

Catching Lobsters Is Great Fun

By PATRICIA H. STRATTON

A few weeks ago, when I was staying with Katharine Boyd in lovely Sorrento, Maine, I was lucky enough to go sailing several times, in boats whose skipper probably thought I was the stupidest "crew" they ever had aboard. But I thought that I would never get a chance to go out on a lobster boat, just to see how it was done during a whole morning's fishing. Early one morning Katharine called "Hurry, Pat, the lobster boat's close by. Run down to the rocks and see if he will let you go out with him."

I ran down and, standing on a rock above the deep clear water, waved and shouted to the fisherman that I should like to come aboard and watch him fish. I was not sure that he could even hear me above the noise of the motor, but he turned and put in to the very rock I stood on, and I climbed down into the boat.

The fisherman was an ex-Marine named Frank Preble, a native of Sorrento. He could not have been nicer or more obliging about answering my many questions. During the morning I watched him "haul" about sixty lobster pots. These pots, or traps, are either rectangular or shaped like small Quonset huts. They

are made of wood slats and wire mesh. Inside there is an intricate arrangement of wire or cord, which allows the lobsters to go in but prevents them from getting out. Along with the lobsters the fisherman finds plenty of crabs, star fish, sea cucumbers and, once, a big red Portuguese Man-o-War. He was tangled in a great bunch of kelp along with the lobster buoy.

After removing his catch, if any, the fisherman adds a bit of fresh bait to the little net full of herring with which the traps are baited. The bait itself is kept in a big can about the size of a garbage can. This bait is the one really smelly item on the fishing boat. Every fisherman has his own style and color of lobster buoys. Frank Preble's were painted red and white. Each pot is attached to its buoy by a half inch rope about sixty fathoms long. The fisherman catches this line close to the buoy with a boathook, and hauls it in until he can hook it over a pulley and around a winch. Using the winch he can easily and rapidly haul the lobster pot up onto the side of the boat.

I was told that our morning's catch was only fair, that 1956 has been a below-average year for all kinds of fishing. Some of the

traps were quite empty, but usually there were two or three lobsters. If large enough he tossed them into a heavy wooden box. This was about three and one-half feet long by two and one-half feet wide by one foot deep. It had rope handles and was kept partly covered to keep the sun off the live lobsters. At the end of a full morning's work the box was about two-thirds full, for which catch the fisherman would receive about \$15.00.

Lobsters obviously too small were tossed back, along with the smaller crabs, star fish, and all else of no value. Some he had to measure, and nearly all he measured were large enough to keep. He put little plastic plugs in their claws, so they could not pinch. Before plastics became common all plugs were of wood, whittled out by the fishermen. I was shown one lobster which had lost a claw and had grown a new one, already half as large as the remaining old claw. He showed me a seal swimming near the boat, and Tidal Falls, and described the many different kinds of buoys; channel buoys, spar buoys; cage buoys, and many others. I thought how differently a sailor and a land lubber look at the water around them. This man observed the wind and the set of the tides and a thousand other things I did not even notice, while inwardly I kept marvelling at the colors of the clouds and the sky and the sea, and the dark wet rocks against the shining water.

I should like to have tried to pull in one of the traps, but didn't ask for fear of being a nuisance. Also, one really needs the tough heavy gloves, and the apron and sea boots these fishermen wear for their work. Sometimes the traps are replaced in the same spot, sometimes moved a short distance. But always they must rest on a rocky bottom, never on mud. Crabs will crawl on mud, lobsters never. The pots are examined each day, and every third day the bait is changed.

At the Lobster Pound our catch was weighed and sorted. Here was a wooden float about twenty feet long by fifteen feet wide, and I don't know how deep. But I was told there were more than ten thousand lobsters stored in the various sections of this float. Also there was an enclosed pound into which more

By MARY EVELYN de NISSOFF

Knollwood after a vacation on Cape Cod.

The Rev. and Mrs. Marshall B. Wyatt entertained a number of friends Friday afternoon at their Linden Road home.

Brief Mention
Maj. Gen. and Mrs. I. T. Wyche leave Tuesday for Boston, Mass., where they will visit their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Flory. General Wyche and Mr. Flory plan a hunting trip to Canada and Nova Scotia.

Mr. and Mrs. John M. Reeves and Miss Anne Reeves left early in the week for a two months' trip to Europe where they will visit Spain and Italy.

Mrs. William Tufts, after spending the summer in Rockland, Me., returns to her home here on Sunday after a stopoff for several days at the York Club in New York City.

Miss Elizabeth Horr leaves today to return to Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Weekend guests at Halfway House were Geirge Stevens and John Berlin, en route from Florida to their Connecticut homes.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Arnold Jackson are expected shortly to occupy their cottage on Village Green East after summering at Fisher's Island, N. Y.

Returning home Tuesday from New York City were Mr. and Mrs. Richard Tufts and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Tufts.

Mrs. John E. Friday of Florida is making a short visit here in the home of her sister-in-law, Mrs. S. Davidson Herron.

Kenneth C. Kennedy is back in

thousands of lobsters were turned. They are fed, mostly on herring, until they are large enough and their shells are hard enough to bring a good price in the market. When the shells are hard the meat is sweeter and there is more of it.

Frank Preble fishes only in the summer, but he says that many others fish the year round, and quite a bit of the fishing is done in the open ocean. Imagine how cold it gets up there on Frenchman's Bay in the winter! There must be a thousand easier ways to earn a living than fishing for lobsters off the coast of Maine in winter. There is certainly nothing soft or easy about such a life; nevertheless one can readily understand why it might hold, for those men born to it, a very great appeal.

PINEHURST NEWS

ing of the 99'ers, National Women's Flying organization of which Mrs. Bradshaw is a member.

James Marold, who is stationed in Norfolk, Va., spent last weekend with his great-grandmother, Mrs. Estel Miner, and with Mr. and Mrs. Paul Miner in the Whitney cottage.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Carter, after driving their daughter, Miss Mary Anne Carter, to Washington, D. C., where she is at the National Cathedral School, are spending the balance of the week with his mother, Mrs. H. M. Adams, in Somerville, N. J.

Demand for many farm products in this country by 1975 may be 40 to 45 per cent more than in 1953, estimates a U. S. Department of Agriculture researcher. Use of livestock products is expected to increase more than use of crops. The estimate is based on assumptions of a growing population, labor force, and employment. It also assumes that the world trend is toward peace.

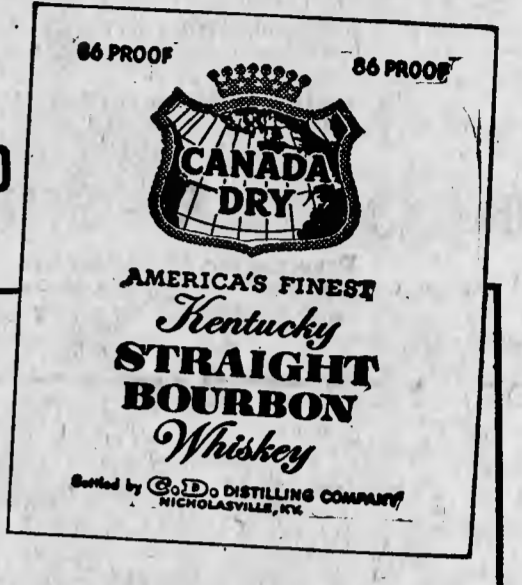
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