XII.—SUPPLEMENTARY TESTIMONY AND INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THE CONDITION OF THE FISHERIES OF THE SOUTH SIDE OF NEW ENGLAND, TAKEN IN 1872.

A delay in the printing of the present report renders it possible to bring the inquiry into the fisheries of the south side of New England through the season of 1872, for which purpose I revisited Wood's Hole and Newport, in October, and sent Mr. Vinal N. Edwards, my able assistant at Wood's Hole, to Hyannis, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard, with a similar object. The following memoranda, obtained by myself and Mr. Edwards, will be found to contain some important statements:

NOTES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER.

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, *October* 10, 1872.

Mr. T. LEE, fish-dealer, said that fish were more plenty in Newport this year than last. Scup, weighing from one-fourth of a pound to a pound, were very plenty.

Bass have not been quite as plenty as last year, but they were quite plenty last year.

Spanish mackerel have been more plenty, and squeteague very plenty. Spanish mackerel have been as low as 15 cents a pound; they were never less than 50 or 75 cents a pound before; they were almost as common as blue-fish at one time.

Bonito have been abundant this year.

Several ceros have been caught here. I bought one for 5 cents a pound and sold it for 8; and the man who bought it of me sold the fish for $12.

Mr. CURRY, a fish-dealer, said fish generally had been tolerably plenty this year. Blue-fish are plenty, but we do not get many sea-bass this fall. Squeteague, bonito, and Spanish mackerel have been more plenty than usual.

Scup are plenty, some of fair size, weighing about half a pound. There were very few of the small-sized scup this year corresponding to those here last year.

Sheepshead have been about as plenty as usual.

No regular mackerel have been caught off the coast.

Several salmon were caught in Saughkonet River, and shad were plenty over at Second Beach, and several were taken in other places.

SAMUEL ALBRO, a fish-dealer, considered fish as plenty as they were last year. He gave the catch of one fisherman, George Crabb, from which the following amounts are taken, as caught with hook and line:

July 11	100 pounds tautog.
Another day	154 pounds tautog.

Another day ..... 198 pounds tautog.
Another day ..... 175 pounds tautog.
Another day ..... 128 pounds tautog.
Another day ..... 162 pounds tautog

From the account of fishing by WILLIAM RECORD, it appears that he took in a pound, on different days, 80, 120, 211, 272, and 310 pounds. August 1, 121 pounds; 5, 35 pounds blue-fish; 7th, 54; 8th, 33; 9th, 133; 13th, 9; 14th, 48; 15th, 138; 16th, 19; 19th, 185; 26th, 21; 27th, 31; 28th, 519, 29th, 48. September 2, 28; 3d, 54; 6th, 27; 9th, 116; 11th, 17; 12th, 37; 14th, 135; 22d, 14. October 1, 51.

Blue-fish are bought of the fishermen for 5 cents a pound. George Crabb averaged 100 pounds a day. In the month of June, last year, he caught 1,109 pounds of tautog.

Mr. J. M. K. SOUTHWICK, a dealer in fishing-tackle, nets, &c., said that small scup had been observed almost every fall about Saughkonet River. A gentleman of Tiverton remembered that many years ago there was precisely such a run of small scup as last year. The hook-and-line fishing is now connected with lobstering, and the lobsters are the most important part to that class of fishermen.

EDWARD M. GLADDING, pilot and fisherman, said line-fishing had not been much attended to this year. He had tried all summer, and could not catch many. It is much poorer fishing than it was last summer; as much worse as you can think. You cannot catch a mess in all day. Tautog'ing has been good for nothing this summer. He had not caught any blue-fish this summer. He had fished more or less for fifty years. No man ever saw the fish so scarce as they are now. He had not caught more than four scup this summer. Two-thirds of the fishermen with set-seines have not made anything; but thousands of fish have been carried to New York and thrown overboard. The heart-seines are death on fish; they catch anything and everything. The West Bay trap never caught more than this season; fish were plenty in the spring, and then they caught them. One trap caught 1,500 pounds in one day. The first fish of the season are tautog. Fifty years ago sea-bass were plenty about the Vineyard, and he used to fish there; but no sea-bass are caught there now. We used to get some nights over one hundred big bass, and sell them at New Bedford.

SAMUEL SOUTHWICK was a trapper three years ago, at Coddington Cove, and had seined more or less for forty years. Used to catch scup, menhaden, alewives, and pretty much all kinds of fish. Large scup are now scarce, but other fish are about as plenty as they have been. Last spring more tautog were taken at one haul than he ever took at two in the same place. Twenty years ago the market for fish was better than now. We did not formerly catch Spanish mackerel. He once caught two near Brinton's Reef, which he sold for a dollar apiece, but did not know what they were.

Bulls-eye mackerel were very plenty here fifteen years ago and more. They were considered better than ordinary mackerel. They were fat and small. When found now they are with the small mackerel.

Squeteague first appeared about twenty years ago; and they grew more and more plenty. About thirty-five years ago the people did not know what blue-fish were. One night he got 200 and put them on the wharf, and nobody would carry them off.

Mr. WILLIAM CHAMPLIN had a number of tinker-mackerel, which he had just caught. He thought they belonged to a different race from the round mackerel. He thought the fishing this summer as good as it was last summer. Lobstering has been better; there are as many lobsters now as there were fifteen years ago. They weigh only about two pounds each.

The tinker-mackerel are worth about fifteen cents a dozen.

P. B. HUDDY said the stripes on the bulls-eye mackerel are more green than on the common mackerel. There have been about the same number of fish caught with the hook and line this summer as last.

Codfish come in at Christmas time and stay till May. Never saw menhaden here in the winter. Mr. Tallman once caught 1,600 barrels on the 3d of December.

English herring come in here in the fall and stay all winter; never noticed any spawn in them. Scup have not been so plenty for four years as they have been this summer.

MARTIN GLADDING has a heart-seine in West Bay. Had found squeteague and scup more plenty this year than for ten years past. The scup are large enough to market, and send to New York every day. They correspond to the so-called second run of scup. Never knew the big scup to stop here in the spring. He thinks the second run of scup spawn. Never saw any spawn run from them.

Blue-fish have not been as plenty as common this season.

Tautog are caught, weighing from one to ten pounds; but the small ones have spawn running from them. They will bite as well when spawning as at any time. They spawn in July.

Got a great many shad this season, and alewives. The shad were caught in May.

Catches squeteague now altogether, and will take them all this month. He gets from four to eight hundred pounds a day. They are much more plenty than last year. He caught so many he could not sell them, and let them go.

The scup that used to be caught years ago were about the size of those taken this year. There was this year a large run of scup so small that they would go right through the meshes; were about an inch and a half long; and there were those of different sizes, up to a pound, all mixed together. There were not so many small ones this year as last; but hundreds of barrels were turned right out of the seine at a time.

Fall before last tautog were very plenty.

Governor STEVENS.—Fish of all kinds, generally speaking, have been more plenty this year than usual. Blue-fish have not been so plenty as sometimes; about the same as last year. Spanish mackerel more plenty. Never saw anything like the number of shad on the coast. They were moving east. They were caught all through this region, and so plenty they could not be sold in New York.

The Spanish mackerel did not last a great while. The scup that were caught were large enough to market. The large ones came a little in advance. The small ones are here now. Occasionally some of the large ones were mixed in with the small. They were more than twice as large as the run of small scup that came last year. I saw this year two days' catch of the largest scup I ever saw; some of them would weigh four pounds. That was about the first of the run. The fish they used to talk about as being so plenty were just like the run

of scup we are getting now. The fish they used to catch weighed three-quarters of a pound to one pound.

We get full-sized English herring here; they are taken in gill-nets. I never saw any spawn about them. They used to catch them here in the winter. They are not plenty.

I got boneto plenty this year; sometimes got one hundred at a time. They brought about six cents a pound in New York. They are not worth as much in New York as blue-fish. I got a good many cero.

WOOD'S HOLE, MASSACHUSETTS, *October* 9, 1872.

Captain THOMAS HINCKLEY, who has a pound at West Falmouth, and whose testimony, taken in 1871, is printed on page 59, stated that all fish had become unusually scarce in 1872, with the exception of alewives, menhaden, and dog-fish, (*Acanthias americanus.*) Alewives and menhaden were in such abundance that it was impossible to dispose of them; especially as the fishing smacks which formerly came in for bait for mackerel are now in the habit of securing their own supply by means of nets that they carry with them. Blue-fish are scarcely one-fourth as numerous as last year, and are of very small size, this scarcity perhaps having some relation to the abundance of herring. Squeteague, too, are considerably more scarce; so much so that both they and blue-fish for a fortnight brought 10 cents a pound at wholesale, an unusually high price.

The small scup, so abundant in the summer of 1871, made their appearance as one year older, and were caught readily on the proper grounds. These averaged 5½ ounces each, or nearly double the weight of last year. There were, however, few or no scup corresponding in size to the small ones of the year before. Uninterrupted fishing by the children from the wharves, in the summer of 1872, failed to make any captures. [From this it would appear that the astonishing supply of young scup in 1871 was rather sporadic in its character, and that, from whatever cause it proceeded, the same conditions did not prevail this season. Where these fish actually came from, it is extremely difficult to say; whether an unusually large number of the breeding-scup succeeded in evading their enemies in 1870, or whether fish bred in more southern waters appeared on the coast in 1871, and moved in a body northward, covering the ground where they did not originally belong.

In reference to the young scup of 1871, some light may possibly be thrown upon the subject by the statement of Thomas James, the proprietor of two heart-seines in Narragansett Bay, that late in the fall of 1870 he was astonished at finding in his nets immense numbers of young scup, evidently spawned during that summer. These would represent, of course, the three-ounce scup found in the summer of 1871, and the six-ounce scup of 1872.

The scup of 1872 correspond to what are usually called the "second run" of scup, and were caught in sufficient quantity to market, being sent to New York in large numbers. Should nothing interfere with them, these fish will probably make their appearance in 1873 as spawning fish. Whether they will be permitted to deposit their eggs in peace, and thus keep up the supply, will depend probably upon the question whether the close time recommended is adopted.

While there did not appear to be any new pounds or traps erected in Narragansett Bay during 1872, many additions were made to the num-

ber in Buzzard's Bay and Vineyard Sound. Thus, four new ones were established in Menemsha Bight, one in Lombard's Cove, and one at Paintville, on the north side of Martha's Vineyard, two or more in Kettle Cove, on the north side of Naushon, and one about the middle of the north side of Nashawena, making nine in addition to the number which were there before. The result has been that, with the increasing scarcity of fish in these waters, scarcely one of them has made a sufficient profit to pay for the outlay and labor, and it is therefore probable that, with or without regulation, a smaller number will be hereafter established. Captain Hinckley thinks that the future of pound-fishing is closely connected with its regulation, and, as a representative of that class, is quite willing to accept any law that promises to secure a continuance of the business. He advises, as the best method of preventing the capture of fish, that the opening to the bowl of the pound be completely closed, and that the entire netting of one side of the heart be taken from the stakes. In his opinion, neither the removal nor the replacing of the net will require more than fifteen minutes to half an hour in each operation.—S. F. B.]

NEW YORK, *October* 15, 1872.

Messrs. MIDDLETON, CARMAN & CO., fish-dealers, state that the supply of fish in the New York market has been full up to that of last year.

Striped-bass have not been quite so plenty. Squeteague of medium size have been quite plenty, and at one time large ones, from Vineyard Sound, were plenty.

Blue-fish are obtained principally for the New York market, off Rockaway and the New Jersey shore, and as far south as Norfolk.

The price of blue-fish and squeteague has been about the same—from four to eight dollars per hundred pounds, at retail.

There were a good many scup off the Jersey shore. There have not been so many brought from Narragansett Bay as in former years. A great many very small scup have been brought from that direction, so small that three or four would weigh only a pound.

Sea-bass have not been quite as plenty as formerly, though many small ones have been taken off New Jersey.

Prices have averaged a little less for fish this year than last.

Spanish mackerel have been quite plenty at one time, for a few days, and then they were off again. There are no pounds in this vicinity.

Mr. E. G. BLACKFORD, a fish-dealer, said pound-fish were not as plenty as last year.

ROGERS & EDWARDS, wholesale dealers, said there had been more than the usual quantity of some kinds of fish, a good supply of large-sized squeteague. The larger ones came from Buzzard's Bay and Vineyard Sound. Blue-fish have not been as plenty as last year. They are mostly caught in this vicinity, and some from Block Island and Sandy Hook.

There have been a great many small scup brought in, more than could be sold. Large ones have not been as plenty as before. The small ones come from Narragansett Bay, principally. Something should be done to prevent the taking of the small scup; it would be an advantage to the trade. There have been few large scup this season. Bonito have come in from Block Island, Newport, and down the Sound.

REPORT OF VINAL N. EDWARDS.

NANTUCKET.

Professor S. F. Baird:

DEAR SIR: I went to Nantucket Tuesday. When I arrived there the net-men got together and agreed to tell the same story, that the fish were more plenty than last year. I heard this from net-men who did not agree with them. The report of the net-men was the same as that of Gershom Phinney and C. E. Snow. But all the others, hook and line fishermen and seine-net men say that fish are growing less every year, and think that nets are using the fish up. A large number of fishermen say that the blue-fish came into harbor to spawn every year, until this year, when there were so many nets that no fish got into the harbor. They begin to catch blue-fish by the middle of May.

I have seen a large number of the younger fishermen of Nantucket, all of whom tell the same story that fish are growing less every year.

Two of the net-men whom you examined last year were absent, and have been gone fishing all summer. Gershom Phinney and C. E. Snow say they had the same number of nets as last year, but other fishermen say they had double the number this year that they had last. The testimony given, is as follows:

GERSHOM PHINNEY, C. E. SNOW.—Think blue-fish have been plenty. They, together, caught in their nets in 1871, 5,500 blue-fish. In 1872, 7,518 blue-fish. They ran two weeks longer this year than in 1871.*

Captain C. B. GARDNER and Captain BATES fished together throughout the season. They report:

In 1870, caught 4,000 blue-fish.
In 1871, caught 3,350 blue-fish.
In 1872, caught 3,495 blue-fish.

They fished more than two weeks longer this year than for a number of years before. They fished on the south side; could get none on the north side.

WATSON BURGESS, a line-fisherman, says there were not half as many blue-fish on the north side this year as the last; that there were twice as many nets on the north side, but did not get as many fish as last year. A line-fisherman could not get one-fourth as many blue-fish this year as the last, in the same time. He went off a number of times and did not get a bite; did not get a large scup; little ones were plenty. Cod and alewives were more plenty.

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* Professor N. S. Shaler, during a recent visit to Nantucket, was informed by C. E. Snow that with the same means and labor as many blue-fish could be caught in 1872 as last year; thinks if there had been no more fishermen than last year, should have caught three times as many. The fish are larger on the whole than last year. There are three different sizes observable. The largest size includes about one-fourth the whole number of fish, and averages in weight about nine pounds. The next size weigh about five pounds, and includes about half the fish. The smallest size weighs about three pounds, and takes the remaining fourth. Some have been caught weighing from twelve to twenty pounds. Since the 7th of September blue-fish have been more abundant than ever before. Scup were plentier than at any time during the last ten years; they were smaller but in good condition. There had been a decided gain in the number of cod-fish; they are larger than last year. Weak-fish were about twice as numerous as last year. Spanish mackerel has not gained in numbers. Alewives were more abundant.

JOHN ORPINS, a line-fisherman, has been fishing for thirty years and never knew fish so scarce as at present. Every year they grow less and less.

Captain WINSLOW, a line-fisherman, has not caught half as many fish this year as last. The nets were so thick that the blue-fish did not get by. None got into the harbor to spawn. Formerly large numbers have spawned in the harbor. He had been off a number of times, and found none; never knew such a thing before. There have been no large scup this year, but plenty of small ones.

Captain G. DUNHAM, E. DUNHAM, and C. DUNHAM, line-fishermen say: We did not catch any large scup this season; there were plenty of little ones at Long Hill. We could get but very few blue-fish on the north side, and had to go to the south shore for them. They were not as plenty as in past years on the south shore. We had to go to Great Point for blue-fish; could catch 25,000 to 35,000 fish in a season formerly; but last year could not catch any fish. Since the fish-pounds have been set, we can get scarcely any fish.

DAVID ANDREWS, a line-fisherman, thinks there have not been more than half as many blue-fish on the north side as last year; they have been becoming scarcer every year for four or five years. There were not so many on the south side as last year; and though the weather was better and the season longer, he did not get as many fish. He did not catch a large scup this summer; little ones were plenty at Long Hill, but few in the harbor. He went fishing several times for blue-fish on the north side, but did not get a bite; never did it before in his life.

David Andrews is regarded in Nantucket as an entirely truthful man.

SYLVANUS ANDREWS, a line-fisherman, had been off fishing several times on the north side of the island, and did not get a bite; never knew such an occurrence before. The nets took all on the north side, so that he could not catch any. The nets did not get as many as last year, the fish having been growing scarcer for eight or ten years. He did not catch a large scup this season, but got a large number of small ones.

J. G. ORPINS, line-fisherman, went blue-fishing part of the season on the south side; the fish were not so plenty as last year. On the north side the nets stopped all hook-fishing.

WILLIAM WOOD, line-fisherman, had been fishing many years; never saw so few fish as this year; on the north side there was no line-fishing; the nets took all or kept them off. Fish were not so plenty on the north side as last year.

CHARLES GARDNER, a line-fisherman, said blue-fish were so scarce on the north side of the island he did not fish for them; caught a large number of small scup. For the last few years blue-fish and scup grow less and less.

MOSES BEATMAN, a net-fisherman, said that in 1871 he caught some large scup; but this year caught but four large scup; plenty of little ones at Long Hill. No blue-fish in the harbor, as in former times; very few on the north side; none to be caught with the hook and line; the nets did not do as well as last year.

Very few of the fishermen keep any account of their catch. At the custom-house an account was kept of the number of pounds of blue-fish caught at the island. The report is as follows:

1871, from April 1 to June 30, 75,000 pounds.

1871, from June 30 to September 30, 149,000 pounds.
1872, from April 1 to June 30, 55,000 pounds.
1872, from June 30 to September 30, 139,250 pounds.

WOOD'S HOLE, *November* 9, 1872.

EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

I have just returned from Edgartown, and have seen the fishermen. Captain Francis Pease is dead; died last September. I saw the rest of the men, besides other fishermen. The record of Captain JOSIAH PEASE is as follows:

		Number of blue-fish.
1871,	June	1,021
	July	1,471
	August	1,600
	September	1,101
	October, to 17	1,014
	Total	6,207
	Sea-bass during the year	312

		Number of blue-fish.
1872,	June	1,616
	July	1,005
	August	937
	September	976
	October, to 13	174
	Total	4,708
	Sea-bass during the year	17

Captain Pease says he fished nearly double the time this year that he did in 1871; had very good fish-weather this season; better than usual. He had been accustomed to go into the harbor and catch blue-fish; but there were none there this year, and he had to go outside for them.

Little scup were plenty early in the season, but none in the latter part. No large scup and no tautog were caught by him. Captain Pease keeps an account of his catch every season.

Captain RUFUS PEASE did not keep an account, but knew that not more than two-thirds as many fish had been caught as last year, by all the fishermen in Edgartown. All kinds of fish have been very scarce. He thinks that if the decrease continues for three or four years, there will be none to be caught with hook and line.

Captain GEORGE COFFIN thought fish had fallen off one-fourth since last year, and nearly one-half since the year before. The blue-fish had always come into the harbor to spawn, but this year the nets took them, and none got in to spawn. Five years ago he could go down the harbor, and in three or four hours could catch three hundred blue-fish. This year he could not catch any. Other fish have decreased in the same manner.

Dr. Fisher, Seth Marchant, and W. Huckford, of Edgartown, all confirmed the statements of others as to the condition of the fishing.

At Holmes's Hole (Vineyard Haven) they caught twenty-three English herring on the 12th of November, but they had no spawn in them. The fishermen say that those that come later have spawn in them.

There have been no whiting yet, but plenty of frost-fish, with spawn in them.

No menhaden or tinker-mackerel were caught later than the 15th of October, and there were no menhaden caught with spawn in them in the neighborhood of Wood's Hole.

WOOD'S HOLE, *Massachusetts, November* 10.

HYANNIS, MASSACHUSETTS.

I have been to Hyannis and got the report of the fishermen, though not much of an account has been kept by them this year. Hatzel Handy has only kept an account of the number of barrels—160 pounds to the barrel. I saw a large number of men, but they say they keep no account; though they say they have not caught more than two-thirds, and some say one-half, as many as last year.

ALEXANDER CROWELL, a line-fisherman, in 1871 caught 8,000 pounds of scup, sea-bass, and blue-fish; in 1872 he caught 5,000 pounds only of the same kinds of fish. He says there were but few large scup, and about half as many sea-bass as last year; that there were but few blue-fish caught with the hook; the nets took nearly all that were taken.

ALMORAN HALLETT, line-fisherman, had no account for 1871; in 1872 he caught, according to his best judgment, 6,000 pounds. Has never known fish to be as scarce as this year.

HATZEL HANDY, a shipper or dealer, received, as shown by his books, the following fish in 1872:

	Barrels.
May, mackerel and scup	124
June, sea-bass, scup, and blue-fish	238
July, blue-fish	106
August, blue-fish	65
September, blue-fish	56
October, blue-fish	54
Total	643

He says he kept a strict account of the number of barrels. He had a larger number of nets this year, and that if it were not for the net-fishing he could not have done anything this year, the hook and line men have done so poorly. In May and part of June the fish were caught in nets and pounds. Blue-fish were caught until the 15th of October. Very many of the scup taken were small.

TIMOTHY CROCKER, a dealer, received in 1871, scup and sea-bass, 250 barrels; blue-fish, 400 barrels; in 1872, scup and sea-bass, 200 barrels; blue-fish, 300 barrels.

He had more net-men fishing this year than last. The hook-men did about one-half or two thirds as well as last year. The scup were generally small.

JOSEPH LORING, a dealer, received, this year, sea-bass and scup, 208 barrels; and of blue-fish, 305 barrels.

He had more nets than last year, and the same number of hook-men, (25.) The hook-men did about two-thirds as well as last year. Very many of the fish taken were small scup. No tautog. Blue-fish were taken till October 14. Says the whole number of his twenty-five men will state that they got about two-thirds as many fish as last year.

While coming up in the cars this morning from Hyannis, I met Arnold Luce, of Jeremiah Luce's fish-pound at Lambert's Cove. He says his father did not do more than half as well as last year. He said he had himself been connected with the fish-pound three years, but sunk money this year. He said that he caught two of those large bill-fish and two saw-tail sharks, (by his description;) that the tail was longer than that of the switch-tail shark.

WOOD'S HOLE, *November* 12, 1872.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD.

I have been to Menemsha and to Lambert's Cove, and saw all the fishermen that are at home. Some are not willing to give an account of what they catch, but say they did not get as much as last year. The Paint-Mill fish-pound men were all away, but the owners say they did not do half as well as last year. There was no run of scup, sea-bass, or tautog. Of blue-fish, they caught about one-fourth as many as last year.

B. TILTON, of the Menemsha Luce pound, said that they did not catch one-half as many scup and sea-bass and tautog as last year; of blue-fish, about half as many. Squid were more plenty; bait very plenty.

HIRAM POOL and LEMUEL REED, of Menemsha, net-men, of Prince Stewart's pound, said that they did a little better on scup this year than last. Their leader was twice as long as last year.

Of tautog and sea-bass they did not take one-fourth as many as last year, nor of blue-fish in the same length of time. They kept their pound down a good deal longer this year. Striped-bass were quite plenty in October. The 1st day of November, the day they took up the pound, they caught blue-fish, striped-bass, squeteague, cod-fish, and shad.

E. FLANDERS, of Menemsha, a net-fisherman, said he never saw fish so scarce since he had lived there as this year. He always could catch plenty of scup, sea-bass, and tautog there with hook and line; but could not catch any this year. Five years ago there were plenty of scup at Menemsha Pond, but none this year. He tended a fish-pound this season, and never knew fish so scarce. There were no blue-fish to be caught with the hook, and very few in the pounds. Squid quite plenty; very few mackerel this year. WILBUR FLANDERS, of the same fish-pound, confirmed the statement made by E. Flanders.

LAMBERT'S COVE.

SETH LUCE and JEREMIAH LUCE, net-men, said they did not keep any account of fish, but knew they did not catch more than one-half as

many blue-fish as last year; of scup, sea-bass, and tautog not more than one-fourth as many. Menhaden and squid were about the same. Did not get more than one-tenth as many mackerel as last year.

VERNAL CLIFFORD, net-man, set his pound for the first time this year, but did not do anything; did not get any run of tautog, sea-bass, or scup. Blue-fish were very scarce; some squid; very few mackerel. Plenty of fish were formerly taken here with hook and line, but this year none could be caught.

E. COTTLE said there were very few scup; no tautog; very few sea-bass and mackerel last season; about half as many blue-fish as last year. Squeteague and small scup quite plenty.

THOMAS NORTON, net-man, did not do much this year. The net was taken up early in the season. There was no run of scup, sea-bass, or tautog, and the business did not pay, and he was compelled to take up the pound. They could not catch any fish with hook and line.

JOHN LOAK kept no account this year, but did not do much. Blue fish were very scarce this year. Tautog, sea-bass, and scup were very few. Squeteague were plenty. No run of mackerel.

VINEYARD HAVEN.

B. D. CROWELL, overseer of herring fishery, had had charge of the herring fishery six years. When he first took the river he caught 800,000 to 1,000,000 in a season; but every year since the fish-pounds were set at Lambert's Cove the herring have been growing less. Last year he caught only 108,000. The scarcity is the same in all the rivers on the island.

B. CROMWELL, net-man, said blue-fish were very scarce there last season. Four years ago plenty of large scup could be taken in the immediate neighborhood, but they could get none this year. Very few sea-bass or tautog had been caught.

P. S.—I saw some of the fishermen in New Bedford yesterday, (November 26.) They say the tautog were very scarce at the mouth of the bay this fall. At Wood's Hole we obtained none after the 25th of October; all were very small.

A few blue-fish were taken at Noman's Land, on the 2d of November, with hook and line, while fishing for cod. English herring (*Clupea elongata*) have been very plenty there lately. Some of those taken were full of spawn.

VINAL N. EDWARDS.

WOOD'S HOLE, *November* 25, 1872.

ADDITIONAL NOTES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER.

WOOD'S HOLE, *October* 8, 1872.

Captain J. B. EDWARDS says there has been a falling off of all kinds of fish this year as compared with last year, except herring, or alewives. They were more abundant in the spring than they had been for twenty years.

Blue-fish have not been caught anywhere in the sound as much as last year; and at Hyannis it has been the same. They have not caught as many this year as last.

Tautog fell off half in the early part of the season, and there have not been anything like as many caught this year as last.

English herring do not come here much in the spring, but in the fall they are taken for bait in gill-nets. November appears to be their running month.

The small scup, of the size that were plenty last year, have been quite scarce this year. A man can catch forty or possibly one hundred in a day on the best grounds here; but before we had pounds I could catch boat-loads in a day.

The pounds at Waquoit did not do much this year, but at the pounds below Falmouth they caught a great many herring. The alewives have been much more plenty than usual this season. I think Captain Spindel got five hundred and sixty Spanish mackerel at one time, and they got three hundred at Menemsha at the same time. Cod were much more plenty in the bay formerly than now.

Captain ISAIAH SPINDEL took up his pound last week, Tuesday, October 1. It did not pay as much this year as last, as there was no market for the menhaden. He had seen menhaden with spawn in them, not ripe, late in the spring. There is no spawn in them now, and they must have spawned some time since last spring. Menhaden are as large and fat in October as at any time.

We take a few English herring in the spring, possibly a thousand; they are what we call "blue-backs;" they come about the 10th or 12th of May. I have seen schools of the same fish in the bay, and have caught them in a purse-net in the spring. They come a little before the menhaden, among the early fish. We never catch any in the fall in pounds, though they are frequently taken in gill-nets.

The fishing was later this year than last. We got 35 barrels of scup about the 30th of May, very large, some weighing 4 pounds.

We did not get as many fish generally as last year; about as many tautog, not so many sea-bass nor scup; blue-fish, about one-fourth as many; squeteague, not one-fourth as many. We got eight hundred more Spanish mackerel than last year. The price of these averaged 20 cents a pound. We got five porpoises and many pilot-fish. We got twice as many ceros as last year, some of which weighed 23 pounds. We got 12½ cents a pound for them. The price for fish generally was about the same this year as last, though not quite so good for mackerel. They are always poor in the spring.

The blue-fish we got this year were small, averaging 2½ to 3 pounds, though we got a few that weighed 10 to 12 pounds.

I was on the coast of North Carolina last winter, and they said they got mackerel about the 20th of March. The run of mackerel that come inside of Massachusetts Bay are much larger than those outside. They do not bite, but are taken in seines and gill-nets. They weigh 3 pounds, many of them; are very fat, and a splendid fish. They are sold fresh.

They are the mackerel that are poor in the spring. They get them in Massachusetts Bay in January.

The small scup that were here last year now weigh not far short of half a pound; but there are not so many small ones, though I have some very small.

VINAL N. EDWARDS did not meet with many small scup like those seen a year ago, but there are many half-pound scup. He had not seen any mullet this season. There are many young menhaden. As he caught tautog with the hook, about the 1st of July, he had seen the spawn running out. The eggs are about the size of No. 3 shot. A part of the eggs seem to ripen at a time. The Quisset men told me they had not done half as well this year as last. Peter Davis, of Noank, who fished on Naushon, said he had not done half as well.

I did not find any menhaden with ripe spawn in them this summer, and I examined them carefully. I caught some last Saturday, but they had no spawn in them. We never see any young menhaden till July or August. I have caught them not more than an inch or an inch and a quarter long.

NEW BEDFORD, *October* 9, 1872.

Mr. CLARKE, fish-dealer, of the firm of Clarke & Bartlett, says blue-fish are as plenty in market this year as they were last, even if scarcer in the sound.

Scup have not been very plenty here. Ten years ago a man could load a boat with scup, here in the bay, in a day.

Fish, generally, are growing more and more scarce every year; and we can see a positive difference in the numbers between this year and last. The scarcity has been increasing for five years. The little scup that were here last year are not so plenty this year.

In this vicinity tautog are about run out; they are not worth fishing for.

The smacks are about killed off; they used to get a load in two weeks, but now they cannot get half a load in three weeks. We depend on traps mostly for fish. In the spring they catch the large tautog and glut the market with them, and after that they have to throw them away.

The regular retail price for tautog is 10 cents a pound. Cod retail at 8 cents, and scup about 8 cents, dressed.

We have had blue-fish in market all the time this season.

I think it would be better for the fishermen and all concerned if there were no traps in the world. As long as they can, the trappers will hire men to go before committees of the legislature and swear that fish grow more plenty all the time. The trap-men make all the money, while the smack-men make nothing all summer. I know two smack-men who have not made enough all summer to pay for their bread and butter, and they tried hard, too. There have been no large scup for about four years. Many poor families in this city suffer for the want of bread in consequence of the traps.

We got some pompanos this summer, for which we got 25 cents a pound. They came here last year, first, of any account.

Mr. WILLIAM A. BASSETT, a dealer in fish, says small scup are more plenty this year than last, (evidently referring to scup that weigh about 5 ounces.)

I think blue-fish have been as plenty as last year, but they are generally small, weighing 2½ to 3 pounds.

They do not get as many squeteague on the Vineyard shore as last year, though small squeteague have been rather plenty this year. We get a few pompanos. Tautog are rather scarce.

English herring are brought here from about Noman's Land. They are about half as large as the alewives that we get in the spring. They are caught about the last of October.

Menhaden have been very plenty this year. There have been very few boats fishing in our harbor this year. Our common alewives were never more plenty than this spring; we could not sell them, they were so plenty; they could be bought for 25 cents a barrel. The Vineyard fishermen turned out a great many, because they could not sell them.

In Clarke's Cove the pound-men did pretty well, as the herring helped them out in the spring. There are seven pounds between this city and Mishaum Point.

Six of the small scup in the shop were weighed, amounting to 2 pounds and 1 ounce, or an average of a little over 5 ounces each.

Dates when the fish were first brought in.

Herring, April 3, from Westport. In 1870, from Edgartown, six hundred herring, April 1. *Tautog*, April 17, from North Tisbury, and one shad. *Mackerel*, about 2d of May. *Striped bass*, May 4, from the Vineyard. *Scup*, May 7. *Blue-fish*, about June 1; most plenty from 10th to 14th of June.

Mr. BASSETT said he had no doubt that the pounds had caused the decrease in the fish.

Mr. PRESBREY LUCE, of Martha's Vineyard, says he has a pound on the north side of the Vineyard, at Paintville. Scup were quite plenty there this year and last; he got 50 barrels at one time.

Blue-fish were more scarce about the Vineyard this year than last. The business of pound-fishing there has been overdone, and the pounds generally there have not done as well this year as the last. Mr. Luce thought the proposition in regard to a close time, as proposed in the bill prepared last year, a fair one, and did not think there would be any material opposition to such a law.