

of freezing expands the fish and forces open the shells; the oyster is removed, and the shells are allowed to fall back into the water, where they tend to destroy the fishery.

Some oysters of very large size and good quality are found at Tabusintac, but those of the finest description are found on extensive beds in Shippegan Harbour, Saint Simon's Inlet, and Caraquet Bay, from which localities they are exported every season to Quebec. The number of bushels exported from the Port of Caraquet during the last eight years is as follows:—

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|-------|--|------|---|---|-------|
| 1841 | - | - | 5,000 | | 1845 | - | - | 2,010 |
| 1842 | - | - | 7,000 | | 1846 | - | - | 1,915 |
| 1843 | - | - | 5,290 | | 1847 | - | - | 425 |
| 1844 | - | - | 6,000 | | 1848 | - | - | 5,432 |

Oysters are abundant at Cocagne, Buctouche, Richibucto, Burnt Church, and other places on the coast; but in general they are too far within the mouths of the fresh-water streams, and their quality is greatly inferior to those affected by sea-water only.

From the manner in which the oyster fishery of the Gulf shore is now being conducted, all the oysters of good quality will in a few years be quite destroyed. The preservation of this fishery is of considerable importance, and it might be affected as well by judicious regulations and restrictions, as by encouraging the formation of artificial beds, or "layings," in favourable situations. Several persons on the coast intimated to the writer their desire to form new and extensive beds in the sea-water, by removing oysters from the mixed water of the estuaries, where they are now almost worthless, if they could obtain an exclusive right to such beds when formed, and the necessary enactments to prevent their being plundered.

There are two varieties of the clam, distinguished as the "hard-shell," and the "soft-shell." They are eaten largely in spring, when they are in the best condition; and great quantities are used as bait for cod. Clams are much prized by persons residing at a distance from the sea coast, and they are frequently sent into the interior, where they meet a ready sale, as they can be sold at a very low price.

The razor fish derives its name from the shells being shaped very like the handle of a razor; the fish is well flavoured in the proper season, and not unlike the clam, though somewhat tougher.

Crabs of all sizes are to be had in abundance, but they are not often caught; neither are the shrimps, which are to be seen in endless quantities. At times, the waters of the Straits of Northumberland appear as if thickened with masses of shrimps moving about, their course being plainly indicated by the fish of all descriptions which follow in their wake, and feed upon them greedily.

RIVER FISHERIES.

The principal fisheries in those rivers of New Brunswick which flow into the gulf, in addition to the salmon fishery already mentioned, are those for gaspereaux, shad, basse, and trout. There are also smelts, eels, flounders, and a great variety of small fish.

The gaspereaux (*clupea vernalis*) has been noticed under the head of herring. This fish is found in almost every river, and the gaspereaux fishery has been considered of so much importance, that various Acts of the Assembly have from time to time been passed for its regulation and protection. But these laws have either been neglected, or not properly enforced, and this fishery is rapidly declining. Very slight obstructions suffice to prevent the gaspereaux from ascending streams to their old haunts; the dams for mills, or for driving timber, have shut them out in numerous instances from their best spawning grounds, and the greatest injury has in this way been inflicted on the fishery.

The shad (*clupea alosa*) of the Gulf are not taken in such numbers, nor are they of so fine a quality, as those caught in the Bay of Fundy; comparatively, they are dry and flavourless, owing, as is said, to the sandy character of the shores of the Gulf, which are supposed to furnish less of the peculiar food of the shad than the muddy rivers of the Bay of Fundy, where they are taken in such high perfection. This fishery has also been mentioned in several Acts of Assembly; but the habits and most usual resorts of the shad of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence have not been carefully observed. It is not improbable, therefore, that a better knowledge of the habits of the fish might lead to this fishery becoming more valuable.

The basse, or marine perch (*perca labrax*), swim in shoals along the coast, and frequently ascend the rivers to a considerable distance from the sea to deposit their spawn. They are taken of all sizes up to 20 lbs. weight, or even more; but those of 3 lbs. to 5 lbs. are considered the best flavoured. They are never salted, but always eaten while fresh. This fishery has also been attempted to be regulated and preserved by law, but evidently with very little success, as it is fast decreasing. Sad havoc is made among the basse in the winter season, when they lie in numerous shoals half torpid in shallow water. A large hole is cut in the ice above them, and they are lifted out with dip-nets; in this manner the basse fishery in some of the smaller rivers has been wholly destroyed.

There are two species of trout found in the greatest abundance in every river, stream, and brook which finds its way from the interior of New Brunswick to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. Of these the salmon trout (*salmo trutta*) is of the largest size, and most valuable. The common trout (*salmo fario*) is taken in every possible variety everywhere.