

Rock off Stewart Island. This resulted in a total of 10,457 sacks being taken from these most westerly beds. The purpose of the limit is to save undue exploitation of the beds which are normally used—i.e., the East and West Beds and the smaller beds contiguous thereto. It now appears from the Oyster Inspector's observations over a number of years that there is a definite drop in the catch per day from the Saddle Bed, the most extensive bed to the westward of the line mentioned above, and this, in conjunction with the disturbing fact that the average size of the oysters being dredged is declining—a sack of oysters used to contain from sixty-two to sixty-five dozen, whereas now the same sized sack contains seventy to eighty dozen—raises the question as to whether or not the Department is wise in approving any extension to the 7,000-sack limit. The Foveaux Strait oyster-beds are the last of the large natural oyster-beds of the world, and it is the duty of the Government to prevent the depletion of these natural resources. It has been suggested that, instead of a seasonal limit of 7,000 sacks per vessel, a limit of 70 sacks per vessel per day's dredging should be imposed so as to (a) prevent excessive catches, and (b) ensure more careful cultching so as to avoid waste of those oysters which, although above the legal size, are not sufficiently mature to be marketable.

WHITEBAIT

The total production for the 1943 whitebait season is estimated at approximately 5,002 cwt. on the basis of returns sent in by local Inspectors at the most important centres, which, however, do not cover all whitebait-fishing waters. The usual details for comparison with previous years are given in the summary that follows:—

Whitebait Fishery, 1943 Season

Inspector's Centre.	Rivers fished.	Method of Fishing.	Fishing began.	Best Month.	Number of Fishermen. (Approximately.)		Total Quantity caught (approximately).
					Whole Time.	Part Time.	
Auckland ..	Waikato	Hand-nets ..		September ..	100	50	Cwt. 482
Auckland ..	Kaituna	Hand-nets ..	Mid-August ..	September ..	25	..	67
Auckland ..	Tarawera, Rangitaiki	Hand-nets ..	2nd August ..	September ..	16	..	85
Napier ..	Ngauroro, Tukituki	Set and scoop nets	July ..	October ..	30	25	50
New Plymouth and Waitara	Waitara, Mokau, Awa-kino, Waiongona, Mimi, Waiwakaiho, Onacro	Hand and set nets	July ..	September–October	..	250	42
Wanganui ..	Turakina, Kai Iwi, Wanganui	Hand-net ..	September ..	October ..	..	18	8
Foxton ..	Manawatu ..	Hand-net ..	July ..	October ..	..	10	10
Blenheim ..	Wairau, Opawa, Tuamarina	Hand-net ..	August ..	October ..	3	20	45
Christchurch	Waimakariri, Ashley, Styx, Salt-water Creek, Waipara, Avon, Halswell	Hand and set nets	August ..	October ..	50	..	134
Temuka ..	Opihi, Orari ..	Set-nets ..	August ..	November ..	..	30	16
Dunedin ..	Molyneux, Puerua, Waikawa, Owaka, Taieri, Shag, Waikouaiti, Tokomairiro, Pleasant, Kakanui, Waitaki, Waimakarua	Hand-nets ..	September ..	October–November	10	20	67
Dunedin ..	Mataura, Oreti, Aparima, Titiroa, Otakau, Waiau, Waikiwi, Makarewa	Hand and set nets	August ..	October–November	25	30	186
Wairoa ..	Big Wanganui, Karangarua, Waia-tato, Maori, Mahitahi, Okuru, Poerua, Wairoa, Waitangi	Set-nets ..	September ..	October ..	60	36	1,991
Hokitika ..	Hokitika, Mahinapua Creek, Walmea Stream, and neighbouring tidal streams	Hand and set nets	August ..	October ..	..	127	988
Greymouth ..	Teremakau, Grey ..	Hand-nets ..	August ..	October–November	..	130	116
Westport ..	Buller, Orowaiti, Nile, Totara, Little Wanganui, Mokihi-nui, Karamea	Hand-nets ..	August ..	October ..	50	40	656
Karamea ..	Karamea, Little Wanganui	Hand-nets ..	1st August ..	September ..	1	12	6
Takaka ..	Takaka	Hand-nets ..	August ..	September ..	3	4	15
Motueka ..	Motueka, Mouere ..	Hand and set nets	August ..	October ..	9	6	38
Total ..					..	..	5,002

The Dominion total for the year is the highest recorded since special returns for whitebait-fishing were first collected in 1931. The previous year's catch, which would total somewhere between 1,300 cwt. and 1,400 cwt. for the 1942 season, was the lowest. The phenomenally successful fishing in Westland,