

The beds picked in the Hauraki Gulf were part of Waiheke, Ponui, Pakihi, Motutapu, and Rakino Islands, also part of the Coromandel and Cabbage Bay sections. In all cases the beds were lightly picked, and left in such a condition that the same areas can be picked again this season if necessary. The beds at Great Barrier Island were not picked last season. These beds are limited in extent; they had been continuously gone over for a good many seasons in succession, and, although in good condition as regards the quantity of marketable oysters on the beds, yet, as there was a large quantity of young oysters on all the beds, it was considered advisable to give them a rest for a season. An inspection of the beds in Port Fitzroy and Port Abercrombie was made by the Chief Inspector, along with the Inspector for the Hauraki Gulf and the local Inspector at Port Fitzroy, and the whole of the beds were found to be in splendid condition. The local Inspector, who has lived at Great Barrier all his life, says the beds are in better condition now than they have been for the last fifteen years. They will be picked this season, and it is expected that they will yield more oysters than they have done any season since 1908.

Excepting on some areas which were overpicked previous to last season, the beds in the Hauraki Gulf are, on the whole, in splendid condition. The "fixing" of oyster-spat on the greater part of this section is more erratic than further north, and any areas which are too severely picked take a good many years to recover.

Oyster-cultivation work was continued at the Bay of Islands, where 1,500 yards of rock walls were built, and the rocks of a good many of the walls previously built were turned, so as to expose the young oysters, which fix readily on the underside, to the sun and atmosphere. All the walls built are now showing a good "fixing" of young oysters. On those built in 1918 and 1919 a quantity of oysters are now ready for picking. The "fixing" on the walls built this season promises to be the heaviest that has ever been experienced.

In the Hauraki Gulf, 740 yards of rock walls were built in sheltered parts of Brown's and Putiki Bays, Waiheke Island. The material for the walls was brought over in the Departments' ketch "Te Waipounamu" from Rangitoto Island, where an immense quantity can be obtained with practically no cost for quarrying.

A good many oysters are now showing up on the walls built on Te Kumu Bay, Coromandel, and in a short time there is every prospect of their being well covered.

The difficulty of protecting oyster-beds from poaching, particularly in the Hauraki Gulf, is more keenly realized year by year as the population of the City of Auckland and district increases. The increase in the number of Inspectors, which has been badly needed for several years, was given effect to during the year—a special Inspector being appointed for the Coromandel coast, and also an Inspector of Beaches, which will relieve the Inspector of Fisheries for the Hauraki Gulf of a good deal of work apart from the fisheries. Although there has been a large increase during the year in the number of convictions for poaching, and heavier fines have been imposed, yet there is no doubt that poaching is still being extensively carried on.

The Department is fortunate in having a staff of zealous and efficient Inspectors in connection with the protection and development of the fisheries and oyster-beds, and without exception they have carried out their duties in a most satisfactory manner.

*Toheroa-beds.*—The Inspector reports that the beds on the North Kaipara beach are improving. The two leasing-areas Nos. 3 and 4 are now showing a large number of young fish. From No. 2 area 980 cases were canned at Meredith's factory at Tikinui. The lessees of Nos. 1 and 2 areas, on the Ninety-mile Beach, north of Ahipara, have commenced canning. The output of their factory for the season was 502 cases.

*Atlantic Salmon.*—The Atlantic salmon in the Waiau and tributaries seem to be increasing satisfactorily. Good catches were made by anglers in the Upokororo, Eglington, and in Lake Te Anau near its outflow, and a number were caught in the lower reaches of the Waiau. The total number taken by anglers is reported to be approximately three hundred.

The Department decided to begin the systematic stocking of the Wanganui River with this fish, and a hatchery was built on the Waitea Creek, upper Wanganui, and about ten miles above Taurunui. The hatchery has accommodation for a million eggs, and is centrally situated for distributing the young fish in suitable tributaries of the main river.

For the first time in the history of fish-culture in New Zealand—and, it may be said, in the Southern Hemisphere—the collection of Atlantic-salmon eggs was undertaken by the Marine Department for the purpose of stocking other suitable rivers.

The spawning season for Atlantic salmon commenced about the first week in June, the first ripe fish being taken in the Upokororo Stream by the Department's officer on the 7th. The Upokororo, a tributary of Lake Te Anau, was the only river netted last season. The number of salmon taken was 160—of these 77 were females and 83 males; and the total number of eggs collected was 637,000. These were "eyed" out at the Department's hatchery at Te Anau, and forwarded to the hatchery on Waitea Creek, upper Wanganui, where they were hatched out, and the young fish successfully liberated in tributaries of the main river.

*Quinnat Salmon.*—The run of these fish in most of the snow-fed rivers showed a considerable decrease in the number which came up the two previous seasons. All the rivers continued high and dirty the greater part of the time from the beginning of November well on in the autumn, and as a rule poor catches of salmon were made by anglers. The largest run was reported from the upper Clutha, and a late run was reported in the upper Rakaia, and also in the lower reaches of the Waitaki.

The size of the salmon caught by anglers, and also those netted during the spawning season, were of a larger average size than in 1923.

The collection of eggs was continued as usual. The rivers netted were the Hakataramea, Ahuriri, and Dobson, tributaries of the Waitaki. On account of floods, very few eggs were collected from the Hakataramea. The river conditions were favourable on the Dobson and Ahuriri, and good results