

CAPT. NELSON E. CANTILLO, GLOUCESTER, MASS.

Interviewed by William Wakeham, Richard Rathbun  
and Hugh M. Smith, November 21, 1893.

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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 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 after-  
wards. 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 barrels of salt mackerel.

If they stopped 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 fishing 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 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 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.

This fall down in the Bay, as far as we could see, were these small mackerel, and the question is where do 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 bursting of

the seines. Started on this fall's trip the 1st of 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 and 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. 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 North. Come right back the same way they go. The second schools 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 go out as early as August. They come out both ways too. Those small 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, on 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 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 Islands.

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 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 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 out of the Gulf by 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. SW. 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 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. Get all sizes there at the same time. Get them 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 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 about 12 inches long. It takes 3 years to make No. 2's. The smallest length for No. 1 fish is 13 inches. Would require 4 years to make a No. 1 fish. The 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 coarser and darker bellied fish than those which we find along our own shore, and, practically, than all the others.

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CAPT. THOMAS C. PARIS, GLOUCESTER, MASS.

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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  
3 years ago.

Does not think the purse seine hurts the  
fish any. Fish this summer down the Bay were  
wilder than 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 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 hook and line fishing. Thinks perhaps they might do better hook and line fishing than with seines, but it would take sometime. 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 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. They spawn in the Gulf of St. Lawrence he thinks, in June. Thinks June is the spawning month. That is the month they spawn the most anywhere; 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 remember. Was in the Ellen M. Adams at that time.

Those fish at the south are heading north. Some years they go nearer inshore 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 No Man's Land.

Thinks that part of the fish from the southern school come in at Block Island. Others strike off 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 inshore; 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 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 Lee 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 fishing has been resorted to for at least 10 or 12 years, and perhaps longer.

The fish enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence 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 strikes 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. 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 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 1's and extras.

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

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

best month on this shore. Sometimes they go there earlier. Sometimes very small schools caught there in June and July.

They get into the Bay of Fundy in 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 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 10th. This 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.

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