

Return showing the Total Quantity and Value of Fish Imported into and Exported from New Zealand during the Year ended 31st December, 1916.

FISH IMPORTED.

	Quantity.	Value.
Anchovies, salted (in bulk)	10 cwt.	£28
Oysters, fresh	Nil.	Nil.
Other fish, fresh or frozen	9 cwt.	£32
Fish, preserved in tins	2,727,914 lb.	£90,908
Fish, smoked, dried, pickled, and salted	640 cwt.	£1,853

FISH EXPORTED.

	New Zealand Produce.		Not New Zealand Produce.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Anchovies, salted (in bulk)	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Oysters, fresh	178,354 doz.	£1,340	Nil.	Nil.
Other fish, fresh or frozen	18,133 cwt.	£29,737	Nil.	Nil.
Fish, preserved in tins	128,528 lb.	£7,526	137,761 lb.	£5,053
Fish, smoked, dried, pickled, and salted	91 cwt.	£212	9 cwt.	£30

Rock-oyster Beds.

As will be seen by the return given in this report, the total quantity of oysters marketed during the year was 8,166 sacks. The oysters were in splendid condition throughout the whole of the season. There was a considerable increase in the number of retail parcels sold on previous seasons, showing that the public appreciate the Department's efforts to supply small quantities at a reasonable price.

On account of the poor fixing of spat on all the beds during the last three seasons the oyster-beds everywhere have had to be carefully nursed, and every care taken that the quantity picked each season does not exceed the number of young oysters which are coming on to take the place of those taken away. Valuable work in the improvement of the beds has been done during the summer months at Great Barrier and Bay of Islands by removing "high-water" rock down to the mid-tide oyster-line.

It was the intention of the Department to commence restocking the beds at Whangaroa, in Whangaroa Harbour, this season, but owing to the difficulty of getting a suitable scow to convey the oyster-rock from the Bay of Islands it was found impossible to carry out this work as intended.

A shipment of oyster-rock was taken by the "Hinemoa" from Manukau Harbour and planted in Crail and Manaroa Bays, Pelorus Sound. The oyster-rock arrived in good condition, and was successfully planted in suitable localities in the bays mentioned.

With regard to the rock-oysters planted in Queen Charlotte Sound and Tory Channel last year, two or three of the plants put down in Bay of Many Coves have died, but those in the other beds are reported to be growing and doing well.

Planting Foveaux Strait Oysters in Cook Strait.

It was the intention of the Department to put down a bed of Foveaux Strait oysters in Cook Strait during the year, but on account of the oysters being too near spawning in October the work had to be put off for that season; but arrangements have now been made to have oysters planted during the coming winter.

Quinnat Salmon.

The number of salmon-eggs collected last spawning season was 1,106,000; 866,000 were collected at the Hakataramea Station and 240,000 from the Dobson River. An effort was made to net the Ahuriri River for spawning salmon, but on account of the heavy current and freshes the attempt was not successful. The salmon-eggs were disposed of as follows: 25,000 were supplied to the Tasmanian Government, 1,000,000 were sent to the West Coast to stock the Hokitika River, and 81,000 were hatched out at Hakataramea.

I estimate that quite four times as many salmon came up the Waitaki last spawning season as during the season of 1915; the collection of eggs was more than four times the quantity taken the previous year.

With regard to the time that these salmon commence to run in from the sea, the first fish this season was taken during the last week of January. A very large run came in during the last two weeks of February, and all through the month of March. In the Waitaki they were taken freely by trout-anglers; the number landed in this way is estimated at about 400 fish,