

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS; A REPORT
UPON THE SCALLOP FISHERY
OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649061860

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts; A Report Upon the Scallop Fishery of Massachusetts by
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS; A REPORT
UPON THE SCALLOP FISHERY
OF MASSACHUSETTS**

*Massachusetts, Commission on
= Fisheries and Game.*
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A REPORT

UPON

THE SCALLOP FISHERY

OF

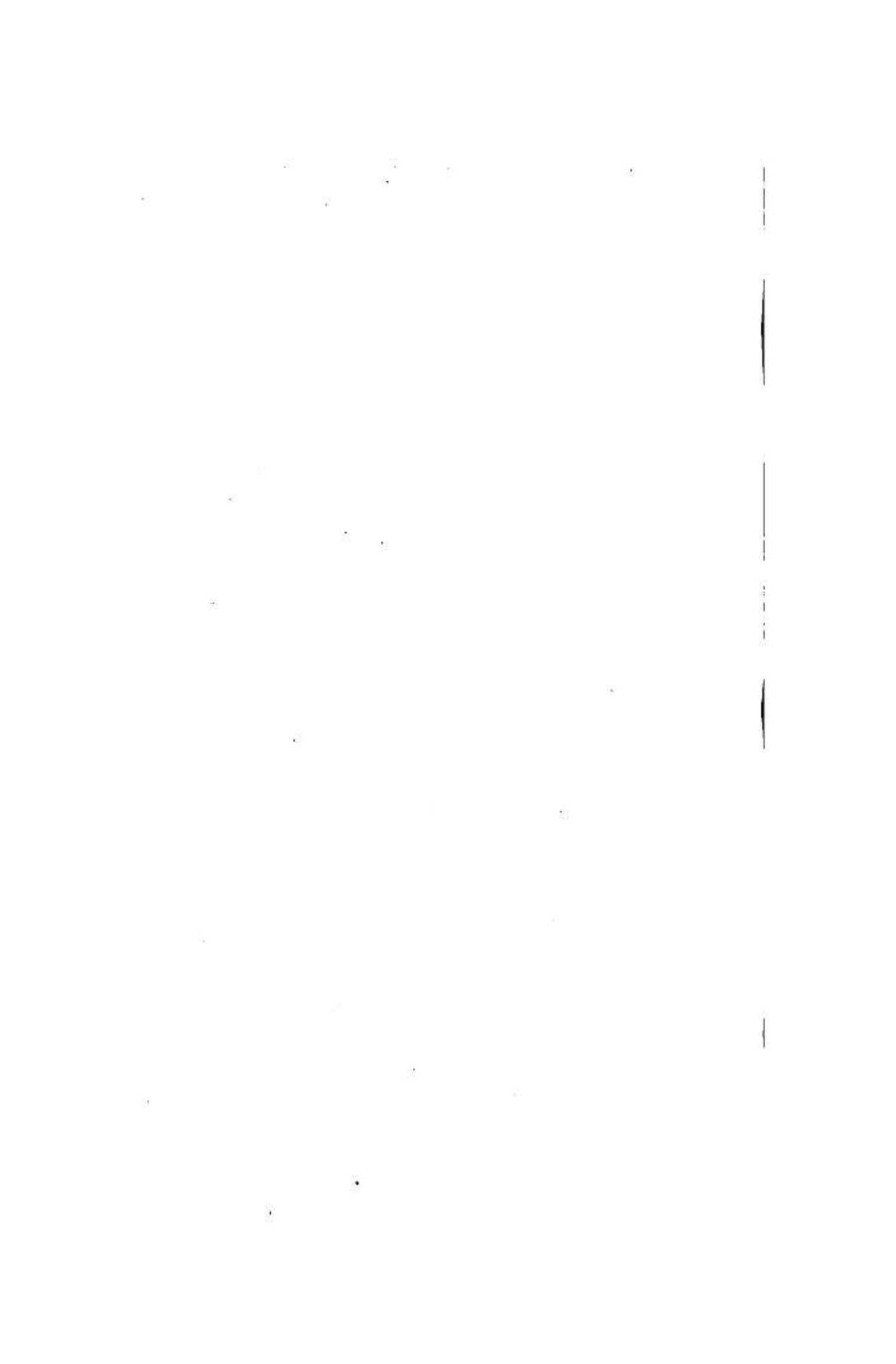
MASSACHUSETTS,

INCLUDING THE HABITS, LIFE HISTORY OF *PECTEN IRRADIANS*,
ITS RATE OF GROWTH, AND OTHER FACTS OF
ECONOMIC VALUE.



BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1910.

APPROVED BY
THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.



A REPORT UPON THE SCALLOP FISHERY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

The bays, estuaries and tidal flats of New England are practically undeveloped as sources of food. The demands and conditions of an increased population, far surpassing the dreams of the framers of the colonial laws, have in a very great degree destroyed the delicately adjusted balance of animal life in these waters, and left us only a comparatively barren waste, governed by laws far out of tune with the changed conditions. The waters are capable of producing for man as much "sea food" as formerly, possibly more, but certainly an enormous increase over present supply if the laws could be so amended as to permit the cultivation of the bays and shores to the full capacity, after the scientific agricultural methods already adopted for increasing the yield of the land.

It is a well-established law of economics that increased population increases the demand for food, with consequent higher prices. These higher prices tend to spread to well nigh every branch of living expenses. The fundamental method of checking this undue increase is to increase the supply. We have learned to do this in the case of corn, potatoes, wheat and other agricultural staples, and (apart from uneconomic and often harmful manipulation of prices by speculators) the increased demand brings forth an increased supply. With the supply of game, lobsters, fish, clams, scallops, etc., however, we apply the absurd practice of limiting the demand by restrictive legislation, *e.g.*, close season, size limit, limits upon time of catching or upon quantities to be taken each day, etc., rather than seeking to augment the supply. If the demand for corn or potatoes tends to higher prices, the logical remedy is the production of

more corn and potatoes. We do not call vociferously for a close season on corn or potatoes, or for any other law which tends to restrict the demand. Measures are taken as quickly as possible to augment the supply.

The necessary increased development of our shellfish supply is notoriously prevented by antiquated and inadequate laws. Agriculture cannot flourish where the community must depend either upon natural yields ("volunteer" crops), or upon fields tilled in common by persons whose chief aim is to selfishly appropriate the results "before the other fellow" can.

The capital required for cultivation of the water, aquiculture, is far less than that required for successful cultivation of the land, while the returns per acre are far greater, both in money and in food value of the product. Our shores, therefore, offer remarkable opportunities for the development of shellfish gardens. Here employment could be furnished for many thousands of unskilled laborers, in a healthy and remunerative occupation.

To secure such desirable results the public mind must be disabused of the false idea, almost universally and tenaciously held, that the "public rights" of getting shellfish wherever they may be found is a valuable and inalienable right. It is equally illogical to apply the same reasoning to forest and fruit trees, to strawberries, raspberries and cranberries, making these the property of the person who discovers and markets them, while at the same time making laws which prevent increasing the natural yield through cultivation by individual owners or lessees. The intelligent public cannot fail, however, to see, upon careful and thoughtful consideration, that what has been represented to be a boasted blessing is now in fact a veritable incubus, impeding further progress, and to this are to be traced many of the unfavorable conditions which check the development of our fishing industries and the prosperity of our shore dwellers.

An abundance of "sea food" is a strong attraction to our summer visitors. But the supply must be certain, regular, definite, readily accessible for quick consumption; available in sufficient quantities to meet special seasons of largely increased demand; and produced under unquestionable sanitary conditions.

Further, the supply of bait for our shore fisheries is an exceedingly important item, and should furnish directly large

opportunities for employment, in addition to increasing the quantity of sea fish landed upon our shores.

For these reasons it has seemed wise to the Legislature to devote some attention to the questions involved in the very obvious decline in the shellfish production along our coasts, since this decline affects not alone the shore communities, but, to some degree, every citizen of the State. The problem must be viewed in its broad aspect. The source and the supply of sea food is not solely and exclusively the peculiar asset of the seashore town, to be kept forever closed to development. It should be truly public, in the sense which our forefathers intended, *i.e.*, "free to every citizen of the Commonwealth," free, not for plunder and destruction, but for intelligent development for the increased production of food and wealth.

Inasmuch as the scallop (*Pecten irradians*) and the lobster (*Homarus vulgaris*), though formerly exceedingly numerous and cheap, have now become merely a delicacy, practically beyond the reach of the average citizen, it seemed desirable to investigate for the purpose of suggesting some feasible methods for increasing the market supply, before the source is commercially exhausted.

To say that the fault lies in the increased use of these foods is but idly begging the question. The fault rather lies in the failure to assist Nature, which is ever ready to respond to intelligent and well-directed efforts to increase her bounty.

The report covers in very considerable detail the facts connected with the scallop industry. The notable peculiar fact in the life history, the weak link in the chain of supply, and, therefore, of greatest importance, is that the abundance and even the continuance of the scallop depend chiefly upon the generation immediately preceding. Thus, successful fishing depends upon the number of eggs laid by the previous generation of scallops. The number of eggs laid depends upon how many adults lived through the vicissitudes of the previous winter, after escaping the dredges of the scallopers. As a general rule, the scallop lays but a single litter of eggs, inconceivably vast in numbers, but yet only a single litter. It seems surprising that nature should, so to speak, rest all on a single throw. So narrow, indeed, is the margin of safety that the excessive destruction of scallops