

Of the fish-supplies landed at Wellington, steam-trawler catches represented 32.6 per cent. of the total, as against 51.2 per cent. in 1940-41. Two motor-trawlers added a further 8.3 per cent., while the smaller local craft contributed the remaining 59.1 per cent. Tarakihi formed 69.1 per cent. of the steam-trawler catch and moki a further 7.4 per cent. The line boats landed increased quantities of groper and hake, but ling landings decreased by 18.6 per cent.

In the main, the fisheries of Canterbury and Otago have shown some improvement, although decreases are recorded for Kaikoura, Nuggets, and Waikawa. At Port Chalmers a smaller quantity of groper was landed compared with the previous year. Increased supplies of soles and considerably greater catches of red cod and barracouta were brought in by the motor-trawlers.

A general review of the year's returns shows that fish-supplies were well maintained in spite of certain difficulties.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

Some decline in imports and exports of fishery products was to be expected. So far as imports are concerned the Government's policy of encouraging the canning of New Zealand fish for our own consumption has been largely responsible for the low total of £20,822, which represents the value of all imported fish and shell-fish during the year. Practically all this consisted of canned goods.

The total value of £138,029 for exports has fallen below the average of recent years, but is still higher than that of any year up to 1935. Of the principal kinds exported, frozen blue cod comes first (8,424 cwt., valued at £38,136) followed by the miscellaneous category termed "other kinds" (11,702 cwt., value £35,071, the only class showing an increase over the previous year's figures), flounder (3,702 cwt. and £15,613 value), tarakihi (3,201 cwt. and £10,139 value), with snapper (2,087 cwt., value £7,088) showing the most marked decline. Of canned fishery products exported, crayfish (37,645 lb., value £4,175) shows an appreciable increase. Whitebait exports (62,948 lb., value £9,592) have fallen by 50 per cent. Oysters (194,652 lb., value £10,898) show a decline of about 30 per cent., and toheroas (74,540 lb., value £5,277) are about 12 per cent. below last year's exports. The complete table showing particulars regarding exporting ports is not given this year.

ROCK OYSTERS.

Picking for the 1941 season commenced on 15th May and closed on 9th August. A total of 6,029 sacks was gathered from the various areas, as follows: Bay of Islands, 2,153 sacks; Whangarei Harbour, 131; Kaipara Harbour, 1,146; Coromandel, 600; Great Barrier Island, 400; Hauraki Gulf, 1,599 sacks.

The several areas in the Hauraki Gulf yielded as follows: Ponui, 509; Pakihi, 82; Pakatoa, 184; Waiheke, 307; Rakino, 18; South Shore, Tamaki Strait, 72; Motutapu, 139; Motuhihi, 280; Noisies, 8. The oysters picked from all areas totalled 6,029 sacks. By the capsizing of a barge during a gale in the Bay of Islands 90 sacks were lost; the total of rock oysters marketed was thus 5,939 sacks or 17,817 bushels.

The improved production of the rock-oyster beds shown last year was maintained and somewhat increased. Unfavourable weather conditions caused some inconvenience at times, but on the whole the season was a very successful one, the quality of the oysters marketed being maintained at a high level, and the staffs, both on the beaches and in the depot, working with efficiency and zeal.

OYSTER-CULTIVATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1942.

Area.

- I. Bay of Islands: 1,490,000 borers and 2,487 pupus destroyed, 5,963 square yards of rock cleared of weeds, and 100 square yards cleared of dead shell. Cost, £290 4s.
- V. Tamaki Strait: 300,600 borers and 87 pupus destroyed. Cost, £24 6s.
- VI. Coromandel: 413,500 borers destroyed and 18,590 square yards cleared of grape-weed. Cost, £40 10s.
- VII. Kawau: Barnacle cleaned off 275 old posts and 175 posts with seed-oysters shipped to Coromandel.
- XI. Whangarei Harbour: 291,300 borers destroyed and 826 square yards cleared of grape-weed and 78 yards of oyster-bearing rock moved to better position and 208 square yards of clean rock distributed. Cost, £22 10s.
- XIII. Waiheke: 752,700 borers and 364 pupus destroyed and 2,386 square yards cleared of dead shell. Cost, £35 2s.
- XIV. Ponui: 369,200 borers and 40,630 pupus destroyed and 1,010 square yards cleared of dead shell and 294 square yards cleared of grape-weed. Cost, £29 14s.
- XV. Patiki: 79,000 borers and 49 pupus destroyed. Cost, £8 2s.
- XVI. Great Barrier Island: 232,000 borers and 250 pupus destroyed and 563 square yards cleared of dead shell and 150 square yards of clean rock distributed. Cost, £54 16s.

Total for all areas: 3,928,300 borers and 43,867 pupus destroyed, 5,963 square yards cleared of weed, 4,059 square yards cleared of dead shell, 436 square yards of clean and oyster-bearing rock shifted, 19,710 square yards cleared of grape-weed, 275 old posts cleared and 175 posts bearing seed-oysters transported from Kawau to Coromandel area. Cost, £505 4s.

DREDGE OYSTERS.

The record quantity of 74,751 three-bushel sacks was dredged in Foveaux Strait and landed at Bluff for the 1941 season. There were fewer complaints from retailers about the low average size of the oysters supplied than was the case during the previous season, since when the size limited has been raised from 2 in. to 2½ in. It is believed that conservation of under-sized oysters was helped appreciably by this measure.