

**42.—REPORT ON THE TRAP-NETS FISHED IN THE SPRING OF 1883
IN THE POTOMAC RIVER AND CHESAPEAKE BAY.***

By Lieut. W. M. WOOD, U. S. N.

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

I beg leave to submit the following report on the trap-nets fished this season in the Potomac River from Bryant's Point to its mouth, and in the Chesapeake Bay from the mouth of the Potomac, by way of the Capes, to Cherrystone Inlet. The accompanying table gives whatever reliable data I have been able to obtain.

Wherever possible the catch of shad and herring was obtained, but in most instances the owners of the nets were not to be found, and in many others they had no record of the catch themselves.

The fishermen of the Potomac spoke of the catch this season as very light, but the reports became more favorable as we came down the bay, culminating at York Spit, where it was the best ever known. The catch here exceeded that of last year by one-third, and the average per net was from 10,000 to 25,000 shad, and immense numbers of herring of which no account was kept. The fishermen on the Eastern Shore say they never make very large catches of shad there; that they did fairly this year, and considerably better than last season. The table shows 153 nets in the Potomac, 244 on the west side of the bay, and 15 on the Eastern Shore, making 412 in all.

In some localities, instead of calling a net of two or more pockets a single net, the fishermen speak of it as so many separate nets of a single pocket each.

In some instances, these nets, in a line, one outside the other, belong to different individuals, though to all appearances they are one net. Whenever I was able to find out a net which had more than one pocket it has been so specified.

Owing to the lateness of the season some few nets have probably escaped my observation. After the shad season, most of the nets are taken up, even as far down as York Spit. Comparatively few fish for mackerel and summer fish.

STEAMER FISH HAWK,

York River, June 21, 1883.

* The accompanying tables have been compiled in the office of the Fish Commission from the more detailed tables furnished by Lieutenant Wood.—EDITOR.

Shad and herring nets in the Potomac River, 1883.

Name of shore.	Number of firms engaged in fishing.	Number of nets.	Length of nets in fathoms.	Number of pockets in each.	Season's catch.	
					Shad.	Herring.
POTOMAC RIVER.						
Gut Landing.....	1	4	600	1	300	15,000
Gunnison Cove.....	1	6	(a)	1		
Indian Head.....	3	6	600	1		
Ocoquan Flats.....	1	2	400	1		
Deep Point.....	1	2	200	1	300	20,000
Stump Neck.....	1	2		1		
Goose Bay.....	1	2	300	1		
Liverpool Point and Sandy Point.....	1	3		1		
Nanjemoy Reach.....	2	4	400	1	(b)	(b)
Upper Cedar Point.....	1	4	600	1		
Port Tobacco Flat.....	2	8	1,025	1	(c)	(c)
Mathias Point.....	1	2	300	1	(b)	(b)
Pope's Creek.....	3	12	1,450	1	(d)	(d)
Mouth of Port Tobacco Creek.....	1	2	300	1		
Prospect Hill.....	1	3	300	1		
Clifton.....	1	2	200	1		
Persimmon Point.....	1	3	300	1		
Lower Cedar Point.....	1	2	300	1	500	100,000
Mouth of Machodic Creek.....	1	4	(e)	(e)	(e)	(e)
Picawaxen Creek.....	2	3	(f)	1	(b)	(b)
Machodic Flats.....	1	2	200	1		
Cedar Island.....	3	7	700	1		
Rozter's Creek.....	4	14	1,400	1		
Bluff Point.....	1	5	500	1	3,000	175,000
Hollister's.....	1	1	100	1	(g)	(g)
White Point.....	1	5	500	1		
Mattox's Creek.....	2	6	600	1		
Bridge's Creek.....	1	2	200	1		
Stratford Mills.....	1	1	75	1		
Curioan.....	1	3	300	1		
Ragged Point.....	1	5	500	1		
Mouth of Neal's Creek.....	1	2	300	1		
Henry Creek.....	1	1	100	1		
Saint George Island Bar.....	3	3				
Cornfield Harbor.....	1	1				
Sandy Point, mouth of Yeomico River.....	1	2				
Lynch's Point, mouth of Yeomico River.....	3	3	(h)	1	(i)	(i)
Hog Island, mouth of Coan River.....	6	11	1,100	1	(j)	(j)
Great Neck, Coan River.....	2	2	200	1	2,500	35,000
Mouth of Cubitt's Creek.....	1	1	100	1	1,500	20,000

(a) Two of the six pound-nets at Gunnison Cove measured 100 fathoms apiece.

(b) Catch small.

(c) The catch for three of the eight pound-nets at Port Tobacco consisted of 500 shad and 100,000 herring; that for the rest is not reported.

(d) The catch for four of the twelve pound-nets at Pope's Creek consisted of 400 shad and 15,000 herring; that for five of the remainder is said to have been small, and nothing has been ascertained regarding that for the other three.

(e) Two of the four pound-nets at Machodic Creek measured 100 fathoms each and contained one pocket apiece. Their catch consisted of 500 shad and 20,000 herring; that for the others is not reported.

(f) One of the three pound-nets at Picawaxen Creek was 125 fathoms long.

(g) Catch fair.

(h) Two of the three pound-nets at Lynch's Point measured 100 fathoms each.

(i) The catch for one of the three pound-nets at Lynch's Point consisted of 400 shad and a very few herring; that of one is reported small, and that of the third is unknown.

(j) The catch of nine of the eleven pound-nets at Hog Island consisted of 8,000 shad and 90,000 herring; that of the other two was slight.

Shad and herring nets in Chesapeake Bay, 1883.

Name of shore.	Number of firms engaged in fishing.	Number of nets.	Length of nets in fathoms.	Number of pockets in each.	Season's catch.	
					Shad.	Herring.
WEST SHORE OF CHESAPEAKE BAY.						
South of Smith's Point.....	1	1	300	3	(a)	(a)
Taskmaster's Creek.....	25	38	(b)	1	(b)	(b)
Dammeron's Marsh.....	3	4		1	(c)	(c)
Between North Point and Windmill Point.....	1	2		1	(c)	(c)
Mouth of Rappahannock River.....	7	11		1	(c)	(c)
Inside of Rappahannock Spit.....	16	30		1	(c)	(c)
South side of Rappahannock Entrance.....	5	9		5	(c)	(c)
Hill's Bay, mouth of Piancatank River.....	4	6		1	(c)	(c)
South Shore.....	2	3		1	(c)	(c)
Gwynn's Island.....	7	16		1	(d)	(d)
Mobjack Bay.....	21	21		1	(e)	(e)
Wolf Trap Spit.....	1	5		1	(f a)	(f a)
Dias Creek Bar.....	11	17		1	(f a)	(f a)
York Spit.....	21	62		1	(f a)	(f a)
York Spit and Too's Point.....	11	19		1	(f a)	(f a)
EAST SHORE OF CHESAPEAKE BAY.						
Cape Charles.....	6	6		1	(g)	(g)
Picket's Hole.....	5	9		1	(h)	(h)
Total.....		412				

(a) Catch large.

(b) Three of the thirty-eight pound-nets at Taskmaster's Creek measured 100 fathoms each. Their catch consisted of 3,500 shad and 95,000 herring; that for twenty-three was of fair size, and that for the other twelve was very slight.

(c) Catch fair.

(d). The catch for fourteen of the sixteen pound-nets at Gwynn's Island consisted of 21,000 shad and 950,000 herring; that for the other two is not known.

(e) Four of the twenty-one pound-nets at Mobjack Bay contained one pocket, fourteen contained two pockets, and three contained three pockets. The catch for one pound-net was fair, that for three was light, and that for the remainder was not reported.

(f) The best season ever known, the nets averaging from 10,000 to 25,000 shad each, together with great quantities of herring of which no record was kept. The catch was one-third larger than that of last year, and greatly exceeded any catch made during the previous eight years.

(g) Two of the six pound-nets at Cape Charles measured 100 fathoms each. Their catch consisted of 1,000 shad and 10,000 herring; that for the others was fair, and better than last year.

(h) Catch fair and better than last year.

43.—EARLY CATCH OF MACKEREL.

By BARNET PHILLIPS.

[From letter to S. F. Baird.]

Mackerel in market to-day caught on Thursday [March 29] off Hatteras. In 1882 they were in New York markets on the 1st of April; in 1881 on the 23d of March.

TIMES OFFICE, NEW YORK, March 31, 1883.