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TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF
FISHERIES

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1929

TO THE
GOVERNOR *and*
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



BUREAU OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA

1929

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STATE BOARD OF FISHERIES

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E. Mitchell Seabrook, Edisto Island, S. C.
J. Walter Doar, Georgetown, S. C.
Chief Inspector, P. M. Buckner
(Home Address) Walterboro, (Office) Beaufort, S. C.
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REPORT

To his Excellency, John G. Richards, Governor, and the Honorable General Assembly of South Carolina:

The Board of Fisheries respectfully submit their annual report for the year 1929 as required by law.

SCOPE OF WORK

About twenty-two years ago the South Carolina General Assembly, realizing the need for the proper supervision and development of coastal fisheries in South Carolina, created what is known as the State Board of Fisheries, and clothed it with certain jurisdiction pertaining to commercial fisheries in salt and tidal waters. At various times during these twenty-two years, for many reasons, the work has failed to carry on activities properly belonging to the Board of Fisheries. These reasons involve many points, including failure of appropriations, local opposition, and a general lack of recognition of the value of the work to be done. During recent years the Legislature has been more liberal with the appropriations, has passed protective legislation, and today it seems that the Board of Fisheries will be allowed to develop a most wonderful natural resource in the coastal waters of the State which will furnish employment to thousands of people, and which should eventually bring into the State a large revenue.

Under the present laws, the Board has general supervision of all commercial salt waters and tidal fishing along the South Carolina seacoast from the Savannah River on the south to the North Carolina line on the north. Included in the regulatory powers of the Board may be enumerated the supervision of the catching or taking for commercial purposes, oysters, clams, crabs, terrapin, etc., and crustacean, such as shrimp, etc. It is the duty of the Board to enforce all the laws dealing with the catching of such products of the sea and tidal water, including the enforcement of open and closed season, tackling regulations and enforcement of the tax laws on various fishing activities.

GEOGRAPHY

The Savannah River, the southern boundary of the State, furnishes an enormous area of salt, brackish and tidal waters and from the Savannah River boat traffic is open the entire distance to the North Carolina line. This river brings to the sea a large amount of fresh water, necessary for the development of shell fishing, one other large stream along the seacoast bringing a volume of fresh water from the Piedmont and Appalachian section of this State, and other states, is the Santee. Other fresh water streams contributing to the development of commercial salt water fishing include the Pee Dee, the Edisto and the Combahee Rivers. There are other small streams which also require careful supervision by the State Board of Fisheries.

The coastal section of South Carolina abounds in salt water rivers, creeks, bays and inlets. There are numerous excellent harbors along the coast, and all of these inlets of various sorts covering immense areas, are placed under the supervision of the State Board of Fisheries for the regulation of salt water fishing. Anyone at all familiar with the seacoast of the State can conceive of the enormous duties placed upon the State Board of Fisheries, and can realize the great potential value of the products of these areas in supplying food, employment and recreation to the people of South Carolina, and it is in this area that the Board performs its functions and eternal vigilance is necessary to see that the various laws are properly enforced and revenues collected.

THE OYSTER INDUSTRY

The Board considers that the Act of the Legislature in 1928 vesting the State Board of Fisheries with complete control of the management and leasing of the oyster lands along the coast is one of the most progressive and far reaching pieces of Legislation enacted by the South Carolina Legislature, working to the development of salt fisheries.

The Act of 1928 has not yet been in effect long enough to show the results which the Board expect from it within the next few years, but we are delighted to be able to report that there is much interest now in securing leases for oyster lands. The Board has on hand, at the time of the preparation of this report, quite a number of applications for leases involving ex-

tensive areas, and we confidently expect this to continue. With the interest shown in securing leases we expect great development at an early date.

The Board has a dual function in so far as all of its activities are concerned; the first is to secure a reasonable amount of revenue for the State, and the second, much more important than the first, is to conserve, develop, and make useful to the people of the State the vast possibilities of the products of the tidal waters of South Carolina. While revenue is highly important, and is not overlooked by the Board, yet the Board of Fisheries desires to bring for the benefit of the people of South Carolina a great industry furnishing food of a most delectable nature.

It has been proven beyond question that certain areas of the South Carolina seacoast are practically as well adapted for oyster propagation and cultivation as the famous Chesapeake area, the native home of the oyster referred to as the "Norfolk." As pointed out above, the two large rivers bringing down fresh waters from the mountains serve to temper the salinity of the salt waters along the coast and these fresh waters of the Piedmont blend with the salt waters of the sea to furnish a water which supplies the oyster with an ideal home in which to live. The oyster will not survive in the salt waters of the sea nor will it in the fresh waters of the interior, but it reaches its greatest development when long rivers, arising in the mountains mingle with the salty waters of the sea to supply the elements necessary to oyster life. All of our fresh water streams are useful for this purpose when they enter into the salty bays, marshes and sounds of the coast.

In addition to the long streams coming from the mountains and entering the sea along coastal South Carolina there are numerous fresh rivers which tend to reduce the salinity of the waters to the point where oyster production may be carried on profitably. Among these streams may be mentioned those delightful fresh water streams well known throughout South Carolina, including the following: Little River, the head waters of May River; Coosawhatchie, Pocotaligo and Tulifinny Rivers which are the headwaters of the immense Broad River; Combahee River having its rise in the various branches of Salkehatchie River in Barnwell and Bamberg Counties; Ashepoo River;

Edisto River, with its two forks rising near Aiken and Edgefield; the Cooper and Ashley River; the Sampit River; the Black River, that most delightful of fresh water fishing streams; and the Waccamaw, so greatly beloved by South Carolinians and our Northern friends.

The oyster is a product of the waters of the South Temperate Zone. The center of the oyster industry today in America is in the Chesapeake area, but the South Carolina coast has advantages equally as good for oyster culture as those of the Chesapeake area if handled intelligently, and if protected with the proper Legislation, such as that recently enacted by the South Carolina General Assembly.

It is contended, by many who know, that the cultivated South Carolina oyster is equal in size of that developed in the Chesapeake area, and far superior in flavor. If the members of the General Assembly could visit the plants handling oyster products along the South Carolina coast and could partake of the products fresh from the waters, we contend that they would be thoroughly convinced that the South Carolina oyster is superior to any shipped into the State. This fact is rapidly being recognized by citizens of South Carolina and especially by the newspapers.

The Board is particularly gratified with the interest shown by the newspapers of all South Carolina in oysters during the past year. The Board heartily endorses the excellent work being done by the South Carolina Natural Resources Commission in its discovery and advertising of the iodine contents in South Carolina vegetables and fruits. The oyster is a product, which from its very habitation, is much more highly iodized than the average products of South Carolina unless it be the other salt water fish and crustaceans.

The vast importance of this industry may be shown by the fact that there are now in operation eleven canning factories canning South Carolina oysters, and twenty-one shucking plants supplying fresh oysters to the trade in all South Carolina and parts of Georgia. In the seaports of South Carolina, by those who prefer good oysters, the South Carolina oyster is now in great demand.

The Board acknowledges with thanks the careful co-operation of the State Board of Health in providing sanitary methods in

oyster plants and in helping the people of the State to realize that the South Carolina product is one that can be eaten safely. In the future the people of the State can well consume its oyster products knowing that all are packed not only under the careful regulations of the State Board of Fisheries, but under the direct supervision of the State Board of Health of South Carolina. The objection which arose a few years ago to the use of canned oyster products in certain sections of the nation cannot apply to products of South Carolina because both the State Board of Fisheries and the State Board of Health have seen to it that these products can safely be consumed.

Under the Act of the 1928 Legislature the Board of Fisheries is clothed with complete power to lease "Bottoms" land suitable for the cultivation of oysters and to fix the price for all oyster lands whether on "Bottoms" or "Shore" lands. The Board has had a systematic method of leasing these lands and will continue with a method working to the development of the industry. The rates will not be unreasonable and will tend not only to produce revenue, but to stimulate the industry in propagation of this valuable commodity.

In our report of last year, to which reference may be had, we cited the great economic possibility in the development of the oyster lands. While the figures in that report may to some have seemed excessive, yet we believe that the report would suggest possibilities from this line of work. Without attempting to give a review of the profits and revenues to be derived from the oyster industry it is sufficient to say that the Board of Fisheries is doing all in its power to provide an industry along the Atlantic Seaboard which will rank in productivity and return for labor with some of the major industries of the State.

RATE OF TAXATION ON SHUCKED OYSTERS

The General Assembly of 1929 adopted our recommendation in our 1928 report to tax all oysters alike. This is being put into effect during the present season, and while the present season is not very far advanced yet we believe that considerable increase in revenue will be noted at the end of the season, which takes place May 1st.

SHAD FISHING

The catching of Shad has for many years been a most variable quantity. In our last report we were able to say that the 1928 shad season was the very best in the last several years. We had hoped that this would continue, but unfortunately the excellent season of 1928 appears to have been miraculous. But there are certain reasons, which might in a measure, explain the great decrease in the 1929 catch from that of the 1928. First of all the rivers from which the shad are caught were at their flood stage for quite a long period at the height of the shad season, in many cases causing the fishermen to quit fishing and in all cases materially handicapping their operations. The next factor in the matter was the price received for the shad. From the height of the season to the end the price was hardly sufficient to warrant extensive fishing and many of the regular fishermen, on that account, discontinued their activities.

In the 1928 report we were able to show that the total catch of that season was 76,561 fish, this decreased in 1929 to 55,239. While we have endeavored to explain in some way the decrease in the catch and while we do not believe that the fish are near extinction yet the decrease in catch makes it necessary for us to emphasize as strongly as possible the necessity for the restocking of the shad waters of the State by means of hatcheries. The 1929 Legislature gave us an appropriation of \$2,500.00 for this purpose, but of course the appropriation was not available until after the 1929 shad season had passed. Since the appropriation was made we have done our best to use the money in order to get the hatchery in operation for the 1930 season, but so far without success. With only the \$2,500.00 appropriation to expend we realized that we would be forced to have the fullest co-operation of the Bureau of Fisheries of the United States Government. This co-operation has been promised us, but the government experts recommend and offer their services during the actual shad season, during which time they could make first hand observation of the conditions and give us the benefit of the U. S. government in similar work. If the General Assembly should see fit by resolutions passed early in the season, to continue the \$2,500.00 appropriation, it is possible that we can make progress with the hatchery matter during the 1930 shad season, which officially begins on January 15th, but by all means we

recommend, advise and request that the \$2,500.00 appropriation be continued in effect for the 1930 appropriation. We have not used our authority to expend the \$2,500.00 for the purpose of the hatchery, but we hope that this authority will be continued next year during which time we promise to begin on what we think to be a great necessity for the promotion of the shad industry. If the appropriation is continued from year to year for the purpose of a hatchery it is the intention of the Board of Fisheries to see that all of the shad streams of South Carolina receive equal consideration in the use of the money.

TERRAPIN

The Board regrets that it is forced to report that the terrapin industry is practically extinct caused by the market price for the products being so low until the terrapin cannot be grown and marketed at a profit. In fact, there is very little demand now for terrapin in any way. There are many citizens of the State and of the nation who remember the great delight in the use of terrapin soup in particular, but reports coming from the Northern markets indicate that there is very little demand for this product at the high class cafes and cabarets where the product in the past was so commonly served. The Board of Fisheries will not subscribe to the reason advanced for this, which is that on account of the failure to secure the high class wines, brandies and spirits formerly used in flavoring, the public has lost interest in terrapin soup. The Board will continue to study the terrapin situation and will do all in its power to encourage and stimulate it. The General Assembly last year reduced the tax on terrapin and the Board recommends that the lower rate be continued until the industry shows sign of new life.

CLAM

The Board of Fisheries desires to encourage a clam industry in the State along with oyster industry, but up to the present time has made very little headway in securing commercial operators to be interested in the proper propagation of this delightful salt water product. The waters of Georgetown County have been the waters in which most of the clams for commercial purposes have been taken and on account of great inroads from

other states upon the clam beds of that county the Board of Fisheries, at the request of the Senator and numerous citizens of Georgetown County, declared a closed season on the waters of Georgetown County until such time as the Board should see fit to remove it. The closed season has remained in effect during the entire year of 1929 and at present the Board does not deem it wise to open the season. The Board will gladly cooperate with the people of Georgetown in restocking the clam beds and it sincerely trusts that other beds may be established in other counties within the near future.

SHRIMP

The shrimp industry in South Carolina is still in its infancy. The season of 1927 being the first in which the catch reached any great proportions. The 1928 season was far in excess of the 1927 catch, and we are pleased to be able to report a still greater increase this year. The exact figures on which will appear in the tables at the end of this report. It is sufficient to say that the Board is studying the problem of the shrimp fisheries and is attempting in every way to increase the output. The present impost tax on shrimp is one-fourth cent on cooked shrimp, and one-eighth cent on raw shrimp. We believe that the industry has reached the stage where it should pay its proportionate share of revenue in order to equalize the tax with that on oysters. We therefore, recommend that this rate be increased to one-half cent on cooked shrimp and one-fourth cent on raw shrimp.

TAX ON PRAWN BOATS

We renew our recommendation of last year to the effect that a flat rate should be placed on every boat engaged in taking shrimp and prawn of \$20.00 per year for each boat engaged in the work, provided the boats are operated by citizens of the United States. We think this much better and certainly easier to collect than the old tax of nets. Reference may be had to our last report to see our reason for this recommendation.

We believe that a much higher rate should be put on aliens engaged in taking of shrimp. There are quite a number of citizens of foreign countries engaged in this industry to such

an extent that many citizens of this and other states are practically excluded. We think that any boat operated by an alien or aliens should be taxed at the rate of \$40.00 per boat.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The present law provides as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Board to enforce all laws for collection of revenues due the State from the fishing industries and lease of bottoms; and they shall require the inspectors to report to them from time to time all violations coming within their knowledge and the Board is authorized to prosecute for violations of said laws when in their judgment such prosecutions are for the best interest of industries or of the State and to that end they employ counsel having special knowledge of the fisheries law and of the matters pertaining to fisheries and coastal conditions to work up and conduct such prosecutions in the inferior courts and to assist the solicitor in the Court of General Sessions and Supreme Court should he desire such assistance."

From the above it will be seen the Board of Fisheries by law is authorized to employ special counsel in prosecuting violations. The Board recognizes the valuable assistance given it by the solicitors and the Attorney General, but the work of prosecuting offenders against the fish law is of a highly special nature requiring much study along that particular line, which facts the Legislature apparently recognized by placing the provision in the fishing laws above quoted. No appropriations though, have been made to carry this out, and in a few instances the Board of Fisheries thinking that it was justified in employing special counsel found itself embarrassed by reason of the fact that there were no appropriations with which to pay for this. The Board believes that the sum of \$500.00 per annum would be sufficient amount to secure special counsel and we recommend that this appropriation be made. If it is not all used it will be returned to the Treasury. But the members of the General Assembly will recognize that the efficiency of our work depends in a large measure on the proper prosecution of cases which we make, the preparation of which will require more time than the solicitor and the Attorney General can devote to it.

While we have submitted in this report very few recommendations, yet the Board is strongly of the opinion that there are many phases of the Fisheries act which should be clarified in order that the law may be more definite. This applies particularly to various penalties, methods of collecting taxes and the issuance of licenses. Several members of the General Assembly have individually expressed their approval of a new Fish Code and it will be a great privilege to the Board to be called before any committee of the General Assembly to recommend administrative changes in the various laws under which the Board now operates, and under which it attempts to collect revenues for the State. The following is a summary of our recommendations this year:

1. A continuation of the appropriation for the shad hatchery.
2. The establishment of a closed season from April 1st, to January 1st, on all waters in the State, permitting the shad to increase more rapidly and which will force a longer migratory into the interior of the State.
3. We recommend a flat boat charge of \$20.00 per boat instead of the net license for parties engaged in the taking of prawn and shrimp who are citizens of the United States, and a tax of \$40.00 per boat for boats operated by aliens.
4. We strongly recommend a fund of \$500.00 to be appropriated for the purpose of securing special counsel to prosecute offenders against the fishing laws, and we believe that if this is done the amount of the increase of the fines will more than repay the cost.
5. We recommend an increase in the impost tax on shrimp from the present rate of one-fourth cent on cooked shrimp to one-half cent and from one-eighth cent on raw shrimp to one-fourth cent, which we believe to be a proper and reasonable rate.

Respectfully,

E. D. RANEY, Chairman,
E. MITCHELL SEABROOK,
J. WALTER DOAR.

Attest:

P. M. BUCKNER, Chief Inspector,
Mrs. O. M. OGLETREE, Clerk.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT

	1927	1928	1929
Canned Oyster Stamps	\$ 9,117.92	\$10,333.91	\$ 8,727.56
Raw Oyster Stamps	2,047.20	1,731.65	1,764.28
Oyster in the Shell	53.30	61.90	61.60
Clam Stamps	678.40	764.40	402.20
Shad Tags	3,260.46	5,818.83	5,252.26
Terrapin Stamps	1,063.40	948.20	589.40
Raw Shrimp Stamps	364.35	566.86	1,413.90
Cooked Shrimp Stamps	712.50	1,187.50	1,657.44
Registered Boat License	1,036.00	1,014.00	661.50
Non-registered Boat License	229.50	243.00	192.00
Swimming Fish License	1,447.50	1,295.00	1,210.00
Shrimp Boat License	270.00	560.00	795.00
Shrimp Net License	280.00	555.00	795.00
Gill Net License	199.95	195.25	192.25
Oyster Cannery License	16.00	13.00	9.00
Terrapin Pen License	250.00	225.00	200.00
Terrapin Farm License	20.00	50.00	.....
Shad Buyers and Shippers License..	300.00	225.00	300.00
Sturgeon Net License	225.00	195.00	225.00
Sturgeon Buyers and Shippers License	300.00	200.00	200.00
Shrimp Buyers and Shippers License	10.00	25.00	60.00
Oyster Shucking Shed License	32.00	30.00	36.00
Clam Buyers and Shippers License	10.00	15.00	25.00
Shrimp Cannery License	3.00	6.00	4.00
Crab Buyers and Shippers License..	3.00	4.00	10.00
Oyster in the Shell—Shippers License	9.00	8.00	12.00
Oyster Land Rent	1,458.75	1,478.35	664.73
Fines	175.00	10.00	205.00
Pound Nets	3.00	.....	.....
Oyster Pickers Bateau License	271.00
Oyster Barge License	286.50
Trap Net License	3.00
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	\$23,635.23	\$27,759.85	\$26,224.62

Appropriation for 1929	\$18,950.00
Unused Appropriation	1,296.51
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	\$17,653.49
Receipts	\$26,224.62
	17,653.49
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Net	\$ 8,571.13

PROFITS

1927	\$ 8,881.32
1928	11,686.73
1929	8,571.13

SHRIMP

Shrimp caught	14,071,538 lbs.
Shrimp headed	965,750 lbs.
Shrimp canned	25,940,002 oz.

OYSTERS

Oysters gathered in shell	716,733 bu.
Oysters shucked raw	34,430 gal.
Oysters canned	24,913,211 oz.
Number shad caught	55,239
Number terrapin caught	3,653
Number terrapin shipped	893
Bushel oyster shell planted	507,097

REVENUE FROM DIFFERENT COUNTIES ITEMIZED

	Beaufort	Charleston	Georgetown	Horry	Colleton	Total
Canned Oyster Stamps	\$6,223.84	\$2,503.72	.....	.....	.....	\$8,727.56
Raw Oyster Stamps	1,646.18	107.75	\$8.75	\$1.40	.....	1,764.28
Oyster in the Shell	15.80	31.60	1.00	13.20	.....	61.60
Clam Stamps .....	.20	20.20	.....	380.80	.....	402.20
Shad Stamps	664.10	2,226.08	2,027.88	159.00	\$175.20	5,252.26
Terrapin Stamps	453.08	135.60	.....	.....	.....	589.40
Raw Shrimp Stamps	1,030.17	373.73	10.00	.....	.....	1,413.90
Cooked Shrimp Stamps	1,327.31	330.13	.....	.....	.....	1,657.44
Registered Boat License	592.50	69.00	.....	.....	.....	661.50
Non-Registered Boat License	192.00	.....	.....	.....	.....	192.00
Swimming Fish License	335.00	220.00	327.50	107.50	220.00	1,210.00
Shrimp Boat License	560.00	220.00	15.00	.....	.....	795.00
Shrimp Net License	560.00	220.00	15.00	.....	.....	795.00
Oyster Cannery License	7.00	2.00	.....	.....	.....	9.00
Gill Net License	32.50	26.50	88.50	14.00	30.75	192.25
Terrapin Pen License	125.00	75.00	.....	.....	.....	200.00
Shad Buyers License	50.00	125.00	125.00	.....	.....	300.00
Sturgeon Net License	45.00	.....	150.00	.....	30.00	225.00
Oyster Shucking Shed License	25.00	10.00	.....	1.00	.....	36.00
Clam Buyers and Shippers License .....	.....	5.00	.....	20.00	.....	25.00
Sturgeon Buyers & Shippers License .....	.....	.....	100.00	.....	100.00	200.00
Oyster Land Rent	351.25	145.23	168.25	.....	.....	664.73
Oyster In the Shell-Shippers License	3.00	7.00	1.00	1.00	.....	12.00
Shrimp Buyers and Shippers License	25.00	25.00	10.00	.....	.....	60.00
Shrimp Cannery License	3.00	1.00	.....	.....	.....	4.00
Oyster Picker's Bateau License	266.50	4.50	.....	.....	.....	271.50
Oyster Barge License	286.50	.....	.....	.....	.....	286.50
Crab License .....	.....	10.00	.....	.....	.....	10.00
Trap Net License .....	.....	3.00	.....	.....	.....	3.00
Fines .....	.....	85.00	20.00	.....	100.00	205.00
Totals	\$14,820.65	\$6,982.04	\$3,068.08	\$697.90	\$655.95	\$26,224.62