

haunting species will generally neglect free swimmers and only capture occasional individuals that accident brings to their attention, nor will they without good reason neglect an abundant, easily captured food supply for a scarcer and more agile prey. The salmon at all stages is a free swimming fish, very agile and quick in its movements. The sculpin, on the other hand, is a ground feeder, hugging the muddy bottom, and is more easily caught than strong swimming salmon; therefore, so long as the former are present in numbers, the latter are not likely to be hunted or pursued extensively. The fact that the birds we obtained from the sculpinless reaches of the river near the mouth had empty stomachs, supports the view that salmon are difficult of capture. The one bird that we know had been fishing in salmon waters without results for an hour and a half further corroborates this view.

From all reports, the salmon in the rivers have been lately increasing from year to year. One experienced man says that ten or twelve years ago about thirty fish were taken in the York river per year, while in 1913 from 120 to 130 were caught by anglers. The cormorants are also generally increasing in number, the rookeries are enlarging and new ones being established. These facts taken together do not indicate that the cormorants are markedly harmful to the salmon. In fact, they may be more beneficial than harmful as a whole, in helping to weed out the weak and unfit fish, and so keeping the stock up to virile strength. The danger of removing all predacious influences was well shown by the grouse plague in Scotland when it was decided, by the investigating committee, that the great spread of the disease was due to the destruction of the vermin that normally, quickly, eradicated diseased or weakly birds before they had a chance to contaminate the remainder of the flock. From the evidence on hand it is, therefore, evident that the cormorants in the fresh water reaches of the rivers are few; that those in the tidal mouths feed on bottom haunting fish, and that as a whole the influence of cormorants upon the number of salmon can be disregarded as too slight to be of economic importance.