John's 153 Fish
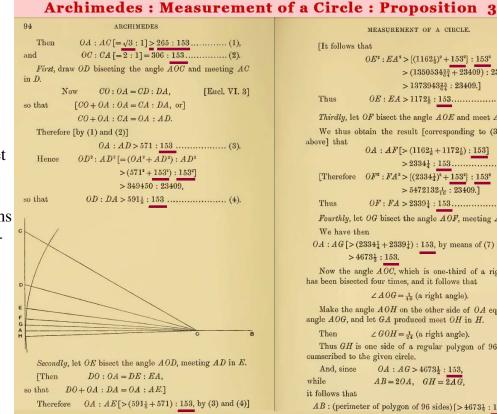
John 21:3-14

"So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a 153 of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn."

The detail of 153 fish seems too specific to be insignificant. Did John have a special meaning by the reference of a 153 fish?

Math : Beauty of 153

$153 = 3 \times 51$ (symmetry)

$1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3 = 153$

$12^2 + 3^2 = 153$

$(10 + 7) \times 3^2 = 153$

Jerome cites Oppian's Halieutica and seemed to think that the 153 types of fish represented all the nations from which the Gospel would save. However, Wikipedia states:
"… this could not have been the intended meaning of the Gospel writer (John) because Oppian composed Halieutica after the Gospel text was written, and at any rate never gave a list of fish species that clearly adds up to 153."

Therefore, it seems impossible for Jerome's idea to have been John's.

Context Points to the Answer :

Archimedes : Measurement of a Circle : Proposition 3

Context ↑

St. Augustine cites the formula

$$1 + 2 + 3 \ldots + 17 = 153$$

17 represents the combination of divine grace (the 7 gifts of the Spirit) and the Law (the 10 Commandments.) 153, according to St. Augustine, represent all those who will be saved.

An evangelist seeks to convey a message. Therefore, his meaning had to be apparent to those whom he was writing. It seems very difficult if not impossible to defend the idea that John would have known that his readers would have seen these mathematical formulas as part of his message. **Therefore, the Church Fathers' Answers Could Not Be John's**

Jesus calls the Apostles "children." What are children? Father Bob Stine, if memory serves me correctly, told me about 40 years ago that the key to understanding this verse, and what children are, is to look from a Christian Biblical context. Children are those who lack the wisdom that comes with age. Therefore, the fish, the Divine gift, that filled their empty net represents wisdom.

We must look at this passage not from today's standards but from John's. Understanding the Greek culture opens the key to understanding this Biblical passage.

A few hundred years before Christ, the Greek Pythagoreans made a ground breaking discovery and proved what is now called the Pythagorean Theorem.

"One of the most important characteristics of the Pythagorean order was that it maintained that the **pursuit of philosophical and mathematical studies was a moral basis for the conduct of life.** Indeed, the words *philosophy* (love of **wisdom**) and ***mathematics*** (that which is learned) are said to have been coined by Pythagoras." : Wikip.

Above all else the Greeks esteemed Mathematics, Wisdom and Philosophy. Their greatest mathematician was Archimedes. In his *Measurement of a Circle* he calculates the value of π, Pi. It was his most influential work. His calculations included the ratio of 265:153 which represents the most accurate value of √3 that can be expressed by using small whole numbers. The unusual number of 153 figured most prominently in that work.