

on an appreciation of the necessity of such data for a proper understanding of the fishing from year to year, and not from any compulsion imposed by the regulations. Of course, the responses have not been uniformly satisfactory, but, with the District Inspectors to assist where necessary, further improvements may be expected.

It is hoped, in the annual reports on fisheries in future, to give tables in a form designed to record fishing conditions and results with more significance as well as with more accuracy. For this report only one additional table has been included, IIb, (p. 47) which shows the quantities of different kinds of fish caught by different methods of fishing for the year ended 31st March, 1937.

The statement which follows gives the estimated total quantity and value of the principal classes of fishery products marketed during the year :—

	Quantity.	Value. £
Wet fish	363,128 cwt.	360,466
Whitebait	1,888 cwt.	17,621
Oysters (dredged)	63,412 sacks	39,632
Oysters (rock)	4,035 sacks	4,840
Mussels	10,415 sacks	2,809
Crayfish	8,868 cwt.	7,848
Toheroa (canned products)	104,936 lb.	6,271
Whale oil	280 tons	4,760
Quinnat salmon (netted fish only)	1,067 lb.	54
Total value		<u>£444,301</u>

In comparing these total figures with those of previous year's reports the fact must not be overlooked that, since they have been for the most part compiled from data collected, as explained above, on a different basis, the figures for wet fish and crayfish for the two years will not be strictly comparable. It is possible that the 1935-36 total of 363,448 cwt. for wet fish may have been slightly too high, because the bulk of the figures had been obtained from information supplied by merchants at the large centres, some of whose fish may have been derived from small outside fishing-ports. In the past there has thus always existed a possibility of the same fish figuring in two totals. However, the error involved was small, because such uncertainty applied to a very small portion of the whole, and it was also counter-balanced by the omission of sundry small catches that were disposed of by hawking, frequently by the catchers themselves.

Bearing these cautions in mind it will be noticed that the total quantity of wet fish landed for the year under review—363,128 cwt.—is very similar to that for the previous year, being scarcely 0·9 per cent. below it. Its total value, however, is estimated at £360,466, which is about 15 per cent. increase. A marked decline is shown for whitebait and quinnat salmon, but all other categories show an increased yield. Details may be studied in Tables I-IV (pages 44 to 48).

Surveying briefly the main features of the year's fishery at the principal ports we may first consider Auckland, which is by far the most important fishery port of the Dominion. Comparative figures for the total landings and for the two categories, snapper and flounder, for the last six years are given below :—

	1931-32.	1932-33.	1933-34.	1934-35.	1935-36.	1936-37.
	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.
Total quantity landed ..	83,753	82,758	91,512	102,313	129,209	159,371
Snapper	43,102	49,657	60,540	68,432	88,374	112,656
Flounder (including dabs) ..	4,201	10,452	6,607	6,550	7,560	3,743

The figures for total landings and for snapper are the highest yet recorded for any one year. The flounder total, with which is included the category returned as "mixed flat-fish," is the lowest for six years. This last is to be ascribed partly to a scarcity of the fish and partly to increased restriction on the fishing, the principal spawning-grounds for flounders in the Hauraki Gulf having been closed to Danish seiners for the two months (August and September) covering the period of reproduction, instead of the one month imposed the previous year, by a regulation gazetted on 8th August, 1935.

Two steam-trawlers were in full-time operation and one part-time, as against one whole-time and two part-time for the previous year, and during the year these vessels made 117 landings, an increase of twenty-two on the landings made for the year 1935-36. The trawler voyages were divided between the outer grounds of the Hauraki Gulf and the Bay of Plenty grounds in the proportion of about 3 to 2, with seven landings from the West Coast out of the total of 117. Trawl-caught fish represented 34 per cent. of the total landings at Auckland, Danish-seined fish 61 per cent., and line-fishing vessels and net-fishing vessels landed 2·4 per cent. and 2·2 per cent. of the total respectively.

In October, 1936, there was a dispute between the fishermen manning the thirty-two vessels comprising the Danish-seiner fleet and the fish-merchants regarding the prices paid for fish, and these vessels were not taken to sea between the 9th and the 24th of that month. The dispute was settled by the merchants agreeing to pay 2d. per pound for snapper and tarakihi, and the merchants came to an agreement among themselves regarding the over rigorous competition which had been going on in connection with export trade. There does not appear to be much foundation for the hope that this