

During the first two weeks the men were on the estuary the river was considerably above normal, and the current was too heavy to hold set-nets, and it took some time before any clear bottom could be found for hauling nets.

Although the run of quinnat salmon this season has been rather poor, yet there is no doubt but they came up the Clutha River in considerable numbers, although the men were not catching them, as a run of salmon were seen in the Clutha at Lowburn Ferry about the end of March, and the day after the men packed up their nets and left the mouth of the river a large school of fish were seen making their way up the Matau Branch.

It is evident that very few salmon were running while the Department's men were on the river, and the river conditions were generally unfavourable at that time. There is no question but that the Clutha Estuary is rather difficult to work with nets because of the strong currents experienced, rough bottom in many places, and the quantity of debris which comes down. However, from the experience gained this season, the officer in charge is of opinion that netting when the river conditions are favourable is quite possible, and he says in his report: "I certainly consider that in a very short time quinnat salmon will be taken in large quantities in this river."

The run of salmon this season was certainly considerably below the number which has come up during the last previous four or five years, and on that account the quantity taken by netters and also by anglers has been very much below the average of previous years.

In normal seasons there is no doubt the catching of salmon in the different rivers on the east coast will be a good business proposition.

The following is a summary of the information supplied by Collectors of Customs and Inspectors of Fisheries in their reports for the year:—

*Bay of Islands (including Whangaroa and Mongonui).*—The Inspector reports that the supply of fish for the past year has been exceptionally good, and for several months exceeded the demand. Mullet, snapper, and flounders were taken in large quantities. Sporting fish were very plentiful this season, and a great many overseas anglers have had splendid sport, and were unanimous that it is the best fishing they have yet experienced. The Bay of Islands oyster-beds are in splendid condition this season, and it is expected to take over 3,000 sacks from them this year. Last season oysters were only picked from these beds for the local market. The reason for this was that the pickers from Bay of Islands were employed for the whole of the season picking the Kaipara beds. There has been a very good fixing of spat on all the natural beds, and a wonderful fixing on all the rock walls built during the last two years. All the cultivated beds in the Bay of Islands are now heavily stocked with oysters, and over 200 sacks of first-class oysters will be taken from some of the rock walls built in 1920 and 1921. The Whangaroa beds, which were replanted by the Department, are being depleted by the constant poaching which goes on there. Unless these beds have stricter protection it is felt they will soon be completely destroyed. The Whangarei beds are in very good condition indeed, and it is expected to take between 400 and 500 sacks of first-class oysters from them this year.

*Whangarei.*—Snapper, mullet, and other market fish have been plentiful throughout the greater part of the year on the local fishing-grounds, and good catches were made, particularly on the fishing-grounds outside the harbour.

*Kaipara.*—The usual market fish have been caught in fairly large quantities during the year in the Kaipara Harbour and its estuaries. Flounder is the fish mostly sought after, as there is a keen demand for them in the Auckland market. Mullet has been very plentiful, but as there is very little demand for this fish for the Auckland market they were only taken by fishermen in small quantities. Snapper has also been plentiful, but on account of the very large quantities of these fish brought in to Auckland by trawlers and Danish-seining boats there has been very little demand for these fish from the Kaipara grounds.

Toheroas are very plentiful on the west-coast beds from north of Kaipara Heads to Mahuta Gap.

The Kaipara oyster-beds are in good condition, and a large quantity was picked for the Auckland market last season.

*Auckland.*—The Inspector for the district states that the quantity of fish caught in the Auckland District, including Thames, Coromandel, and Manukau, was approximately 134,552 cwt., valued at £126,151. This shows a substantial increase on the previous year's operations, the wholesale value of fish, oysters, and mussels amounting to £132,228.

Snapper and other round fish have been fairly plentiful, although the average size of snapper has been rather small. Flounders have been particularly plentiful, especially on the Thames flats.

The oyster-beds in the gulf were lightly picked last season, yielding 3,726 sacks. The beds were all left in good heart, and will easily give an equal quantity this coming season. The beds at Great Barrier yielded 620 sacks, and are showing a substantial improvement every year. The bed on the Coromandel coast are showing a substantial improvement each year; 323 sacks of oysters were taken from them last season, and from the condition the beds are in it is estimated that they will give from 400 to 500 sacks this coming season.

The rock-wall oyster-cultivation work at Putiki and Brown's Bay have now got a splendid fixing of young oysters on them. At Te Kumu Bay and generally along the islands on the Coromandel shore the fixing of young oysters this year has been very satisfactory.

*Tauranga.*—The catches by fishermen on the local ground has been quite equal to the previous year. Considering the extensive fishing-grounds in the Bay of Plenty, it is to be regretted that there is so little interest taken in the development of the fishing industry from this port. As a matter of fact, the quantity of fish brought in from the local grounds is not nearly sufficient to supply the demand in Tauranga and district, and large supplies are brought from Auckland every week.

Deep-sea sport fishing has become very popular here, and is attracting a large number of visitors and foreign tourists as well as sportsmen from all parts of the Dominion.