

of the acclimatisation society as regards the fresh-water fish at that place. General regulations in regard to fishing for trout, &c., have been made, and special fishing regulations have also been made for various acclimatisation societies' districts.

A return showing the number of sea-fishing boats registered and licensed at the various ports at the end of December last is appended. It will be seen that the number registered was 1,189 and licensed 1,175. In the previous year the number registered was 1,106 and licensed 995.

Regulations have been made allowing sea-trout to be taken between Tewaewae Bay, in Foveaux Strait, and the Waitaki River, and permitting the sale of such trout.

One of the most important undertakings in connection with the development of the fisheries of the Dominion was the extensive experimental trawling and fishing cruise of the "Nora Niven" during the year. The vessel was first chartered for a period of three months, commencing on the 5th June, and on the expiration of the charter period the Department chartered her for a further period of three months.

The vessel was specially built at Great Grimsby, England, for the New Zealand Trawling and Fish Supply Company, and arrived in the Dominion on the 7th May last year. Her outfit for trawling and fishing was very complete, and she proved to be a splendid sea-boat and well adapted for the work she was employed to do for the Government.

During the first three months' charter the fishing-grounds were tested from Stewart Island up the east coast to the Mercury Islands, Bay of Plenty, and also round the Chatham Islands, and during the second charter the grounds were worked to the west of Cook Strait, Tasman and Golden Bays, down the west coast of the South Island to the Hokitika River, and from Auckland northward round the North Cape and down the west coast to Farewell Spit.

Very large areas of splendid trawling-bottom were found to exist off different parts of the coasts of both Islands. On some of these very good results, both as regards the quantity and variety of market fish, were obtained; on other sections, probably owing to the season and unfavourable weather conditions, the catches were not so satisfactory. As the value of the fish-supply in any locality can only be correctly proved by having it fished at different seasons, some of the sections of the coast-line, such as the Canterbury Bight and the west coast from Manukau Heads to Okarito, should be carefully prospected at other seasons.

The fishing-grounds round the Chatham Islands proved to be very rich in fish-life. A considerable extent of good trawling-ground was found, and the line-fishing grounds were found to be teeming with hapuka and blue-cod of the finest quality. These rich fishing-grounds have not as yet been worked to any extent, but there is no doubt that they will in a short time become one of our most important sources of fish-supply.

The greatest quantity and variety of fish-life were found to exist from inshore out to 30 fathoms, and no flat-fish of any value were taken over that depth. Hapuka, king-fish, and ling were taken at various depths out to 100 fathoms, while tarakihi and schnapper were taken frequently out to 60 fathoms.

The practical results and information obtained during the cruise will undoubtedly prove of great value in developing the fishing industry.

Mr. Waite, Curator of the Canterbury Museum, accompanied the expedition for the purpose of collecting specimens and as far as possible of making a biological survey of the areas worked. He worked energetically throughout the cruise, and succeeded in making a large collection of specimens and obtaining a great amount of very valuable information with regard to the feeding and breeding habits of both the edible and also of the coarse non-edible fishes caught. A report from Mr. Waite is in course of preparation. It will be published by this Department, and will be of great importance both practically and scientifically.

The limits within which trawling is prohibited in the Hauraki Gulf have been reduced, and the prohibition now applies only to that area inside a line drawn from the North Head of Cabbage Bay to the southernmost point of Tiri Tiri Island, and thence to the right-bank at the mouth of Matakana River. Trawling has been prohibited in the Bay of Plenty for a distance of three miles off shore between the Northern Head of Whangamata River and Koronohina Point. Netting has been prohibited in a part of the upper portion of Otago Harbour.

Regulations have been made providing that the owner of a licensed fishing-boat shall be responsible for the good conduct of the crew, and that he shall not employ in the boat a person known to the police to be a thief or a person of dissolute habits or bad character; that it shall be an offence to take fish for sale from any vessel or boat other than a licensed fishing-boat; and that whitebait set-nets in the County of Westland shall not be placed at a less distance from each other than 2 chains.

Owing to the scarcity of mullet on the east coast of the North Island it has been deemed advisable to make a close season for that fish during the spawning season, and it has therefore been declared unlawful to take mullet during December, January, and February in the waters of that coast. The waters south of a line drawn from Tararu Point, Thames, to the left bank of the mouth of the Makaka Creek have, however, been excluded from the closed area.

Mr. L. F. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, reports that, as regards the Wellington district, as the fish are brought in from the various fishing-grounds by coasting steamers, railway, and small boats, it is impossible to obtain anything like a correct estimate of the quantity landed in the city from those who handle them in transit; and the fish salesmen, as a rule, are not always able or willing to give detailed information as to the quantities they receive.

The principal fish-dealers report that a fair supply has come to hand during the year. A fair quantity of blue-cod from the fishing-grounds in Cook Strait and the Marlborough Sounds has been taken.

The warehou season has so far been an exceptionally poor one. These fish made their appearance considerably later than usual, and the catches have been very poor. The supply from the Hawke's Bay trawling-grounds has been unsteady. In the spring and summer flat-fish were plenti-