
THE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES OF THE INTERIOR LAKES
AND RIVERS OF NEW YORK AND VERMONT.

BY

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The first statistical investigation of the commercial fisheries of the interior lakes and rivers of New York and Vermont was made by the writer in 1896. In the fall of 1903 a second canvass was made, when data were gathered showing the condition of the fisheries during the calendar year 1902. With the exception of the Great Lakes and the Hudson, Delaware, and Susquehanna rivers in New York, and the Connecticut River in Vermont, all lakes and rivers in the two States were visited in which it was thought commercial fishing might be carried on. The writer is under great obligations to the Forest, Fish and Game Commission of New York, especially to its secretary, Mr. John D. Whish, and to the Commissioners of Fisheries and Game of Vermont, for many courtesies extended to him.

NEW YORK.

New York is dotted with numerous lakes, many of them—such as Oneida, Champlain, Seneca, and Cayuga—of great extent, while there is a veritable network of rivers, creeks, and canals throughout the State. The principal aim of the authorities has been, as far as possible, to confine the fishing in the interior lakes and streams to sportsmen, who are attracted, not only from all parts of New York, but from other States and even from foreign lands by the excellent fishing afforded in these waters. Such pleasure seekers are usually liberal, and the sums expended by them net a larger profit to the community than would be obtained by the unrestricted use of fishing apparatus on the part of local fishermen. It has been estimated that the sportsmen leave behind them, in the hands of the railroads, hotels, guides, boatmen, etc., several million dollars each year.

Whenever possible without injury to the sport fishing, the State has permitted the use of nets to some extent, principally for the purpose of reducing the abundance of the commoner species of fishes, which, when in excessive numbers, do serious damage to the game fish by devouring spawn and fry. It has been an exceedingly difficult matter to guard waters so extensive, however, and as a result there is much illegal fishing. During 1901 the authorities seized 803 fyke nets, 443

Huron, Lake Champlain leads all other bodies of fresh water in the United States in the catch of wall-eyed pike and pickerel.

The table below shows the extent of the commercial fisheries on the Vermont side of the lake in 1902:

Table showing by apparatus and species the yield of the fisheries on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain in 1902.

Species.	Haul seines.		Tip-ups.		Gill nets.	
	Pounds.	Value.	Pounds.	Value.	Pounds.	Value.
Bullheads and cat-fish	54,920	\$1,679	4,700	\$118		
Eels	4,100	206				
Lake herring	660	33				
Perch, yellow	43,917	2,576				
Pickereel	48,111	3,856	3,600	288		
Pike, wall-eyed	208,836	16,319	7,100	596		
Rock bass	674	40				
Sturgeon	1,460	73			14,130	\$1,978
Caviar					1,000	750
Suckers	37,375	1,854				
Sun-fish	15,308	767				
White-fish	80,191	5,777				
Total.....	490,552	33,179	15,400	1,002	15,130	2,728

Species.	Hand lines.		Spears.		Total.	
	Pounds.	Value.	Pounds.	Value.	Pounds.	Value.
Bullheads and cat-fish					59,620	\$1,797
Eels					4,100	206
Lake herring					660	33
Perch, yellow					43,917	2,576
Pickereel					51,711	4,144
Pike, wall-eyed					210,936	16,915
Rock bass					674	40
Smelt	6,000	\$600			6,000	600
Sturgeon					15,590	2,051
Caviar					1,000	750
Suckers					37,375	1,854
Sun-fish					15,308	767
White-fish					80,191	5,777
Frogs			1,600	\$160	1,600	160
Total.....	6,000	600	1,600	160	528,682	37,669