

18.—NOTES ON A RECONNOISSANCE OF THE FISHERIES OF THE PACIFIC
COAST OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1894.

By HUGH M. SMITH, M. D.,

Assistant in Charge Division of Statistics and Methods of the Fisheries, U. S. Fish Commission.

NARRATIVE OF THE TRIP.

Under date of May 8, 1894, I was directed by the Hon. Marshall McDonald, U. S. Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, to proceed to the Pacific coast "for the purpose of making a study of the apparatus and methods of the fisheries of that region." I was instructed to make observations on the condition of the salmon industry of the different sections that it was deemed advisable to visit; to consider the development of the market fishery and the sardine industry; to investigate the history, growth, and present extent of the sturgeon fishery of the Columbia River; and to look into any other branches of the fisheries that possessed special interest. I was directed to give particular attention to the shad, the striped bass, the black bass, the catfish, the carp, and the eel, which have been artificially introduced from the east, especially observing their distribution, size, commercial importance, and food value.

I was ordered to leave Washington on or about May 16, and to return not later than July 10. Pursuant to these instructions, I left Washington May 18 and arrived at San Francisco May 24. Ten days were spent in that city, devoted chiefly to an inspection of the fish and other water products exposed for sale in the markets; to visits to the fishermen's wharf where the catch is discharged, the nets are dried, and the boats are moored; and to an examination of the books of the wholesale dealers for the years 1893 and 1894 for the purpose of taking off an account of all shad, striped bass, carp, and catfish handled. The American Union Fish Company, A. Paladini, G. Camilloni, and J. H. Kessing very obligingly permitted this examination of their records when the object of the inquiry was made known, and are entitled to the thanks of the Commission for this and other courtesies shown. Several other dealers whom it was not possible for me to visit, owing to the short time available, later gave to representatives of the California Fish Commission figures similar to those furnished to me, copies of which were forwarded to this Commission by the California Commission.

On June 2, I went from San Francisco to Los Angeles and San Pedro, chiefly in order to examine the sardine industry centering at the latter place and to interview the proprietors of the cannery, who had offices in Los Angeles. Through the courtesy of Mr. A. P. Halfhill, vice-president of the canning company, who, in San Francisco, had given me a letter of introduction to the superintendent of the cannery, I was enabled to make a very satisfactory examination of the methods of this new, interesting, and important branch of the fisheries during the two days passed in this part of the State. I returned to San Francisco June 6.