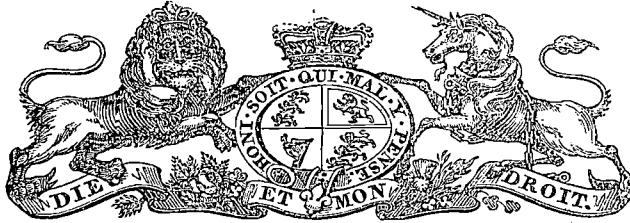


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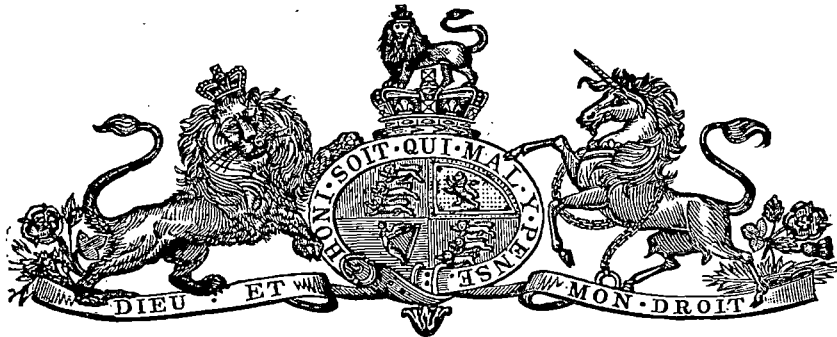
1892.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT:

REPORT FOR 1891.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

Hobart, 31st May, 1892.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to present to you the Report of the working of the Fisheries Department for year 1891, and period down to date of this Report,—the fishing season ending 30th April in each year.

SECRETARYSHIP.

Mr. Philip S. Seager, in consequence of the multiplicity of his other official duties, found it necessary to tender his resignation as at 28 February, 1891, of his position as Secretary to the Commissioners of Fisheries; and the Commissioners, in accepting his resignation, placed on record the following Minute:—"That the Commissioners desire to express their sincere regret at the resignation of the office of Secretary by Mr. Seager, and their sense of the serious loss they will sustain by his retirement; and they feel it is due to him to place on record their thankful appreciation of the zeal, ability, and courtesies which he has invariably displayed in the conduct of his duties."

Mr. Harrington Wedge Knight, of Sandy Bay, was appointed to the vacant post.

CARETAKER AT SALMON PONDS.

Mr. Harry Stannard, who for some years had occupied the position of Caretaker at the Hatchery on the River Plenty, died suddenly on 23 November, 1891; and, although advertisements were inserted in most of the principal newspapers throughout the Colonies for a capable man to take his place, no suitable person applied. At the present time Mr. Michael Jones is in temporary charge of the establishment, and has so far given satisfaction.

COMMISSIONERS.

Philip S. Seager, Esquire, was appointed a Commissioner in place of Dr. Huston, deceased; and the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Dr. Gray was filled by Curzon Allport, Esquire.

PROTECTION OF SEALS.

At the request of the New Zealand Government, that the Macquarie Islands should be closed to sealers, and influential representations having been made from Bass Straits that the seals in that locality were in danger of becoming extinct, regulations were made prohibiting the taking of seals in Tasmania and her Dependencies for a period of three years from 20 July, 1891. The Victorian Government kindly made similar protection, at our request, to all parts within their jurisdiction.

OYSTER CULTURE.

There is little to report in relation to the resuscitation of this important industry. Very satisfactory results were anticipated from the Tasmanian Fish and Oyster Company, whose beds are situated at Spring Bay, but unfortunately the pressure of the times has caused a cessation of operations, although the indications of success were most promising. A large natural bed was found and worked upon the East Coast, and there is no reason to doubt that if systematic exploration by competent persons were followed, other large and extensive beds would be found. With regard to

artificial culture, little results can be expected unless persons skilled in the calling are available. With such skilled labour there seems to be no reason to doubt that the success attained in France and elsewhere might not also be attained in this Colony.

The Commissioners have fixed on Pipeclay Lagoon at Sandford for the purpose of trying the experiment of artificially re-stocking a locality where oysters were once naturally numerous. For this purpose beds have been formed, and a supply of 5000 oysters from the East Coast have been carefully selected for stocking purposes. It will be of much interest during the coming summer to watch the success or otherwise of this experiment.

EXTENSION OF NETTING BOUNDARIES, RIVERS DERWENT AND HUON.

A Resolution having been passed in the House of Assembly giving an opinion that there should be an extension of the netting boundaries in Rivers Derwent and Huon, it has been resolved to recommend that in the Derwent the line for graball netting should be extended from the old boundary (viz., a line from the Flagstaff, Battery Point, to First Bluff at Bellerive) to a boundary represented by an imaginary line drawn from same flagstaff to the northern end of Smelting Works Bay, thus giving a large additional extent of foreshore for netting, whilst it leaves the Harbour and Domain free for anglers, especially of the poorer class, who frequent the jetties and rocks at these places in goodly numbers and procure a valuable supply of fish.

In the Huon the Commissioners have decided to recommend the opening the river for graball netting from Shipwrights' Point, the old boundary, up to the southern end of North Egg Island, under certain regulations.

FINANCE.

The Revenue and Expenditure of the Department for the past two years are shown in the following table :—

Season.	Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	Licences.	Sale of Ova.	Total.	General.	Special Vote for Destruction of Cormorants.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1890-91.....	224 15 0	...	224 15 0	384 8 8	...	384 8 8
1891-92.....	192 7 6	10 12 6	203 0 0	381 19 0	199 9 6	581 8 6

A falling-off will be noticed in the revenue from Licences to fish for Salmon and Trout in the season just closed. This is explained by the Sub-collectors throughout the Colony as being due to the destruction of the fish by cormorants. The consequent diminution of fish in the rivers have rendered the latter less attractive to anglers.

DESTRUCTION OF CORMORANTS.

These voracious birds having invaded the rivers and inland waters throughout the Colony in large numbers, committing great havoc amongst the fish, both native and imported, the Commissioners during last season set to work actively to have them destroyed, and, to that end, offered one shilling a head for the black species, which are unquestionably the most destructive. The result was the handing in of about 4000 heads, and the consequent lessening of these birds upon the rivers. The Commissioners are continuing rewards during the present season for both black and black-and-white cormorants, but at a reduced price of sixpence a head. Considerable numbers are being shot.

WORK AT THE HATCHERY.

Distribution of Ova and Fry.

Season 1890-91.

Owing to heavy floods only a small supply of ova was obtainable; the harvest therefore proved a failure, and only 7340 fry were available for distribution. These were issued as under :—

Salmon Trout.		Brown Trout.	
Where liberated.	Quantity.	Where liberated.	Quantity.
Northern Rivers	4950	North (Epping)	500
Campbell Town.....	300	Plenty.....	690
Plenty.....	900		
Total.....	6150	Total.....	1190

Season 1891-92

The season being more favourable, a good supply of Ova was obtained both from the fish in the Ponds and the River; and the following distribution of Ova and Fry was enabled to be made:—

FRY.				OVA.	
Californian Trout.		Salmon Trout and other species Salmonidae.		Salmon Trout.	
Where liberated.	Quantity.	Where liberated.	Quantity.	Where forwarded.	Quantity.
Northern Rivers	2150	Southern Rivers	58,000	Geelong	15,000
Inland Lakes	2500	Northern Rivers	10,500	Sydney	5000
Southern Rivers	2650				
Total.....	7300	Total	68,500	Total.....	20,000

Salmo salar.

The young salmon presented by the Hon. J. W. Agnew were retained in the Ponds until they assumed the smolt form. On 12th October, 1889, the gratings were removed in order that the fish might pass into the River Plenty. It is estimated that 130,000 accepted their liberty between the 12th October and 5th November, when the gratings were replaced. In the month of May, 1892, the Pond was emptied, and those remaining, number 225, were placed in the Plenty. 200 selected specimens were kept back in October, 1889, to form a breeding stock. These should have spawned in 1891, but from some unaccountable cause did not do so. It is anticipated they will do so during the coming season.

Salmo leuvenensis.

Fish produced from Ova purchased in New Zealand, and hatched at the Ponds, have been placed in Lakes Sorell and Laycock, and a small lot in the River Esk.

Salmo fontinalis.

Fish produced from Ova also purchased in New Zealand, and hatched at the Ponds, have been used to stock Lakes Sorell, Crescent, and Dulverton. Various fresh-water streams and rivers also received a supply of this splendid brook trout during last season.

FISHERY STATISTICS.

Owing to a misunderstanding the statistics of fish sold at the Hobart market have not reached the Commissioners regularly. The statistics of fish sold can therefore be only given for six months. Arrangements have now been made by which these returns will be always available in the future:—

Period.	Fish.			Crayfish.		
	Doz.	£	s. d.	Score.	£	s. d.
November, 1891	1779	=	488 7 0	79	=	19 15 0
December, 1891	2386	=	423 5 0	30	=	7 10 0
January, 1892	2499	=	473 14 0	120	=	30 0 0
February, 1892.....	2966	=	546 15 0	80	=	20 0 0
March, 1892	2276	=	560 11 6	180	=	45 0 0
April, 1892.....	3128	=	525 19 4	142	=	35 11 0
Totals for Six Months only.....	15,034	=	£3018 11 10	631	=	£157 16 0

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

MATTHEW SEAL, *Chairman Commissioners
of Fisheries.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Hobart.