Creating a New Bottom Fishing Area off Long Beach, N.Y.

Unofficial experiments were made during the years 1946 - 1947, which indicated a possibility of greatly increasing the catch of bottom-feeding species by creating artificial grounds for hook & line fishing. Sportsmen's organizations of the New York area obtained several hundred butter tubs, into which they poured concrete and inserted wooden posts about 18 inches in length. These were distributed over inshore and bay areas after the cement had hardened, creating a habitat for barnacles and other marine growths which would never thrive on the shifting sands of the natural bottom.

The result was an increase of about 25 times on the catch of sea bass and 2½ times on the catch of tautog. This result could not have been a very great surprise for the experienced "bottom-boat" captains, who for many years had enjoyed their best fishing around submerged wrecks and natural "rock piles". One of the principal areas fished for cod and tautog during recent years by the Sheepshead Bay (N.Y.) party boat fleet has been the "Subway Rocks", which is indeed a fishing grounds created artificially, by the dumping of material excavated during the construction of New York City's subway system. During the winter of

1949-1950 this area even produced a good number of haddock to the party boat fishermen.

Work in which Dr. James R. Westman, Senior Aquatic Biologist for the New York Dept. of Conservation, has been instrumental, is now resulting in the creation of a new bottom fishing area 3 miles off Long Beach, Long Island. Two barge loads of broken paving, brick, and rubble (official name: "cellar dirt") were dumped over an area 50 feet wide by 600 yards long, late in 1949. Each barge load contained 1000 yards of the material, and the area will be enlarged and built up with more material during 1950.

Mr. Jefferson D. Beard, U.S.N., of the New York Harbor Supervisors, obtained clearance for this dumping from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and several cable companies. Dr. Westman arranged with the barge company and the L. Smith Development Company, contractors disposing of the material, for a change in the dumping area to a spot where it could be utilized as a pleasure fishing area.

At this writing, party boats have already caught cod on this site.

S.E. Angstman March 7, 1950