exaggerated owing to the new system of collecting the data. The total for this port obtained from data collected in the old way approximates very closely to that of last year. The usual comparative table for the last six years follows:—

Fish landed at Thames.	1931–32.	1932–33.	1933–34.	1934–35.	1935–36.	1936–37.
	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.
Total wet fish	21,291	18,078	17,412	17,614	19,134	15,447
Snapper	10,257	9,750	10,429	11,163	14,053	11,356
Flounder (including dabs)	7,228	6,516	4,869	4,769	3,305	2,165
Total value	£21,116	£14,029	£13,595	£13,957	£14,593	£16,690

A welcome rise in the total value is shown, the highest since 1931–32. This is due to the better prices paid for both snapper and flounders, especially for the latter part of the year, though both kinds had declined in quantity. For the time being, at any rate, Thames has fallen from the relatively more important position it held as a fishing-port in former years. Among the probable causes of this decline may be mentioned the deterioration of the flounder fishing and the disadvantage at which Thames is placed compared with Auckland from the better position of the larger port as an exporting centre and from its possession of a large fleet of Danish-seiners, most of which are recently-built vessels. Reports and fishing returns tend to show that the local fishing-grounds of the Thames are maintaining a satisfactory degree of productivity. So far as snapper fishing is concerned, this has been ascribed to the measures that have been taken for the protection of the spawning and nursery grounds. One may reasonably expect that the more recent steps taken to restrict the catching of dabs and flounders when they are spawning or congregating to spawn, together with the regulation prescribing a larger mesh for flounder nets will in time produce the desired improvement in the flatfish stocks. In passing, it may be mentioned that these more effective fishery regulations are based on a biological understanding of the fish stocks combined with a practical acquaintance with fishery operations. Thanks to the work of the staff of the Fisheries Branch in the Auckland district some progress has been made along such lines, which are fundamental as a basis for sound administrative action; but even in the Hauraki Gulf the problems to be elucidated are more than can be tackled with our present resources; and elsewhere, for lack of the means for making biological investigation or for practical contacts with fishery operations, administration has been left rather groping in the dark.

Fishing activity at Gisborne, which had slumped badly during the depression years, shows a decided revival; with one steamer trawling for part of the year and three whole-time motor-trawlers in operation, the landings have risen from 2,190 cwt. (value, £1,920) to 4,219 cwt. (value, £4,136). Good catches of tarakihi and groper were reported.

The Napier fish returns show a decrease compared with the previous year, the total being 15,585 cwt., as against 16,421 cwt., the total flat-fish landings having fallen by 242 cwt. and the round fish by 594 cwt. The total value, however, is higher, £15,522, compared with £13,782. The number of landings by trawlers diminished from 1,648 to 1,340, while Danish-seiner landings increased from 246 to 404. Trawling was responsible for 11,383 cwt., Danish-seining for 2,532 cwt., line-fishing for 1,661 cwt., while set-net and seine-fishing produced 9 cwt. out of the total of 15,585 cwt.

With returns received from every licensed fishing-boat, together with a better supply of market records, it has been possible to obtain much more comprehensive information as to the fishing in the Wellington district than has previously been the case. The two steam-trawlers, operating for the most part on the Cape Campbell, Kapiti, Kaikoura, and Palliser Bay grounds, provided 65 per cent. of the total fish landed. The principal fish caught by the trawlers, in order of abundance, was tarakihi (over 70 per cent. of the total fish landed by these vessels), moki (4·7 per cent.), barracouta (3·9 per cent.), snapper (2·4 per cent.), red cod (2·1 per cent.), groper (1·1 per cent.), and "whiting" (1 per cent.)

With regard to the long-line fishing-vessels operating from Wellington, the data available show the highest total for both groper (hapuku) and ling that has been shown since the collection of records of the fishing was commenced in 1932, with practically no change in the hake landings since last year. The general use of sardines ("Picton Herrings") as bait for groper has had a marked effect in improving the catches.

The catch for the district totalled 46,103 cwt., valued at £54,908, and consisted of: Trawled fish, 62·3 per cent.; fish landed by the regular long-lining fleet of Wellington, 23·5 per cent.; fish from miscellaneous fishing-launches working in and around Wellington Harbour, 10·1 per cent.; fish from local rowing boats, 0·1 per cent.; and fish caught by boats operating at Makara, Paremata, Paraparaumu, and other small stations on the west coast of the province, 3·9 per cent. Of the total fish landed in Wellington 45·7 per cent. by weight consisted of tarakihi, with groper (hapuku) next in order of importance, representing 19·5 per cent. Making nine landings at Wellington during the year, the fish-carrier "South Sea" brought a total of 8,721 cwt. of blue cod, 12 cwt. of groper, and 6 cwt. of mixed fish from the Chatham Islands.

The returns from the French Pass district give a total of 2,545 cwt., compared with the previous year's total of 1,919 cwt. We are now getting much better information as to the fishing in this region than formerly, but it is still uncertain whether our data represent the whole of the fish taken. It would appear, however, that there is very little steady and continuous fishing throughout the year, and the returns received give an average of approximately seven landings per boat per month for the only three boats that worked every month during the year. The other boats did not average more than two landings each per month.