

ably ascend the river to near that point and anchor, while a tug would perhaps be necessary to operate with further. It seems that the Little Pedee is literally teeming with all kinds of fish. The country is poor, low, and unsettled, and the river seems to be a succession of lakes for a long distance. It is said that rockfish are here in great numbers, and are taken during April and May full of eggs.

While the mouth of the Little Pedee is so excellent a place for getting spawn, the Edisto also is a good stream for these fish, and so is the Ogeechee River, near Savannah. At the mouth of Black Creek, a stream that runs by Darlington and empties into the Great Pedee, is a favorite place to fish for rock, and so is a stream on the opposite side of the Pedee, in Marlborough County. Sometimes very large rockfish in considerable numbers are taken, in the spring of the year, by the shad fishermen in the Pedee and Waccamaw Rivers near Georgetown, S. C. Up the rivers in the brackish water the tide extends inland a long distance here.

It is a very gratifying fact that shad have been more plentiful in our Southern waters this year than for twenty-five years before. If this is due to the efforts of the U. S. Fish Commission, the poor people here (white and black) owe it a sincere debt of gratitude.

DARLINGTON C. H., S. C., *May 22, 1886.*

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#### 46.—FISH AND FISHING AT ABACO ISLAND.

By **WILLARD NYE, Jr.**

At this island fish abound. From boats the islanders catch margot, porgies, hogfish, &c., in four fathoms of water, while the groupers and large blackfish are taken in water seven or more fathoms deep. The men go to the fishing-grounds and with water-glasses hunt for a spot where the fish are seen swimming around, which is generally found away from the heavy growth of coral, and on some sand spot where a fine grassy fern-like gorgonian is scattered. For bait, conch or crawfish is used; the latter is most used, although the grouper seems to prefer a piece of fresh fish.

The fishermen generally fish with a water-glass in the left hand and the line in the right, until they have hooked a fish; this is because these fish often take the bait into their mouths without the fisherman being able to feel them with the line. I think a man would catch at least one-fourth more fish with a water-glass than without one. For the same reason (the light way in which the fish bite), a very short snood (from 2 to 5 inches long) is used on the hook and put on several inches above the sinker, so that a very slight pull may be felt. Considerable quantities of grunts, sailor's choice, &c.. are caught with hand-lines by men

too poor to own a boat, who wade out from the shore and fish where the water is three or four feet deep. The best time for this fishing is during a rising tide, just about sunset.

In the deep holes of creeks the mangrove-snapper was seen in such numbers as to make these places resemble the wells of smacks. At one place, under the mangrove roots near the shore, not having a fish-line, I killed 8 of these fish (singly with a shot-gun) that would average 3 pounds apiece.

During the summer months many turtle of the green, loggerhead, and hawk's-bill varieties are caught, either by being speared at or near the surface, caught with jigs while on the bottom, or in tangle-nets around the reefs. Catching them with jigs was new to me, and is done in this way: The jig is made of three or four hooks, about the size of small shark-hooks, fastened to a line which reaches a few inches below and has a sinker made fast to the end. The fisherman goes out in a boat, and when a turtle is seen on the bottom (say in 6 or 7 fathoms) the jig is let down and dragged along until it brings up against him, when a quick jerk will generally fasten it in some soft spot, and the turtle is pulled to the surface.

Turtles are found at and around most of the keys and reefs of the Bahama Islands. They come ashore to deposit their eggs during May and June, and the fishermen assert that they generally lay three times a year. These eggs are much sought after by the islanders, and are considered excellent food. If many more than can be eaten are found, they are sent to Nassau, where they bring about 12 cents a dozen. As the eggs begin to hatch, barracouta, sharks, &c., gather around the reefs in large numbers to feed on the young turtles as they venture out into deep water.

To escape this danger, the young turtles take to the shoals, creeks, and shallow lagoons, where the fishermen catch them during the early fall, pursuing them in boats as they swim along near the bottom. At first it is all that the men can do to row fast enough to keep one in sight, but after a few minutes the turtle becomes exhausted and is easily approached near enough to be speared. These young turtles are delicious eating. I saw none of the regular turtle pegs, the fishermen using mostly an iron or steel headed spear, the head (with line attached) coming off when the turtle was struck; but I noticed they tried not to strike him too hard or near the middle for fear of killing him, and thus preventing preservation for market. If they would use a regular turtle peg this trouble would be entirely done away with. The shell of the hawk's-bill is carried to Nassau, polished, and sold to winter visitors and others, \$1.25 being the usual price asked for one 8 inches, and \$2.50 for those 12 inches in length.

NEW BEDFORD, MASS., *May 12, 1886.*