

33.—SHAD IN THE SAINT JOHN'S RIVER, FLORIDA.

By W. DEMPSEY.

I began fishing in the Saint John's River in 1865. Then there were from 7 to 10 nets fished along the river, with from 1,500 to 2,500 fathoms of twine. Now, from Jacksonville to Saint John's, there are 100 nets, with about 250,000 fathoms of twine. One hundred boats are also used, employing 200 men, while probably 20 more are engaged in handling the fish.

The figures here given will serve to give some idea of the catch, which was a good one this winter, at the town of New Berlin; but beside the shad I handled, there were small amounts caught by 6 other nets fished from this place, and a few nets were fished by small boys. The following table shows the number of nets used (whose catch I handled) per day, the daily catch of shad, and the average number of shad taken per net during each of the four months of the season, which here begins on December 1 and ends on March 31:

Shad taken at New Berlin during the season of 1885-'86.

| Day of month. | December. | | January. | | February. | | March. | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Nets. | Shad. | Nets. | Shad. | Nets. | Shad. | Nets. | Shad. |
| 1..... | 6 | 86 | 12 | 220 | 14 | 182 | 14 | 465 |
| 2..... | 7 | 101½ | 7 | 22 | 23 | 1,520 | 10 | 333 |
| 3..... | 11 | 264½ | ..... | ..... | 21 | 934 | 18 | 658 |
| 4..... | 12 | 202 | 18 | 490 | 23 | 1,830 | 22 | 1,301 |
| 5..... | 15 | 560 | 14 | 186 | 18 | 1,785 | 14 | 790 |
| 6..... | ..... | ..... | 13 | 204 | 19 | 805 | 11 | 344 |
| 7..... | 16 | 354 | 8 | 24 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 8..... | 15 | 207 | 11 | 183 | 2 | 5 | 19 | 508 |
| 9..... | 16 | 906 | 14 | 717 | 21 | 2,010 | 9 | 60 |
| 10..... | 13 | 345 | ..... | ..... | 24 | 2,592 | 20 | 1,635 |
| 11..... | 13 | 748½ | 3 | 57 | 22 | 1,218 | 21 | 758 |
| 12..... | 16 | 876 | 4 | 49 | 15 | 1,283 | 10 | 326 |
| 13..... | ..... | ..... | 8 | 107 | 23 | 1,004 | 13 | 529 |
| 14..... | 11 | 215 | 7 | 43 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 15..... | 11 | 257½ | 6 | 30 | 7 | 63 | 18 | 680 |
| 16..... | 12 | 278 | 1 | 4 | 21 | 3,071 | 13 | 359 |
| 17..... | 8 | 104 | ..... | ..... | 25 | 1,664 | 19 | 666 |
| 18..... | 17 | 228 | 6 | 26 | 20 | 498 | 19 | 1,142 |
| 19..... | 9 | 90 | 4 | 12 | 8 | 122 | 20 | 738 |
| 20..... | ..... | ..... | 8 | 58 | 16 | 640 | 20 | 1,132 |
| 21..... | 16 | 201 | 16 | 264 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 22..... | 13 | 177 | 5 | 79 | 3 | 13 | 19 | 687 |
| 23..... | 15 | 232 | 13 | 88 | 1 | 11 | 14 | 407 |
| 24..... | 8 | 116 | ..... | ..... | 14 | 130 | 8 | 166 |
| 25..... | 9 | 256 | 19 | 1,137 | 22 | 2,945 | 11 | 244 |
| 26..... | 19 | 455 | 21 | 471 | 21 | 1,222 | 10 | 429 |
| 27..... | ..... | ..... | 19 | 227 | 21 | 1,034 | 12 | 486 |
| 28..... | 2 | 7 | 10 | 151 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 29..... | 2 | 2 | 21 | 391 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 30..... | 3 | 23 | 12 | 872 | ..... | ..... | 13 | 831 |
| 31..... | 9 | 36 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 12 | 808 |
| Total..... | 304 | 7,366 | 280 | 5,612 | 404 | 25,985 | 410 | 16,418 |
| Average per net..... | ..... | 24 | ..... | 20 | ..... | 64 | ..... | 40 |

NEW BERLIN, FLA., April 13, 1886.