

CENTRAL FILE

The Recreational Fishery for Pollock (Pollachius virens)
in Southern New England and the Middle Atlantic

by

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The recreational pollock fishery in southern New England and the Middle Atlantic can best be described as poorly defined, highly specialized and non directed. Landings of pollock from New York south in 1970 were so low that they were not listed in the results of the 1970 saltwater angling survey (Deuel, 1973). A survey of marine recreational fishing in the northeastern United States conducted in 1974 failed to locate enough successful pollock fishermen to enable estimates of landings to be made for any states south of Massachusetts (Deuel, pers. comm., September 1976). In a survey of catches made at Montauk, New York in August and September 1977 (Christensen et al., 1978), pollock catches were found to average 14% by number of the cod catch. The mean catch was only 0.2 pollock per fishermen per trip based on interviews of party-boat fishermen making trips specifically for Atlantic cod and pollock.

Pollock catches in southern New England (i.e. eastern Long Island, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island) are usually made by party-boats that are actively pursuing Atlantic cod in the general vicinity of Block Island. Table 1, a synopsis of the catches made by party-boats based on printed reports in the Long Island Fishermen during 1979, give one some idea as to catch, seasonality and abundance; however, these data cannot be considered quantitative by any means.

Table 2 give data similar to those mentioned above based on reports in the Fishermen during 1979, for catches made in the Middle Atlantic Bight. Pollock catches in the Middle Atlantic are usually the product

of what are termed "offshore" trips. The trips are, for the most part, made on an irregular basis by perhaps 10 to 15 of the larger (85-140 feet) party-boats which sail out of western Long Island, New York and New Jersey ports. These "by reservation only" trips fish wrecks and other obstructions from 25 to 90 miles out on the continental shelf for periods of one to three days. At various times of the year, some "offshore" trips will combine, in varying proportions, wreck, pelagic and open bottom fishing for Atlantic cod and pollock, tunas and sharks and tilefish, respectively. Table 3A and 3B give pollock biological data for two "offshore" trips made during 1976.

In addition, there is an occasional fishery for small (harbor) pollock in some areas during years when they sporadically occur in relatively large numbers throughout the two areas. The ongoing national survey is anticipated to provide new data on pollock as well as other species in the near future.

REFERENCES

Christensen, D., M. Martino and S. Turner.

1978. Catches of Atlantic cod, Gadus morhua, and other species by party and charter boat anglers at Montauk, N. Y. in August and September, 1977. U. S. Dept. Comm., NOAA, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Center, Report No. SHL 78-50.

Deuel, D. G.

1973. The 1970 saltwater angling survey. U. S. Dept. Comm., NOAA, NMFS, Curr. Fish. Stat. no. 6200.

Table 1. Long Island 1979 pollock fishing summary.

Month	Port	Area Fished	Catch and Comments	
March	Montauk	Cartwright	-5 fish up to 20 lbs	
April	Montauk	Cartwright Block I.	-1 fish no wt -"few"	
		Cartwright Block I. Block I.	-"several" up to 20 lbs -2 fish approx. 20 lbs (120' of water) -1 fish "large"	
May	Montauk	Block I.	-12 fish at 28 to 30 lbs	
		S.W. ledge 20 min E.	-4 fish up to 35 lbs -1 fish at 30 lbs	
		20 min E. Wreck at S. side of Montauk	-1 fish no wt -15 fish at 15 to 20 lbs	
		Wreck at S. side of Montauk	-1 fish no wt	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-3 fish no wt	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-2 fish "large"	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-20 fish up to 55 lbs	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-18 fish from 20 to 31 lbs	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-25 fish from 25 to 35 lbs (trolling umbrellas)	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-18 fish no wt	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-5 fish from 4 to 51 lbs	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-9 fish approx. 25 lbs	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-"few"	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-"few"	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-13 fish up to 25 lbs	
		S.W. ledge Block I.	-"some"	
		Hooter Bay	-"few"	
		A giant school of fish (pollock) greater than four miles in diameter was reported south of Block Island		
		Block I.	-21 fish, almost all over 25 lbs	
		Block I.	-"loaded" - one man sailed for 2 days caught 49 fish, 900 lbs	
Block I.	-70-80 fish per trip (one boat) 20 to 30 lbs			
Block I.	-20 fish from 22 to 28 lbs (jigs)			
Block I.	-38 fish from 20 to 36 lbs (jigs)			
Block I.	-26 fish from 20 to 35 lbs (trolling) "good number" from 20 to 30 lbs (jigs)			
Block I.	-40 "small" fish			
Block I.	-7 fish all over 30 lbs (jigs), 11 fish all over 30 lbs (jigs), no number of fish up to 30 lbs (jigs)			
June	Montauk	Block I.	-"couple"	

No more pollock catches reported after this

Table.2. New Jersey 1979 pollock fishing summary.

Month	Port	Area Fished	Catch and Comments
February	Brielle	Open bottom off beach	-"some"
April	Belmar Brielle	Pollock grounds Offshore	-200 fish up to 42 lbs -~300 fish up to 32 lbs many between 15 and 20 lbs
May	Belmar	Offshore	-300 fish (cod and pollock) from 15 to 37 lbs
June	Barnegat Brielle	Offshore wreck Offshore	-"loaded up" -"hugh success with more pollock than cod"

No more catches of pollock reported after this

Table 3A.

DATE: 23 V 76
 PORT: Barnegat, New Jersey
 AREA FISHED: Lump just west of the mud hole 40°14 73°51'
 BIOLOGICAL DATA:

<u>Length(cm)</u>	<u>Weight(kg)</u>
108	15.7
104	12.5
101	12.5
88	9.0
84	8.3
46	1.0

Table 3B.

DATE: 23 V 76
 PORT: Belmar, New Jersey
 AREA FISHED: Ruins of the Texas Tower 72°39' 39°48'
 BIOLOGICAL DATA:

<u>Length(cm)</u>	<u>Number Observed @ Length</u>	<u>Length(cm)</u>	<u>Number Observed @ Length</u>
40	1	63	11
42	6	64	8
43	4	65	1
44	7	66	3
45	2	67	7
46	6	68	5
47	3	70	8
49	4	71	3
50	3	72	3
51	2	73	4
52	2	75	4
54	1	76	1
55	6	77	1
57	2	79	1
59	5	80	3
61	3	81	1
62	4	83	2
		85	1

COMMENTS: These fish were caught on board a party-boat which was making a two day trip offshore for tilefish, Atlantic cod and pollock