

DIVE IN AND LIKE IT!

(Written for "The Listener" by K.C.B.)

"We Would be Private!" pleads "Irideus" on the opposite page, hoping to defend solitary sports from popularity. And yet here is a solitary sportsman actually inviting participation in his exclusive pastime of catching crayfish with bare feet. Will he attract an eager milling crowd to the rocky pools along the coast? Or will he?

HAVE you ever been up to your neck in a seaweed-covered pool, feeling for crayfish, with bare feet? Have you ever made your cautious way up a muddy stream, waist deep in water, hunting eels with hand and gaff? Perhaps not . . . but it's sport to the youth of Central Hawke's Bay.

The coastline in this district is almost rugged—the hills sloping gracelessly to the beaches, sometimes leaving fine stretches of sand, but more often meeting the sea in a tangle of stone and rock. Here, in mile after mile of rock-studded pools, are crayfish; food for the coastal Maoris and holiday-making pakeha; bait for the fisherman's hooks, sport for everyone who cares or dares.

Your equipment (for the benefit of those who may try their luck this summer) is an old pair of sandshoes, last season's trunks, and as many sacks as you may be optimistic enough to carry.

The rest is simple—just walk in and fill your sacks.

But mind the sharp rocks against your legs. Look out for those porcupine-like sea eggs. And above all—find your crayfish. This you do by systematically submerging yourself into the chill of the incoming tide. You locate a rock when you are about waist deep in water and seaweed and if your feet are tough you remove your right sandshoe.

Some Get Cold

Now you proceed to feel under the rock with your bare foot, imagining at first everything is a crayfish. "What happens," you think, "when I do find one?" You think of those claws you have seen in the fishmonger's window and you wonder. Some people find that the water becomes suddenly cold at this stage and beat a retreat to the warmer, safer pools. The braver souls go deeper, feeling under each rock, following up submarine caverns with nervous feet.

Eventually, unless you are a complete Jonah, you'll find your first. Nothing like you expected—nothing vicious, just a sudden movement against your foot. But it gave you a shock at first—perhaps though, more thrill than shock, because you were at last hot on the trail.

Down You Go

You have been told at this stage that you submerge lock, stock and barrel and proceed to grapple with your quarry under-water. A deep breath, and under! You can't dive at first because you haven't learned the art of keeping your air-inflated body on the sea



bottom. But after a number of spluttering attempts you find that you can keep under by the simple process of holding on to a convenient rock. If you're a beginner you can bet your bottom dollar that by the time you are in good diving trim your cray will be pools away, warning his mates of your impending approach. If, however, you are lucky, or more experienced, you will make contact with your enemy.

In nine cases out of ten you'll find that crayfish face you, frantically waving

with their feelers, reinforced with strong claws at the ready. These claws are to be avoided at all costs if your crayfish is large enough to warrant your attention. (Less than 8in. crayfish are illegal tender).

The expert meets the feelers and gropes his way down towards the head or base of the feelers. If possible it is advisable to obtain a strong grip on the hard shell which forms the cray's back. Remember, this action is taking place under-water—sometimes deep water, and you have to move and think fast. A crayfish is sometimes as hard as a paw shell to move from a rock surface, and often he retires the winner of a willing tug-of-war.

Now and again crayfishers meet veterans of previous struggles minus feelers and sometimes claws—cases have been known where these maimed and stubborn wayfarers have proved the victors.

It May be Dangerous . . .

In deep water—that is, from the neck up, you have to keep a watch on your personal safety. Although cases of accidents are few and far between, many incidents of lucky escapes have been recorded. Large conger eels have been seen flashing their white bellies within a few feet of enthusiastic hunters; the octopus is an ever-present enemy, although these are usually small, but nevertheless ugly customers to meet when you are expecting crayfish. A touch on the arm is sufficient to send you dashing for shore willing to leave any number of crayfish which may be in the neighbourhood. Small octopuses have been known to follow crayfishers in shore, even darting round and round rocks where refuge has been claimed.

. . . But Don't be Frightened

But this is not intended to frighten. Crayfishing is a splendid sport and well worth trying this summer. If you are frightened of seaweed pools try rods—you'll get them if you choose the right hunting grounds.

And remember—20 minutes in boiling sea water makes them delicious!

BOXING NOTES

Rayner on Top + Alabama Kid Can Punch + Hanham Was Bold

IMPORTATIONS usually find our boxers not quite up to their own mark. For a time it seemed that Herman Gildo was just too good for the best light-weight we had. Clarrie Rayner has exploded this myth. Since the Filipino has been in the Dominion the Blenheim rep. has defeated him twice and secured a draw. This performance must place Rayner in the front rank of the light-weights.

If his failure to obtain contests in New Zealand when he arrived here about two months ago suggested that the Alabama Kid was considered something of a spent force, his appearance in Auckland against Les Brander dispelled the idea. The American negro is perhaps the most vicious puncher ever seen in the Dominion.

His terrific uppercut, which caught Brander under the jaw half way through the first round, lifted his 12 stone 11 lbs. about two feet off the canvas and

put him on his back. The referee counted Brander out but it was unnecessary. The big fellow, who was nine pounds heavier than the Alabama Kid, had to be carried to his corner and later assisted from the ring.

In challenging the winner, Cliff Hanham of Waimate showed considerable temerity. It is to be hoped for the New Zealander's sake that nothing comes of the challenge. Hanham would be giving the negro weight and his most ardent supporters could not imagine his winning.

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In Palmerston North there are some very keen boxing enthusiasts; among them D. Armstrong (secretary) and E. Wimsett (president). It is a tribute to their efforts that every tournament staged during the last two years has drawn a crowd and pleased it, too. The recent bouts between Hutchinson and Caltax, and Gildo and Rayner, have done much to popularise boxing in the district.

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Since the transfer of referee Dick Meale to Wellington, Auckland has been minus one of its most efficient third men. However, for the big bout recently Mr. Joplin acted and he showed himself quite at home inside the ropes.

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