

On certain grounds inside the Sound, mainly off Tawera Point, Maud Island, and between Maud Island and the entrance, small hapuka are also obtained. Many of these hapuka are below the legal limit, and it is essential that some control should be exercised over this fishery, as apparently these are mainly nursery-grounds. I will deal with this more fully in a later paragraph.

In addition to the blue cod and groper, the line-fishermen also capture snapper, conger-eels, and barracouta.

SMALL HAPUKA.

As I have pointed out in a previous paragraph, there were large quantities of small hapuka caught on certain grounds in the Sounds during the time I was making my investigations. As this is definitely exploiting nursery-grounds this type of fishing should be stopped if possible. The present legal limit of 5 lb. is quite impossible to administrate, as the fisherman has only to head and gut the small fish as they are caught, and no action can be taken against him with any definite chance of success. In a previous report dated 30th June, 1934, I have given a list of small hapuka caught with the weights and lengths set out alongside, and I would recommend that the size limit for hapuka be changed from 5 lb. weight to a total length of 2 ft. from the snout to the tip of the tail, or a length when headed of 15 in. measured from the posterior side of the base of the pectoral fin to the tip of the tail.

CONCLUSIONS.

With regard to the effect of Danish-seining in the Sounds I do not think that the open season of four months has done any material harm to these fishing-grounds from the point of view of the adequate conservation of the flat fishes.

There is no evidence of the wholesale destruction of under-sized flat fish by Danish-seiners. Some unmarketable fish, such as elephant-fish and dogfish, *may* have been destroyed and wasted, but as a rule they are thrown over the side alive, as the fisherman is too busy to kill them.

After due consideration of the results obtained by this small investigation, I can see no reason why the Danish-seiners should not be allowed to use this ground again next season (1935), and if this is permitted I would like to stress the importance of my being on the spot, to sample the catches, so as to estimate the result of the eight months' closure. Finally, I wish to draw your attention to the inadequate policing of the grounds. The lay of the land definitely favours the poacher, and it is only fair to fishermen who abide by the regulations that poaching should be stopped by catching and making an example out of any poachers who use these grounds during the close season, or who at any time fish in the waters above Tawera Point.

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TABLE 1.—CATCHES OF MARKETABLE FLAT-FISH.

(Figures in this table refer to hauls actually observed and from which fish were measured. They do not include data from other Danish seiners operating in Pelorus Sound during the same period.)

Month during which Observations were made.	Number of Total Hauls.	Number of Foul Hauls.	Number of Clear Hauls.	Total Catch (Cases).	Average Catch per Haul (Cases).		Catch per Haul (Cases).	
					Clear Hauls.	Total Hauls.	Highest.	Lowest.
April	12	2	10	32.50	3.25	2.70	5.50	0.25
June	6	1	5	4.25	0.85	0.70	1.50	0.25
July	12	3	9	6.30	0.70	0.52	1.50	0.13
Totals	30	6	24	43.05	1.79	1.43	5.50	0.13

NOTE.—A case contains approximately 65 lb. of fish.