

163.—THE SPECKLED CATFISH.**By J. F. JONES.**

[From letters to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

The general species of fish is common, but the valuable and highly appreciated variety that I have domesticated is different from all of the kind, both in habit and color. The "speckled catfish" is naturally a pond fish, and found only in one locality in the South; at least, such is my information and observation. That locality is on Flint River, running south and emptying into the Chattahoochee some distance below Columbus, Ga. Many years ago this fish was plentiful, being found only in still water, lagoons, or ponds. The Flint River runs through the Pine Mountain. Not far south or north of the mountain these fish cease to occupy the waters and inhabit only the tributaries to the river, including a space of about 50 or 75 miles.

Some time since I determined to try and domesticate them, and the effort has resulted in success. The species is easily tamed or domesticated. They can be trained like pigs; increase and grow fast when well supplied with food; subsist upon vegetation, but in the absence of it can be fed any kind of fruit, such as peaches, apples, persimmons, watermelons and the like, corn, wheat, and sorghum seed. I put fifty, 3 inches long, in a cotton basket and set it in my pond. I fed them well on corn shorts and dough. In the short space of six weeks they grew to be 6 and 7 inches long and trebled in weight. They spawn when one year of age, and twice a year—May and September. Last spring I procured only eight wild ones. After feeding them well up to this time they have spawned in May and September and have filled my pond. They have grown to be 15 and 18 inches long and weigh 4 and 6 pounds. They take care of their own young and trouble no other fish, bite readily at hooks, and offer all the sport at catching that a trout does.

They resemble the leather carp more than any other fish, are oval from head to tail-fin on the back, and have a sharp mouth. The under part, or belly, is as white as cotton. The sides and back are as spotted as a leopard. The flesh is perfectly white and tender, and no better for the table is to be found; bones are rather small and slender. At the same time they carry more flesh than any fish I ever saw. They love a pond of clean water and a mud bottom. All the floods that come cannot wash them from their home unless the whole of the pond is carried away. They will not go in running water if they can avoid it. Disturb them, and, like a carp, they will sink in the mud to hide.

They can be caught conveniently in a gill-net, but with great difficulty in a seine.

My pond covers 5 acres of land, the largest and best pond in Western Georgia. It is a perfect mass of fish and has been constructed only eleven months. The water is from an inch to 5 feet deep, and abounds in vegetation. I could sell it for a fine price, but I would not exchange for the best four-horse farm in Georgia. The twenty little carp you sent me last winter, then about 3 or 4 inches long, are now 20 inches in length. I had two old ones that I bought, and they have stocked my pond with hundreds now about 8 or 10 inches long.

HOGANSVILLE, GA., *October 31, 1883.*

I am anxious to send you some of my "speckled cat," and to have you test their value as a domestic fish in the Government ponds. I can send you some alive without danger.

I am sending the September spawn all over the Southern States now, and when they are properly introduced they will give the laborers or farmers all the meat needed.

HOGANSVILLE, GA., *November 5, 1883.*

164.—THE MIGRATIONS OF THE SALMON (*SALMO SALAR L.*) IN THE BALTIC.*

By Prof. A. J. MALMGREN.

From time immemorial there have been caught in Finland salmon in whose mouth or entrails have been found hooks of a form and character entirely unknown in these regions. In all the salmon streams which fall into the Gulf of Bothnia, not excepting the most northern, the Tornea and Kemi, it is quite common to find such hooks. They are found every summer, even in the Kymmene River, which empties into the Gulf of Finland, although not so frequently as in some of the other rivers. At the Raatti salmon fishery in the Ulea River, where all salmon are cleaned before they are sold, the fishermen gather every year a large number of strange hooks taken from the mouths and stomachs of salmon. Thus, I was informed during my last visit to Raatti in August, 1883, that among about 3,000 salmon caught since the end of June, weighing on an average from 25 to 30 pounds, there were at least 25 fish from which brass hooks were extracted. At the Klockarsand's government fisheries in the Kumo River, near Bjorneborg, a considerable number of similar hooks are taken from salmon every summer.

With few exceptions, of which I shall speak later, the hooks found in salmon are of the same kind. They are made of brass wire, varying in thickness from 2 to 2½ millimeters [from one-twelfth to one-tenth of an

* "*Laxens (Salmo salar L.) vandringar i Ostergjön.*" From *Afstryck ur Sporten*, No. 2, 1884. Translated from the Swedish by HERMAN JACOBSON.