

Vol. IV, No. 9. Washington, D C. April 24, 1884.**59.—NOTES ON THE COD GILL-NET FISHERIES OF GLOUCESTER, MASS., 1883-'84.****By S. J. MARTIN.**

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

Captain Gill, of the boat *Gracie*, had four cod-nets given him that were worn out in catching codfish last winter. He set them, together with two new ones, and the first night he caught 5,500 pounds of pollock and 400 pounds of large codfish. The pollock averaged 21½ pounds apiece, while those caught on hand-lines average 13 pounds apiece. The pollock caught in nets are all female fish full of spawn. There are three boats which have nets set. They catch three times as much pollock and three times as much codfish as they do on hand-lines. Pollock and cod have been scarce this fall. Forty sail of small craft which were out two days on the pollock grounds came in with 2,000 pounds. There will be more cod gill-nets used this winter than there have been before since they began to be used. There are no sperling this fall, so that most of the boats will use nets.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *October 28, 1883.*

There are five boats fishing with the cod gill-nets. They are doing first rate in catching pollock and cod.

The schooner *S. W. Craig*, of Portland, one of the high-line pollock catchers, was in here last Wednesday. I went aboard to see the skipper and gain what information I could concerning the pollock fishery. The conversation ran thus: "How do you find the pollock, captain?" "Pollock! there ain't none. I have been out two days with 12 men and got 2,000 pounds; that is bad enough." I said: "They are catching a good many pollock in nets. Do you see that small boat coming? That is Horace Wiley's; he caught 3,000 pounds night before last, and caught as many last night. He has got three nets." "Where does he catch them?" "Off on a spot of rocks called Brown's." The captain said: "I will get some spirling to-night, and go off where they have got their nets set. We will give them fits, if we can get some new spirling." I answered: "Cap., it is of no use to go where they have got their nets set. If you do you will get no fish." "That be hanged for a yarn. I think that you can catch fish with spirling as well as you can with nets." I said: "No, sir; you can't do it."

The next day he went out with some new spirling to where Wiley was hauling his nets. (The latter had picked out a dory full of cod and pollock.) He let go his anchor close to the nets. He ordered, "All

hands over lines," and was going to give them fits. He lay there two hours and did not catch a fish.

I was aboard yesterday again. I said, "Captain, how did they bite where the nets were?" "That beats all," he replied; "we never felt a bite. I am going to Boston to order 25 nets."

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *October 31, 1883.*

A month ago there was one boat using the cod gill-nets; to-day 8 boats have them. The boat Gracie started four weeks ago to-morrow. Her three men made \$145 apiece. The rest of this week there will be 16 boats using cod gill-nets. They have each got 15 nets 50 fathoms long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms deep, with a $9\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh. There is a prospect of a good winter's work with nets. The first boat that started has landed 15,000 pounds of large cod and 30,000 pounds of large pollock. Some of the hand-line fishermen have not caught as much as 10,000 pounds in the same time. There is but one boat which has nets set in Ipswich Bay. She caught 6,000 pounds with five nets. All the shore fishing will be done with nets this winter, as the sperling are scarce. The prospect is good for a large school of fish this winter.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *November 11, 1883.*

There have been landed this week 120,000 pounds of large cod, and 80,000 pounds of large pollock; 35,000 pounds have been landed at Rockport by two boats. Six weeks ago there was one boat using nets; to-day there are 26 boats, with an average of 15 nets each; that is, 390 nets in all, or 19,500 fathoms of netting. All that is set to-night in Boston Bay. There are two in Ipswich Bay. The schooner Onward went out to-day with 35 nets to set in Ipswich Bay. The schooner Morrill Boy hauled her nets for the first time last Sunday. She has landed 43,000 pounds of cod and pollock since then, and stocked \$1,066.75. There were seven men in the crew, and they made \$124 each, which is not a bad sum to take in one week. Two days out of the week they could not haul their nets, as there was too much wind. Last Wednesday they made \$50 to a man. The hand-line fishermen are not doing anything, bait is so scarce.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *November 18, 1883.*

During the past six nights 487,000 pounds of fish have been caught in Boston Bay with cod gill-nets and landed in Gloucester. Four boats fishing in Ipswich Bay landed 55,000 pounds during the same period. There are 35 vessels now using cod gill-nets, which number, I think, will increase to 40 by the 10th of December. Boats fishing with hand-lines catch only a few small fish. Bait is high; spirling brings 50 cents a bucket. About all the fish caught in-shore is by nets. If they could be knit fast enough the whole fleet would have nets. Fishermen buy twine and the women knit the nets. Everybody is at work. Some boats

have been waiting four days for the glass floats. A great winter's work is anticipated.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *November 25, 1883.*

The amount of fish landed during the month of November was as follows: Fish caught in cod gill-nets, 1,330,000 pounds codfish, 174,000 pounds pollock. Fish caught in cod gill-nets landed at Rockport and Portsmouth during the month of November, 183,000 pounds. Cod nets take the cake.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *December 3, 1883.*

Last week the cod gill-nets landed at Gloucester 590,000 pounds of fish. There was also landed at Portsmouth and Rockport 84,000 pounds which had been caught in Ipswich Bay by 5 boats. The fish landed in Gloucester were caught in Boston Bay by 33 boats. The gill-nets catch not only cod but pollock, puffers, monkfish, and dogfish. The three puffers caught last week all contained young. The codfish average 25 pounds apiece and are mostly sold to split at $1\frac{3}{4}$ cents a pound. The cod gill-nets cost \$12 apiece last winter, and this winter \$14.25 apiece. We much need something to keep the nets from rotting. Some boats having used their nets about five weeks now have to get new ones; the nets are 50 fathoms only. If the nets rot as fast all the winter as they do now, each man will require three nets before April 1. These will cost \$43 without the floats. The floats cost 22 cents apiece, which is too much. The catch of fish varies very much. In three cases boats caught 2,000 pounds of fish in one night, and on the next night caught 8,000 pounds in the same place. Most of the cod are full of ripe spawn.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *December 9, 1883.*

During the past week there have been landed at Gloucester 430,000 pounds of fish, at Rockport and Portsmouth 81,000 pounds, and at Swampscot 48,000 pounds. These fish were all taken with the cod gill-nets. On one day it was impossible to haul their nets. All the nets have been in use five weeks, and are so rotten that new ones have been ordered. Forty-eight vessels are using nets this week. There are five boats from Swampscot using nets, having failed to do anything with hand lines. The business of the glass-blowers and the net-makers is good.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *December 16, 1883.*

During the past week there have been landed at Gloucester 186,000 pounds of codfish, at Rockport 48,000 pounds, and at Swampscot 34,000 pounds, all taken in the cod gill-nets. During three nights of the week the men were unable to haul their nets. On Thursday morning when they hauled their nets some boats found they had taken 4,000 pounds of fish. On Friday morning not one fish was caught, although the nets were set in the same place. Some of the boats then shifted their nets

3 miles off shore upon a soft bottom. Here they caught from 3,000 to 4,000 pounds. Most of the large boats will go to Ipswich Bay next week. There are 54 boats using cod gill-nets. There are 5 dories with 3 gill-nets each from Salisbury. The weather has been very bad for cod gill-netting during the week.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *December 23, 1883.*

The amount of fish landed at Gloucester during the month of December was as follows: Fish caught in the cod gill-nets, 1,120,000 pounds. Fish caught in cod gill-nets landed at other ports during the month of December, 300,000 pounds.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 1, 1884.*

All the vessels using the cod gill-nets are in Ipswich Bay. During the last ten days the weather has not been favorable for fishing. Sixty thousand pounds were landed at Portsmouth last week. In Ipswich Bay the fish are in one place. Four hundred nets are set in a place one-half mile wide by one-half mile long. The nets are across one another. The vessels have set their nets all over the bay, but find only a few scattering fish except in that one spot. There they get good hauls every morning, when there is a chance to haul the nets. The three vessels that have been fishing on the Georges have set their nets in Ipswich Bay. One vessel has 40 nets. Six boats have taken up their nets. The boats are too small to fish in Ipswich Bay, and they have put their nets on larger vessels. I think we shall have a good report next week. The fishermen think strangely of the fish being in one place. They can find nothing on the bottom to keep them alive.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 7, 1884.*

In the gale of January 4, the vessels using the cod gill-nets met with a great loss. They lost 35 nets and had a great many badly torn. No fish were caught for four days after the storm. The last three days the nets have done well. They have landed 150,000 pounds. There are 7 boats home preparing their nets. Fifty-two sails are using the cod gill-nets. The fish caught in the nets sell for $4\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound. I think the nets will be used till the 1st of April. The fish are large, averaging 20 pounds. They are half spawning fish.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 15, 1884.*

Vessels using cod gill-nets have done well the past week, except two days when the nets could not be hauled on account of driving snow-storm. During the week 409,000 pounds were landed. The price has been high, $4\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound the whole week. The netters never get any fish the day before storms and have learned to prophesy their coming.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *January 20, 1884.*

Fish landed at Gloucester during the month of January: Shore fisheries, with cod gill-nets, 843,000 pounds.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 1, 1884.*

Vessels using cod gill-nets have not done as well the past week as previously. In Ipswich Bay there was a different school of fish. Their average weight was 10 pounds. The vessels are catching them on trawls. The netters are preparing for the February school. They have done a good winter's work and still have two months in which to use their nets. Fifty-two vessels are using the cod gill-nets, and I think 80 sail of vessels will use them next winter. Quite a number of the George's Bank fleet will also use nets next winter.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 3, 1884.*

There were 305,000 pounds of codfish brought in by the vessels using cod gill-nets during the past week.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 18, 1884.*

During the past week vessels using the cod gill-nets landed 340,000 pounds of large cod at Rockport and Portsmouth. Some of the vessels using cod gill-nets have hauled up for the winter, three of them having used up their nets.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *February 24, 1884.*

There were 1,803,000 pounds of cod taken by the gill-nets in Ipswich Bay during the month of February. There were 48 boats engaged in the cod gill-net fishery, most of which landed their catch at Portsmouth and Rockport. The gill-net fishing will continue in Ipswich Bay during this month.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 3, 1884.*

The cod gill-netters have not done much this week on account of the rough weather.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 11, 1884.*

The men fishing with cod gill-nets in Ipswich Bay have caught nothing to speak of for ten days. The boats, 42 in number, often catch as few as 30,000 pounds in one night. March 13 they caught 75,000 pounds; March 14, the same. The price is low, 1½ cents a pound, to-day.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 17, 1884.*

The vessels using cod gill-nets did well last week, having landed 520,000 pounds. The schooner Morrill Boy took 7,000 pounds in two nights in Ipswich Bay. These were mixed fish, some very large and some medium size. These were half male and half female.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 23, 1884.*

The cod gill-net fishermen have also done well. Since last Monday they have landed 483,000 pounds of large cod. It has been a good win-

ter for the cod gill-netters. At one time there were 52 vessels using nets. At present there are but 18.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *March 30, 1884.*

The total amount of fish landed from the gill-nets thus far this season has been as follows:

	Pounds.
In November, 1883.....	1, 987, 000
In December, 1883.....	1, 120, 000
In January, 1884.....	843, 000
In February, 1884.....	1, 803, 000
In March, 1884.....	1, 137, 000
Total.....	6, 890, 000

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *April 3, 1884.*

60.—STATEMENT OF THE CATCH OF THE SEVERAL COMPANIES ENGAGED IN THE SALMON FISHERIES IN KADIAK DISTRICT, ALASKA TERRITORY, DURING THE YEAR 1883.

By WM. J. FISHER.

KARLUK FISHING AND PACKING COMPANY AT KARLUK.

RED SALMON.—3,250 barrels, and 13,500 cases of 48 pounds each. Vessels and men employed: Schooner Marion, 235 tons and 8 men; schooner Callistoga, 29 tons and 4 men; natives, 50; Chinese, 60; whites, 16.

ALASKA COMMERCIAL COMPANY.

Kenai Station.

KING SALMON.—250 barrels. 1 white and 8 natives.

Achiok Station.

RED SALMON.—252 barrels. Schooner Olga, 20 tons; 3 whites and 12 natives.

Seal Bay Station.

RED SALMON.—300 barrels. Schooner Three Brothers, 20 tons; 4 whites and 4 natives.

Alexandrowski Station.

RED SALMON.—500 barrels; herring, 50 barrels; schooner Mary, 10 tons, 10 men.

CUTTING & CO.

Kassilor Cannery.

SALMON.—14,862 cases of 48 pounds and fifty barrels. Bark Courier, 800 tons; schooner Manitee, 35 tons; 26 whites, 25 natives, 60 Chinese.

SAINT PAUL, KADIAK ISLAND, ALASKA, *December 10, 1883.*