

Capt. Geo. S. McCauley, Southampton, Ont.

Interviewed by Wm. Wakeham and Richard Rathbun,
September 7, 1894.

I fish nothing but gill nets. I use a
tug. I have been fishing here off and on
for 20 years. I was fishing up in the Geor-
gian Bay between times, some seasons I was
up there and some seasons here. I have
fished as far south as Kincardine. Between
Kincardine and Cape Hurd there has never
been much pound net fishing. They tried 2
or 3 here a couple of years ago. They tried
one up at the Fishing Islands, but did not
make a success of it. Fyke nets have never
been used along this coast. I saw a seine
tried around the islands, but they did not
catch much. They have used seines extensive-
ly here at times. They have used them up at

Expensive

T.

Fykes

Seines

Loc.

Extent

Sable beach and Whitefish Island. We used to fish there ourselves for herring. The seining was all for herring. They have used seines at Burke Islands also. That is the only place they have been used from Kincardine to Cape Hurd in my time. The shore is not fit to haul the seine; it is too rocky. I do not think they have seined any for this last 4 years. The water got so low at Whitefish Islands that the herring did not seem to come in. They all stopped outside of the island. The water has lowered here 2 feet I guess. It has been lowering for 7 years. I have noticed it all along the shore here. I do not know the reason. Besides, there was a saw mill built there, and all these mills built on the shore have ruined the herring fishery and the whitefish fishery also. There is one saw-mill at the Sable River and there was one inside of Whitefish Island,

*Seine
herring*

history.

*Level of water
and herring.*

*Sawmills
ruined
herring
w.f.*

but it is not there now. One is on the stream and the other was on the island. I suppose there is quite a good deal of the sawdust goes in the water. They burn a lot, but they had such lots of it that I guess they were not particular about it, but let it run in the river. It is a mill run by water power and it is a fine mill. The sawdust would be what would hurt the fishes, and the slabs and edgings also, as they drift out in the lake and sink. On the Sable beach I have seen them catch lots of whitefish. They were large whitefish. There were some small ones just before they quit. They used to take fish in the summer season, but they would not allow them and so they dropped it. They prohibited the seines in the summer on account of destroying these small whitefish I suppose. They destroy a good many young whitefish during the summer,

*Seines
w/ small*

beach

seines stopped

*Seines
pull
no young w/f.*

but in the fall of the year they do not de-
stroy them because those young whitefish are
not on the beach then. They come in only
during the summer. The seines then were
about 600 feet long, and about 30 feet deep
in the bunt. They used 2 1/2-inch mesh in
the bunt, and in the wings they run up as
high as 5 inches. They had them tapering

Describe

*Seines stopped
would like to
use now*

from 2 inches out to 5. If seines were per-
mitted now, they would be used. I think
they stopped them about 4 years ago on ac-
count of destroying small whitefish. The
seines were licensed then. We used to pay
as high as \$125 for a license for a seine
for 1 1/2 months. That would be from the
first of October until the middle of Novem-
ber. We had this on an island. The island
was small and you could drag it from one
point along, and there was only one side we
could drag it. The license gave us the sole

License

Season

W.C.

*Seine**loc.**depth**Hook**trout**sport**9**tugs*

right to fish there. They would seine out about 1/4 mile from the beach probably. The water would be 20 or 30 feet deep. It is pretty shallow on the Sable beach and sandy.

There is no hook and line fishing been carried on for trout. There are no fishermen here try to make a living at that on this shore, but it is done a little for sport.

They have used tugs here 4 years with gill nets. There has been 5 tugs here during that time. There was 1 tug the first year.

There was a little tug fished here 2 years before that. There was one used here 4

years ago along with the little one, and

then they sold the small one and got another one year before last, and last year they got

2 more tugs here. There were 5 tugs here

last year for awhile, but one was only chartered. The sail boats have always been used

here. There used to be more sail boats than

boats

4.

there are now. I have seen as high as 20 here. Some of them would go up to Georgian Bay in the summer for awhile and then would come down here again. Last year there were 9 or 10 fishing here. 20 years ago there would be 20 or more. The number of sail boats has decreased and the tugs have taken their place. Sometimes the tugs and sail boats fish on the same grounds. I have often fished among the sail boats. The reason of the decrease in the boats I suppose is because the whitefish are scarcer. The sail boats have to fish in deep water in the summer, as well as tugs, but in the spring and fall they both fish inshore.

They use herring gill nets here. They are 3 1/2 pound nets and they are 50 to 60 meshes deep, and 2 3/4-inch mesh. There would be about 40 leads on them and they are about 6 feet apart. I do not do any herring fish-

w/ decrease

Herring g.
Description

method

9.
Descrip.

ing and none of the tugs fish for herring. We have whitefish and trout nets. The whitefish nets are 4 1/2-inch mesh, 18 meshes deep, weigh 3 1/2 pounds, and they have 80 leads 9 feet apart. The trout nets are 5 1/2-inch mesh, 15 meshes deep, and they have 70 leads 8 feet apart. The sail boats use both kinds and tugs use both kinds. We fish the whitefish nets right along until the first of October, and begin as soon as navigation opens. We started this year about the 20th of March, but some years we do not get started until the 20th of April or first of May. It is generally about April 20. We fish then up to the first of October. They take out the trout nets sometimes earlier than the first of October. I am going to set some to-day. We take the whitefish nets ashore the first of October so they will last another season. During

season

4.

rigs.

September we may use both whitefish and trout nets just to keep the thing going until we get our trout nets ready. The sail boats use generally from 70 to 80 nets. They have them all out the first of the month. The tugs will use about double the amount of the sail boats. The sail boats have 4 gangs in the water and the tugs run 4. The 4 gangs are in about all the time. In the whitefish nets in the spring we take principally trout. We fish down near Kincardine first in the spring and out north-west from here. We start in about 20 fathoms of water and set out probably to 40 or 50 fathoms. We will go out from 12 to 15 miles in the spring at first, and that is for 3 or 4 weeks, and then we begin to go way out into the middle of the lake. Our fishing grounds in the middle of the lake are on the banks out there in about all depths. We fish on

*June out
catch
season
(lost
trout)*

9.

that 9-Fathom Bank and fish in 75 and 80 fathoms. We go about half way to Cape Hurd, which is as far as we go north. We go south within 10 miles of Kincaidine. That fishing will continue up to November. In October we set our trout nets back of the Fishing Islands. We do not set them in deep water. We set them from 8 to 20 fathoms. We do not go inside the Fishing Islands, as it is shallow water. They will fish up along that shore in October from here up to Cape Hurd. The boats move up in these coves and harbors and fish out of there in the fall. They just move up there and live there for a time. They have tugs collecting the fish up there then when it is nice weather, and when it blows they salt them. We get some whitefish in May, June and July now, but not a great many. Get them in from 10 to 20 fathoms. We get them all along the shore, but not in

*marketing**w/p
Ocean
depth
Loc.*

deep water. We get an odd one on the bank
 in the middle of the lake. The whitefish
 have decreased or gone somewhere where we
 cannot find them. We do not get 1/4 as many
 as we used to. They are very large in size,
 We do not get any small ones in the gill
 nets. The trout are as common as they used
 to be and I do not see any difference in
 their abundance or size. We get them from
 35 to 50 pounds here. Get them near that 9-
 fathom Bank that size. If there were 20
 sail boats fishing now and no tugs, they
 would not get as many as they used to. We
 get the same quantity by going greater dis-
 tances and fishing new grounds, but we would
 not get the same quantity on the same
 grounds. When we first fished gill nets, we
 got a smaller run of whitefish that we do
 not get now. The whitefish generally stay
 in about from 10 to 20 fathoms of water. Of

F. gen

q.
w.f.
Decrease

size

Trout,
abund.

size

loc.

Catch maintained
by increases
app. and going
farther

w.f.
size

depth

*N. f.
var.*

course, there are different kinds of whitefish. There are some whitefish you cannot catch with gill nets, as they will not gill. They are big ones. I have seen the time when they would get them on the Sable beach fishing with the seines, and get 100 barrels at a drag, and I have seen them set the gill nets along that beach and not get a single fish. That was in the fall, in October.

*loc.
Series
abund.*

*9.7
series*

The whitefish spawn here. There is one kind ^{of} spawns late in the fall about November 20, and I think those outside whitefish spawn in July. I have seen the spawn running from the outside whitefish in July. The trout spawn at all seasons of the year I believe. There is a thing you could not argue with Mr. Wilmot last year, and he would call a man a liar if he said the trout spawn in any other month than November, but I can prove it by all the fishermen on this shore that they

Spawning

*Trout
Spawning*

spawn in other months. I have found them spawning in July. That would be in deep water, and I suppose they were deep water trout. They were short, fat fish. Those in-shore trout spawn about from the 15th of November out. I never knew any to spawn in October. We never take the shore trout in October with the spawn running, but I may have seen an odd one occasionally. But the main body of them do not spawn until in November, for I have caught them here full of spawn in November. In the gill nets we take a few pickerel, but they are very rare. Get no yellow perch. They never took yellow perch in the seines. Get no black bass, cat-fish or sturgeon. I have only seen 1 or 2 sturgeon in the seines in my life and I caught just one in the gill nets. Get no pike or maskinonge. Would get suckers. Get the suckers in about 10 fathoms of water and

g.
 walleye
 no perch
 seines)
 no bass
 " cat.
 & Sturgeon
 maskin
 suckers

9.

shallower. Would not get them in 30 or 40 fathoms. I wish they were all killed out of the lake. Many a ton I have slung overboard. Get no sheephead. We get the moon-eye. I have never seen a menominee whitefish. Get no long-jaw or blue fin. There is only the one kind of herring we get. The herring here are about like the Lake Erie herring, but might be a little longer. The gill nets here are left out 4 nights. We have no trouble in keeping the fish alive in them, but, of course, some will get drowned. We get probably from 20 to 40 pounds of small trout in a lift. They will weigh about 1 pound apiece. We throw lots of them out alive. We do not want to catch them, as they are a nuisance to us. We do not want to catch them under 2 1/2 pounds. It would be better to throw out all trout under 2 1/2 pounds that would live. We do not want any

Sheepshead
mooneye
menominee
long jaw
blue fin
herring

Fine out
cod, fish

Small trout

Throwing out

min. size.

Herring

9

J

mb

9. f.
min. size
size

whitefish under 2 pounds. There are lots of whitefish in Georgian Bay that are only 2 pounds on an average, and they never grow any larger than that. They are all the one size. There they would want to throw out every thing less than 1 1/2 pounds. Can sometimes throw the whitefish out alive. I never saw any whitefish caught in the gill nets too small to keep. They will weigh not less than 2 pounds. Anything smaller than that will not stay in the gill nets. They fish the same size mesh in Georgian Bay and they catch some of the 2 pound fish in them. We get 2 pound fish here and that is just about the size that will stay in a 4 1/2-inch mesh. Anything smaller than that will go through. They do not get any young whitefish in herring nets here. They get a few small trout. I never saw a whitefish in a herring net in my life, and I never heard of

Throwing out
4
Size of fish
mesh

herring 9.
young w/f.
trout

offal

their being caught. There is a man here manufactures the offal into oil. They have never put any in the water to amount to anything. I do not think it would do any harm any way, however, as I think the trout come along and eat it up again, and I suppose the whitefish will eat some of it, too. The whitefish will eat bait. I caught a couple off the pier here once with a hook and line. *hook*

Trolling trout

It is fine fun trolling for trout. You can troll for them in June, as they are in shallow water then. I have seen them catch 400 pounds of them in a day trolling. They would use a sail boat. When I was going out to lift my nets in the morning, they would bite good, and in the evening also. They would pull very hard on the line when you caught them.

bark.

We have lots of trouble from the bark from the logs. We have the trouble all over.

We get it out in the middle of the lake here, but do not get it along this shore because there is no log towing done here. I have had nets ruined by it so that I had to throw them away.

As to regulations, I would stop every saw-
 mill from putting sawdust in the water for one thing, and I would stop all log towing. The sawdust gets on their grounds and it gets in their gills. I have never seen it in their gills, but I know that is the way it acts on them, as they will not stay where there is sawdust. I do not think I would

put any restrictions on fishing at all. Those rough fish along the shore ought to be done away with. They eat up all the spawn of the rest. The suckers were not so abundant formerly as they are now. The sturgeon and other fish are very destructive to the spawn also. You cannot kill the trout off.

*Regulations
 Stop
 Sawdust
 Log Towing*

*No restriction
 on fishing*

*Catch off
 rough fish
 eat spawn*

Suckers

Sturgeon

*Trout cannot
 be caught off
 abundant.*

Pollute

Reg

Figur

They are as thick as ever here. / I do not ^{Reg}
 see any good in a close season. We have got
 to close about that time any way. Last year
 it was blowing the whole time and we could
 not have done anything any way. There would
 not be a great deal of fishing done in Novem-
 ber if there was no close season. I would ^{Reg}
 not regulate the size of the mesh at all. I
 think they are about right now. I would not
 like to see any gill nets less than 4 1/2-
 inch mesh. I would not have them any less
 for my own use. If they were 4-inch, we
 would have twice the trouble in clearing the
 fish out of them. They would get caught
 more by the middle then, and get so tight we
 could hardly get them out, and now they get
 caught mostly by the head and teeth. I ^{Reg}
 would not limit the fishermen, but would let
 everybody go in who wanted to. Of course, ^{Fisher}
 these 5 tugs that fish here it makes no dif-

Close season

not much fishing in Nov.

q. proper size mesh

gilling

No limit to no. fishermen.

Tugs will always catch same amt.

ference to them, because they will catch about the same quantity, and I do not know but that they would catch the same quantity if there were 20 tugs fishing here, at least for a few years. The sail boats do not catch as many fish as they did 20 years ago.

boat catches less than formerly.
Fish decrease sawdust.
w/ chief catch formerly.
Stop Sawdust

I guess the reason is the fish must be scarcer, and I think the sawdust is the cause of it.. Whitefish would be the principal fish the sail boats used to catch. I *Pollut*

would have the saw-mills stopped from throwing sawdust in the streams. This mill here they do not want to throw their sawdust in the lake, as they team it away too fast and burn it. It is generally understood that they are not allowed to put sawdust in the water. Along the Sable River I have seen the sawdust floating down at night. They are supposed to haul it back and burn it. McCleans, when they owned a mill there, used

to let lots of it go in, 6 or 8 years ago,
but I do not know as the men who own it now
do. Off Cape Hurd the tugs average about
the same fishing each year. I have fished
there 5 years and averaged about the same
each year. The tugs do not belong there,
but go there to fish.

*Tugs make
same catch
every year.*

Fig.

