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Page 229 [1]

Gloucester, Mass.

Capt. Nelson E. Cantillo

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

Nov. 20, 1893

Aged 33. Captain of Schooner Herbert M. Rogers. Has had 11 years experience mackerel fishing.

Does not think mackerel have decreased for the last 8 years. For the last 2 years more abundant than the previous 5 years. The first three years of his experience they were plenty. In 1884-5-6 were the most abundant of any time, except one

Page 230 [2]

year before his time.

Does not think the purse seine is doing any harm. Does not think it is causing any decrease in the fish. It may make the schools wilder. This year at the south the fish were just as wild before we set for them as afterwards. Could not catch them at all when we first saw them.

They were after salt mackerel. Did not attempt to run in fresh ones. Got about 20 bbls. of salt mackerel.

If they stopped

Page 231 [3]

catching mackerel with the seines would have to stop catching them altogether. Cannot catch them with the hook and line now to amount to anything.

Does not think the close season was any good at all. The fishermen thought it was going to help them. They thought the early fishery drove them off the shore up here.

Would not regulate the fishery in any way. Would let it go on just as it is.

Nowadays

Page 232 [4]

there is no one to catch fish with the hook. One man might catch 2 or 3 barrels and another man not familiar with it would not get 20 mackerel. Does not think, even though toll bait was thrown to some extent around here it would be any good.

Does not think there is any use having a close season on the purse seine at any time. Supposes mackerel should have protection before they spawn, but the only trip they

Page 233 [5]

can depend upon now is the Cape Shore trip.

Mackerel spawn all through June and into July; to the 10th of July. Never caught any fish around Block Island with spawn in, but never used to fish there much. Go there in the summer mostly after the spawning season is over. The ones we catch after the 20th of July are all fish that have spawned.

Catching so many fish full of spawn will certainly tell on the fishery.

Page 234 [6]

This fall down in the Bay, as far as well could see were these small mackerel, and the question is where they go to.

Dog fish and blue fish are about the only ones that harm mackerel. Blue fish drive them, but does not think they destroy them.

He is just in from the Cape Shore now; got 180 barrels. Supposes they caught altogether, 500 barrels and lost them by the seines bursting. Started on this fall's trip the 1st of

Page 235 [7]

August. Got wrecked down at Magdalen's the 24th of August; blowing a gale. There were mackerel all around there then. Lost one boat in that gale lost their sails and anchors.

Mackerel just ready to spawn will not take the hook. Will not take it until after they are done spawning. Do not seem to have any appetite. They go to the bottom when they are spawning, so that we cannot seine them then.

Page 236 [8]

They stay down perhaps 2 or 3 weeks. Has been fishing in the fall on the Cape Shore for 7 or 8 years. About the same number of vessels go there every year. Mackerel came around Sidney and around Cape North this year, and came in close.

There are mostly two schools come into the Bay. The first school comes out last. It goes in about the last of May and stays in until November. They go around Cape

Page 237 [9]

North. Come right back the same way they go. The second school goes down about the 1st or middle of June, generally the middle of June. Those are smaller fish. They go around Prince Edward Island. Does not think they go any further than that. They go in both ways – Canso and around Cape North. Some of those will out as early as August. They come out both ways too. Those small

Page 238 [10]

fish would be all out of the Bay about the 1st of October.

Mackerel run just as large now on an average as ever since he began fishing.

Has heard of mackerel being caught in the winter, on the bottom in trawls around Georges. Has heard of their being caught off Cape Cod once or twice. Never heard of their being taken late with the herring.

Mackerel are found in the greatest

Page 239 [11]

numbers around the Cape Shore in the spring. Last year they collected in large numbers in the Bay of Fundy, and also the year before. The mouth of the Bay of Fundy is around Seal Islands; about 25 miles west of Seal Ids.

Has seen mackerel off shore on Georges. Has seen them 90 miles off New Jersey. Very often go over Georges, and between Georges and Brown's Bank. They go even to the outside of Georges. The fish that

Page 240 [12]

go across Georges all go to the Cape Shore.

The fish that come on this shore, come up along by Cape Cod, between Nantucket Shoals and Nantucket. Come through the South Channel and keep right along the coast. Strike in at Barnstable Bay and follow the shore right down.

All the fish that go into the North Bay first strike the Nova Scotia shore. Very often they strike Cape Sable. But of late years they go way down to

Page 241 [13]

the eastward of Halifax. Generally expect to strike them between Halifax and Canso. Has known them to strike at Halifax and Canso before Cape Sable.

Has followed a single school for 5 or 6 miles. That is one school, but has followed a body of fish for hundreds of miles.

Very often get scattering mackerel in the Gulf as late as Christmas, but the most of them are our of the Gulf by

Page 242 [14]

the middle of November. At the Cape Shore they disappear about the same time. See fish the 10th of November off Canso.

Late in the fall fish get poor.

These late schools along the Cape Shore are going along the shore in a W.S.W. direction.

The body of the mackerel leave the coast of Maine the last of September and go down into Barnstable Bay. Probably stay there 3 weeks, and then work out

Page 243 [15]

around Cape Cod. That is the last we see of them.

Those at Block Island are the native ones that come there to spawn. Fish around Block Island remain there. Have been mixed fish during the last 4 or 5 years, but before that used to get more large fish. There is a body of fish around Block Island all through the summer. There is a lot of boats fishing there now, and he thinks they feed them so they stay.

Page 244 [16]

Get all sizes there at the same time. Get them there about the middle of May. Got them there this spring the 10th of May. They stay there at Block Island until in November.

When the fish leave the coast they leave in larger schools than when they approach the coast. They follow the same course on leaving the coast as they do when they come. It is always the outside schools that go over or around Georges to the

Page 245 [17]

eastward.

The inshore schools in the spring are generally a smaller fish than the outside schools.

Saw a great many small mackerel coming out of the Bay this year. More than he ever saw before, about 7 or 8 inches long. They were hatched this year. He measured some of them and they were 7 inches. A year from now they will be about 10 inches.

Does not believe mackerel grow much in the winter. The next year they would be

Page 246 [18]

about 12 inch fish. It takes 3 years to make No 2s. The smallest length for No. 1 fish is 13 inches. Would require 4 years to make a No. 1 fish. They quality of the fish does not depend upon the length but upon the condition.

The first fish that enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the last to come out are a (?) and darker bellied fish than those which we find along our own shore, and, practically, than all the others.