

It could be made by enterprising people a paying industry, as there are so many feeding grounds and plenty of fish. If any one were to go with a boat before high water to these places they could fill their boat very soon.

The fish good for eating are hapuka, *Oligorus gigas*; rock cods, *Percis colias*; tarakhi, *Chilodactylus macropterus*; moki, *Latris ciliaris*, etc., etc. There are also two species of dolphin very plentiful, which could be easily secured and used for oil and their skin for leather. In fine weather the smaller species are there in hundreds similar to the common *Delphinus delphis*. I have seen the sound alive with these fish playing.

The second and larger species similar to the *Tursio*, is not as plentiful. They go in small groups from two to a dozen steadily along, the dorsal fin the most time out of the water. They make a roaring noise like the bellowing of a bull, especially in the night.

When I paddled from one place to another these fish would follow alongside my canoe.

ART. XXI.—Description of a new Octopus. By JAMES PARK.

[Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, 14th December, 1883.]

AFTER heavy north-east gales molluscs of this class are not infrequently cast ashore between Stoke and Richmond, and during the fishing season great numbers are caught by the fishermen inside the Boulder Bank; but, except they are almost immediately secured, they are soon shrivelled up and beyond identification. In the present instance the specimen before you, which is a male *Octopus*, was captured near the Marine Baths, at the "Port," in some four feet of water, and I was fortunate enough to obtain it in a very fine state of preservation.

In general outline it somewhat resembles *Octopus tuberculatus*, but the arms are more slender and tapering and very much larger than in that species.

Class CEPHALOPODA.

Family OCTOPODIDÆ.

Octopus communis, sp. nov.

Body oval, stout, fan-shaped behind, smooth, without fins. Head large, long, rounded. Eyes large, round, prominent. Arms long, tapering, unequal; dorsal pair $\frac{1}{2}$ longer than ventral pair. The hectocotylus is shorter and more robust than the other arms, ending abruptly in a long, flattened process with a deep longitudinal groove. Suckers in two rows, not opposite,

sessile, tenth sucker in row largest, gradually diminishing both ways; those on dorsal arms about $\frac{1}{3}$ larger than those on ventral arms. The suckers vary in number from 138 pairs on the longest arms to 110 on the shortest, while the male organ is furnished with only 52 pairs. *Colour*: Above dark steel grey, blotched irregularly with pale grey, almost black round the eyes. Below pale grey, blotches smaller and less numerous.

MEASUREMENTS.

	Feet.	Inches.
Length of body and head	1	1
" dorsal sessile arms	3	0
" ventral "	2	0
" hectocotylus	1	6
" other sessile arms	2	9
Circumference of body	1	5
Diameter of eyes	0	0.5
" largest dorsal sucker	0	1.3
" " ventral sucker	0	0.9

Hab. Blind Bay, Nelson.

ART. XXII.—*The Plague of Rats in Nelson and Marlborough.*

By JOHN MEESON, B.A.

[Read before the Nelson Philosophical Society, 6th December, 1884.]

THE plague of rats from which we at present are and have been now for some months past suffering has features which merit more than a passing notice from a Society having for one of its principal objects the discovery, corroboration, and classification of fresh facts in natural history. The magnitude of the plague is the subject of ordinary conversation. Nelson and Marlborough—in other words, the whole of the extreme northern portion of the South Island of New Zealand—is enduring a perfect invasion. Living rats are sneaking in every corner, scuttling across every path; their dead bodies in various stages of decay, and in many cases more or less mutilated, strew the roads, fields, and gardens, pollute the wells and streams, in all directions. Whatever kills the animals does not succeed in materially diminishing their numbers. Fresh battalions take the place of those slaughtered. Young and succulent crops, as of wheat and peas, are so ravaged as to be unfit for and not worth the trouble of cutting and harvesting. A young farmer the other day killed with a stout stick two hundred of the little rodents in a couple of hours in his wheat field. Plainly, the settler, for this season at all events, in addition to parrots