



THE NEW ENGLAND FISHERMAN



Milton Silvia Photograph / Spinner Collection

The crew of the tuna seiner *North Queen* unloads 120,000 lbs. of bluefin tuna at Homer's Wharf, New Bedford, September 1968—Captain Leonard Ingrande (smoking cigar) oversees the work. Bluefin tuna run off New Jersey in late June and work their way to New England in July. Most are small (150 lbs.), but large fish like these range from 600-900 lbs. The crew dresses the fish at sea, then washes them down dockside before hauling them into the fish house. The heads will be sold to a local cat-food processor. Throughout the 1960s, the commercial bluefin tuna fishery was carried out mostly by small- and medium-sized purse seiners whose landings averaged about 5,000 metric tons of fish a year. In 1974, New Bedford alone landed about 1,200 metric tons. In order to protect the species, the International Atlantic Tunas Convention Act was enacted in 1975, making it illegal to catch Atlantic bluefin with anything other than rod and reel, hand-line or harpoon. Nonetheless, inflated prices caused yearly landings to rise until stricter quotas were enacted in the 1980s. The Atlantic bluefin tuna, among the largest bony fish in the world, is now a protected species.