

9.—NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN SEPTEMBER, 1886.**By W. A. WILCOX.**

September is the beginning of the end of the season's work; and the Grand Banks, Greenland, and Iceland fishing vessels have most of them returned, but the mackerel fleet will remain out a few weeks longer. By the close of the month most of the small boats engaged in shore fishing off the coast of Maine will have hauled up.

During the past month the receipts of fish at Gloucester, as compared with those of the corresponding month last year, show a gain of 649,500 pounds of halibut; a falling off of 353,000 pounds of codfish, 69,462 pounds of other ground-fish, and 51,157 barrels of mackerel.

The catch of codfish, for the number of vessels engaged, has been an average one. The Grand Banks fleet returned with full fares. A less number of vessels having been engaged accounts for the decrease in the aggregate receipts. The mackerel fishery, which gave promise of a large catch, shows a heavy falling off from August, as well as from the corresponding month of last year. During the entire month the body of mackerel appeared to be near shore around the rocks, making it almost impossible to take them with seines, with which the catch is exclusively made. The shore fleets, numbering from 250 to 300 sail, have followed the fish from the Bay of Fundy to Cape Ann, in nearly all cases finding the fish near the rocks and shore. Every day seines were badly torn and damaged, while the catch, if any, was light, disappointing, and in most cases unprofitable.

During the month from 12 to 15 vessels have remained in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, occasionally finding fish abundant, and at other times not finding any. A fair catch, however, was made during the month.

Swordfish have been more abundant than for years, the catch being mostly taken in the Bay of Fundy and marketed at Boston.

Alewives (glut herring) have continued remarkably abundant all along the eastern coast, and mackerel seines have often been filled with them, and the fish released. The only attempts to save these fish have been by the small steamers and vessels engaged particularly in this catch, selling the fish to the oil factories at Boothbay. Steamer Mabel Bird, of Portland, reports having taken 3,000 barrels.

Shore herring arrived earlier than usual, were of large size, fine quality, and for a few days very plentiful. On September 22d and 23d, 1,800 barrels were taken in nets set in Gloucester harbor. A storm on the 24th badly damaged the nets and drove the fish out. Along the eastern

coast, off Wood Island, and other localities in Maine, herring were reported abundant, but owing to fewer vessels having been engaged, the catch was much under the average.

GREENLAND AND ICELAND HALIBUT FLEET.

During the past month most of the vessels from the United States engaged in this far-away fishery have returned. With one exception they belong to Gloucester. The following is the list of vessels (all schooners), with dates of sailing and return:

Greenland.			Iceland.		
Name.	Sailed.	Returned.	Name.	Sailed.	Returned.
Druid.....	Apr. 18	Sept. 21	Alice M. Williams†.....	Apr. 21
Lydia Y. Crowell*.....	June 10	Sept. —	Carrier Dove.....	May 15	Sept. 10
Mary E.....	Apr. 14	Oct. 15	David A. Story.....	Apr. 21	Sept. 6
Mist.....	June 16	Sept. 23	Lizzie H. Haskell.....	Apr. 21	Sept. 20
Seth Stockbridge.....	Apr. 22	Sept. 21	Marguerite.....	Apr. 28	Sept. 23

* Of Beverly, Mass.

† Lost.

None of the vessels made full fares. Off Greenland the weather was reported good and fish scarce, while off Iceland fish were more abundant, but stormy weather prevailed much of the time. Capt. John Cousins, of the Carrier Dove, reports as follows: Sailed from Gloucester on May 15; arrived off Iceland June 23; left August 9; arrived at Gloucester, September 10. On arriving at the fishing grounds found the coast entirely surrounded by ice at the northern part of the island, where all the fishing was done. No halibut being reported on the southern coast, we had to wait about a week for the drift ice to clear. After that, ice was reported outside of the fishing grounds, but occasioned no trouble. Fished entirely with trawls set from 20 to 40 miles from the shore. Fished only for halibut, which appeared to be in spots. The catch was variable, some days only a few being taken, and other days a fair catch was made. We were obliged to change our location every day, having apparently caught all that were on a particular spot. During most of the fishing the weather was very blustery, with strong easterly wind much of the time. About 150 sail, mostly topsail schooners, from France, Norway, and England, were hand-line fishing for cod off the coast. Most of the foreign vessels were from France. The catch was mostly cod, with a small amount of cusk, haddock, and ling. The vessels from the United States fished for halibut only. These halibut average 100 pounds each; near shore they run of small size, some not over a pound. Sharks were very plentiful, and catching them for their oil was made a business by the natives. No fishing, except by natives, is permitted within three miles of shore, a Government steamer keeping watch along the coast to see that the vessels comply with the law.

From the log-book of the Marguerite and the report of Capt. Charles B. Johnson the following account is taken:

Sailed from Gloucester April 28; arrived May 22; sailed for Greenland, to complete the voyage, July 17; arrived there July 27; sailed August 27; and arrived at Gloucester September 23.

On May 9, met drift ice and numerous bergs in latitude $48^{\circ} 7'$ north, longitude $43^{\circ} 8'$ west.

May 10, saw heavy field ice in latitude $49^{\circ} 29'$, longitude $48^{\circ} 29'$.

May 11, no drift ice but many bergs, most of them aground; latitude $46^{\circ} 28'$, longitude $48^{\circ} 8'$.

May 12, two bergs were seen in latitude $47^{\circ} 26'$, longitude $45^{\circ} 31'$.

May 13, clear water; temperature of water, 52° ; of the air, 59° .

May 20, an immense berg was seen aground; ran alongside, and sounded, finding 250 fathoms. Measured the berg and found it 610 feet out of water, or total from top to bottom, 2,110 feet; measured nothing but the height, but estimated it at three-fourths of a mile wide, and from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles long; water alongside of the berg, 43° ; air, 45° ; latitude $63^{\circ} 50'$, longitude $26^{\circ} 46'$.

Captain Johnson reports much of the time during his stop that the weather was very unfavorable for fishing. No fish were to be caught within 3 miles of shore, a Danish cruiser keeping watch to see that the law was not violated. No fishing license is required or any charges, except the port charges, which vary according to the tonnage of the vessel. On the Marguerite, of 103 tons, the lighthouse charge of 30 crowns [about \$8] was collected once. For the first three times a vessel enters a port, 5 crowns harbor tax is collected each time. After paying three times a vessel can enter as often as they please free of any charge. These are the only charges made by the Government. The storage and temporary care of salt and other goods left on shore is collected by private parties, and it often amounts to a considerable sum, and has given rise to reports that excessive fees were collected for the privilege of fishing. Reports have also been made that much objection was offered to landing and that in some cases a decided refusal was made, both at Greenland and Iceland. Captain Johnson reports no trouble whatever, and nothing but kind and pleasant treatment from the officers at both places. Salt can be bought cheaper at Iceland than here. The halibut and cod-fishing grounds are located at the northern and eastern part of the island; halibut were taken on trawls set in from 30 to 90 fathoms; average weight of halibut, 100 pounds.

Between Iceland and Greenland clear water was found all the way. On July 22 met field ice to the southward of Cape Farewell. When off that cape found a narrow channel; passed into and through it for 180 miles, it being from 1 to 10 miles wide. This took them around Cape Farewell and off Cape Desolation. On July 24 passed in full sight of and within one mile of Cape Farewell. With the exception of a few bergs, the harbor was free of ice.

For a number of years large-sized mackerel, that would inspect as No. 1, have been scarce both in American and Provincial waters. The catch of this season will inspect mostly as No. 2, a very small proportion of large-sized or No. 1 fish being taken. Some years large-sized mackerel have been found in immense numbers early in the season before passing Long Island Sound, after which only a small proportion of large fish were seen during the entire season. Where the large mackerel went to has been a mystery, and a subject of much conjecture. If this question is not partially solved, it is certainly of much interest, and may lead to valuable results in the near future to know that during this season large-bodies of extra-large mackerel were seen off the Labrador coast. Captain Johnson, of the *Marguerite*, reports that on September 5 and 6, Temple Bay, at the northern end of the Strait of Belle Isle, was full of large-sized mackerel. They were also found abundant as far north as St. Lewis Sound, longitude $55^{\circ} 45'$, latitude $52^{\circ} 30'$. At these points the native fishermen were seining codfish, and would take large quantities of mackerel in their nets, but would not save them. The natives reported that for several years, of late, during August and September, mackerel have been plentiful. No small mackerel, or any, except large fish, were seen in that section. This season, at the date mentioned, the fish were fat. Captain Johnson says that those which he saw would more than reach across a barrel, not over one hundred fish being required to fill a packed barrel. Vessels that were trading along the coast packed a few barrels.

Capt. Valentine Doane, of Harwichport, Mass., being on a business-trip along the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts, writes, under date of July 28, that mackerel of large size were abundant at Chateau Harbor, Labrador. As the letter has much of interest in connection with the fisheries of that section, some extracts from it are here given :

LABRADOR AND NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.—There are several other harbors near by—Henly, Antelope, Granville, Pitts Arm, &c.—all small, but each with its own peculiar features, and all with the one business and the sole and only thought—fishing. The men catch the fish, the women dress and cure them. The homes of these people are miserable huts and shanties, and yet all are happy and contented, and apparently without a thought of ever having anything better or that there is anything better in the world. I should judge by observation, after visiting all the inlets and coves hereabouts, that there might be 300 persons about here now. It is the most desolate and forlorn looking land I ever saw. The people are sober, honest, industrious, moral, tidy in their appearance, and keep the Sabbath in the strictest sense. We are waited upon regularly by boats that bring us fresh salmon, cod, herring (equal to our No. 1 mackerel), trout, and I have had, to my surprise, twenty-five or thirty fresh mackerel. We also find good clams here, and I am surprised to see the natives stare at us as we dig clams. They never use them, even for bait, and mackerel they not only will

not eat, but will not save them. They find them in their nets among the herring, and until I came and promised to buy them, they would not save one. Now they all understand that I will buy them, and I hope to pick up a few barrels of nice ones. One boat's crew came in yesterday and reported a large school of mackerel in one of the coves on the outside; but there are no seines here that will answer for taking mackerel, and so nothing was done about it. I think there will be one mackerel seine and boat here another year, though they tell us that there have been no mackerel seen about here before for several years, and that they cannot be relied upon. But I am satisfied that there are good mackerel about here now. I found at St. John's, Newfoundland, that the reports from all sources about the island regarding the fish crop for the present season were very discouraging. One of the largest dealers told me he could see nothing but starvation in prospect for many of the outports. He said they exported from St. John's alone last year 1,000,000 quintals of dry cod, and that the crop last year was only two-thirds of a catch, and he feared this year's crop would fall far below that; and the dealers were all very gloomy. And in passing along the coast from St. John's to this place on the steamer we called at nineteen different harbors, and on the Labrador coast at six harbors, and with only one exception they all reported *no fish*. "The poorest fishing ever known in this harbor," was the universal complaint, and certainly they looked as if they were telling the truth, for there was hardly anything about the stages or flakes to indicate what they were used for. We took on at one harbor 125 tierces of salmon and at another 450 cases (four dozen each) of canned lobsters, and should judge that the catch of salmon and lobsters all along the coast had been fair, but I am told that it is never large. The herring have also been very scarce and smaller than usual in size, but at this point, and within 6 miles of this, there has been a good, fair catch of herring within a few days, size large and quality excellent, better to eat fresh than mackerel at this season of the year. I have spoken so far only of the boat-fishing. That is what they call their shore-fishing. There are probably 1,000 sail of vessels owned in Newfoundland and Labrador, principally on the east and the west coast of Newfoundland, that are engaged exclusively in the cod fishery, and from June 15 to October 15 their fishing ground is along the coast of Labrador. From this fleet there have been as yet no reliable reports; only rumors. But in every harbor we stopped at there was a "rumor from the fleet up the coast that they were doing very poorly," and I have heard here within a day or two that up to July 15 the fleet had done but very little; and as all agree that the best of the season is gone when August begins, it looks very gloomy for the cod fishing of Newfoundland. In addition to the boats used about the shore for cod fishing, I find in general use the Yankee invention, traps and seines, and most of the fish taken this season have been taken in seines, regular purse-seines, though not near so large as our mackerel seines, and they

handle them very skilfully. I also notice that as far as I have seen in Labrador the fishing boats are in most cases American build, "lap-streak," handsome, able boats, and the men are proud of them.

During January, February, and March last, three cargoes of codfish were exported from Provincetown, Mass., to Portugal, but owing to the very high duty (\$2.50 a quintal) the shipment did not realize much, if any, more than if sold in the home markets. Yet, from these shipments a number of interesting results have grown. The crews of the three vessels mentioned were Portuguese fishermen that had long fished on the Grand Banks in vessels from Provincetown. On arriving at Lisbon, and speaking of the work, catch, &c., of the American fishing vessels, some persons became interested, engaging as many of the crew as they could to go in vessels for them and show them the Yankee way of fishing. An agent was sent over and four vessels were purchased, one each from Plymouth and Wellfleet and two from Provincetown, and fitted for the Grand Banks, the crew being Portuguese fishermen of Provincetown. These four vessels secured full fares of codfish, which were taken direct to Lisbon, the crew receiving \$400 each and their passage back to the United States by steamer. Vessels that were fitted at Portugal, and manned by men from there, are reported as returning with no more than half fares. Lately an agent has been sent to Massachusetts to engage crews for next season; boats (dories) have been ordered from Salisbury, Mass., and a number of vessels from Lisbon will early in the spring come to Massachusetts for supplies and men, going from here to the Grand Banks, thence to Portugal. It is expected that a large portion, if not all, of the Portuguese fishermen of Provincetown will engage in these vessels from their old country. This demonstrates the superiority of New England methods of fishing over those of the Old World.

Receipts of fish at Gloucester, Mass., in September, 1885.

From—	Fares.	Codfish.	Halibut.	Hake.	Pollock.
		<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>
George's Bank	148	3,207,000	162,200		
Brown's Bank	1	70,000	300		
Grand Banks	34	1,015,000	1,028,500		
Grand Banks	7	2,020,000	24,000		
Grand Banks	1		20,000		
Nova Scotia, Cape Shore	11	483,000			
New England shore	129	20,000		41,000	47,000
Greenland, Flemish Cap	3	130,000	340,000		
Iceland	4		582,000		
La Have Bank	8		218,000		
Bay of Fundy	1	7,000			
North Bay, by railroad	3				
North Bay, by steamer to Boston	3				
Total.....	353	6,952,000	2,375,000	41,000	47,000

Receipts of fish at Gloucester, Mass., September, 1885—Continued.

From—	Swordfish.	Herring.	Mackerel.	Hallbut fins.	Oil.
	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>
George's Bank					
Brown's Bank					
Grand Banks					
Grand Banks*					
Grand Banks†					
Nova Scotia, Cape shore					
New England shore	12,600	600	24,643		20
Greenland, Flemish Cap				122	
Iceland				107	
La Have Bank					
Bay of Fundy					
Harbor nets		2,535			
North Bay, by railroad			1,227		
North Bay, by steamer to Boston			710		
Total	12,600	3,135	26,580	229	20

Other receipts: dry fish from Maine, 1,650 quintals hake; 400 quintals cod; 450 quintals haddock.

*Subject to duty, from British vessels.

†Fresh fish, duty free, from British vessels.

Location of the *New England fishing fleet during the last week of September*.—325 sail, mackerel, between Cape Cod and Portland, Me. 25 sail, mackerel, off Nova Scotia and in Gulf of St. Lawrence. 85 sail, halibut, on the Grand Banks, in latitude 44° to 44° 12', longitude 49° 12' to 49° 25'. 50 sail, codfish, on the Grand Banks. 140 sail, codfish, on George's and Brown's banks, in latitude 41° to 43°, longitude 65° 30' to 69°. 5 sail, codfish, off Nova Scotia. 175 sail, ground-fishing, off New England coast. 50 sail, herring, off New England coast.

10.—NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN OCTOBER, 1885.

By W. A. WILCOX.

October 3, the month opened with strong NE. winds; to-day, a dense fog, light rain, with thunder and lightning; very few mackerel taken the past week; 200 sail of the fleet are to-day detained in the harbor at Gloucester. On October 6 some good fares of fine mackerel were taken between Newburyport and Thatcher's Island. Among the vessels reported we notice the schooner Fannie Belle, 190 barrels; Lizzie Maud, 240; Onward, 80; Henry W. Longfellow, 80; Mystery, 260; Ellen M. Adams, 100; James and Ella, 300 barrels, the latter taken in Ipswich Bay. The fishing fleet are once more detained in this and other ports by high winds and rough weather. October 8 was a fine day, in which the fishing fleet were all busy. Between Eastern Point (just out from Gloucester Harbor) and Thatcher's Island 300 sail and three small steamers were busy in the catch of mackerel. The fish were of good size, mostly No. 2, and quite fat. From the bluffs at East Gloucester thirty seine boats were at one time counted, all busy taking fish. The catch for the day amounted to 6,500 barrels. Fifty vessels made hauls that averaged something over one hundred barrels each. This was the largest amount taken in any one day during the month.

October 9, the fleet worked over to Cape Cod, remaining off Cape Cod and in Barnstable Bay during the month. At times quite a body