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Gloucester, Mass.

Capt. Thomas C. Parish

Interviewed by William Wakeham, Richard Rathbun and Hugh M. Smith

Nov. 21, 1893

Has been mackerel fishing 25 years. Seining for 17 years. Captain of Schooner Lottie Gardner.

Does not think the mackerel have decreased as a whole. Thinks they have increased for the last 4 or 5 years. Had a spell of bad fishing. Those good years preceding bad ones were 1882-3-4. The best year, he thinks, was 1883. Beginning with 1886, it was bad up to

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3 years ago.

Does not think the purse seine hurts the fish any. Fish this summer down the Bay were wilder then he ever saw them before. Thinks it was caused by the feed. They were chasing a little shrimp. This fall after the feed had left they seemed to be quite easy to catch.

The purse seine should be allowed all the time. Would not have a close season. Does not think the close season that was

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in force helped the fish any. The close season would not protect the fish during the spawning season, because wherever you catch fish in June they are all full of spawn. The fish sink to spawn and it is difficult to find them then. Would not advocate a renewal of that close season, or of any other close season to cover the spawning season.

When he was a small boy he engaged in the

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hook and line fishing. Thinks perhaps they might do better hook and line fishing than with seines, but it would take some time. When they go hook and line fishing now they use the same methods that they used to, as near as he knows. No particular region where the purse seine should not be used.

Get a poor class of fish from the south. Has never been a profitable fishery taken as a whole. A few years ago

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there were some pretty good spring's work. Was with Sol Jacobs in 1883-84, and that was the best he ever did.

Would not have any regulations with regard to mackerel fishing.

All fish taken before the middle of June, or perhaps the 20th of June have spawn in them. Thinks June is the spawning month. They spawn in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he thinks, in June. That is the month they spawn the most anywhere;

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at least wherever he has been. They spawn perhaps a week earlier on this shore than they do in the Gulf.

The fish are more easy to catch just before they spawn than at other times. More easy to catch along the Cape Shore than down south.

Never went fishing south with hook and line.

The furthest south he has taken fish was 7 years ago, about 40 or 50 miles this side of Hatteras, as near as he can

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remember. Was in the Ellen M. Adams at that time.

Those fish at the south are heading north. Some years they go nearer in shore than others. Fish are both schooling and scattered at that time. Some years they see them way to the south of Georges, and they go down off Noman's Land.

Thinks that part of the fish from the southern school come in at Block Island. Others strike off

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around and over the southern part of Georges Bank, and those are the fish which go into the Cape Shore; that is, most of them. Some strike into the Bay of Fundy.

The fish that come on this part of the coast, some of them come through the South Channel, and those go close in shore; and some which go over Georges come on this shore.

The fish reach Block Island region about the 10th to the 20th of May.

They strike

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the Cape Shore about the last of May; from the 25th of May to the 1st of June. A few years ago they used to catch them off to the westward of La Have, but of late years they seem to strike in further east of Halifax.

The first year he went down there was 7 years ago. Thinks that the Cape Shore fishery has been resorted to for at least 10 or 12 years, and perhaps longer.

The fish enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence

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About the 2nd or 3rd of June. Those fish are large. They go around Cape Breton Island.

There seems to be a big body that strike nearly to the north from the Cape Shore; the second school, and they go along for a week and then go into the Gulf. Some years this second school remains on the Cape Shore for the biggest part of the time, and other years they may go in as early as a week after the first school.

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The heft of the fish of the second school go around Cape North. Some go through the Gut of Canso.

Those small fish in the Gulf go up as far as West Cape; as far as Miscou. They go out earlier than the other schools. Does not know just when they leave. This year somewhere about the 1st of November they commenced to go up the Cape Shore; that is the small fish go out about the 1st of November. The large fish

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remain there sometimes as late as the 25th of November. Have been caught as late as that.

The fish they have been catching lately are the large fish that are coming out. This fall they were very nice fish; mostly 1s and extras.

The fish are in the best condition in September and October, and about the same in November.

The fish strike Portland, Maine, some years in August and September. That is called the

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best month on this shore. Sometimes they go there earlier. Sometimes very small schools caught there in June and July. Some years they do not go to the Bay of Fundy. Fish used to be much more abundant in the Bay of Fundy than they are now.

Thinks most of the fish that come on our shores come from the south. Never saw fish when they could not see. Might be a scale over

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their eyes, but they could see.

The heft of the fish probably leave the Gulf about the 10th or 15th of November. There are about 3 schools that come out in the fall – one in the last of October, and from the 1st to the 25th of November. Would be found on the Cape Shore about a week after they leave the Gulf. On the coast of Maine they seem to leave pretty early. Last year they left in October; about the 1st to the 11th. This

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year they hung on a little later.

Would not attempt to follow the fish south in the fall.

When the schools are leaving they are about the same size as those coming on the coast.

Never caught any mackerel in the winter. Has heard of their being caught. A few scattering ones caught in other fish on Georges Bank.