

PERSONAL

Mr. R. E. Pritchard, Manager of the Geraldton Fishermen's Co-operative, recently resigned and left the company on June 30.

Our congratulations to Mr. Athol Middleton, Technical Officer, Hydrology Section, C.S.I.R.O., on his marriage on June 14 to Miss Jennifer Greagg.

Mr. T. W. Houston, Research Officer, is a recent appointment to the C.S.I.R.O. staff. Mr. Houston arrived from England in March last. He has recently been in W.A. for the purpose of acquiring data on trawling operations and has had access to the logs of the trawlers "Commilles" and "Ben Dearg". He will compare results achieved here with those obtained in the Eastern States and assess our trawling potentialities.

WHALING

Operations are strongly under way at all three stations. Progressive totals of captures have been published in the press and these are in advance of official returns. Reports indicate that whales are in exceptionally good condition and oil recovery is expected to be high. The new venture at Albany has already secured about a quarter of its quota of 50 humpbacks.

DISTRICT OFFICERS' CONFERENCE, PIMBERTON,  
JUNE 5 to 5

The following matters were discussed at the conference and the discussion and recommendations arising therefrom are detailed hereunder for the information of officers generally.

1. Hours of duty and time off.

- (a) Inspectors have no set hours of duty and accordingly "time off" is not obligatory. Some time ago the Public Service Commissioner



granted Fisheries Inspectors 3 weeks' annual leave in lieu of the fortnight previously granted and it was intended that the additional week be in recognition of the extra hours inspectors are required to put in. It is recognised that at times it may be necessary for inspectors to seek time off for various reasons but in all cases prior approval must be sought. Such approval may be granted by District Inspectors to Assistants or Cadets stationed with them. Other officers must secure approval from Head Office.

- (b) Assistant Inspectors and Cadet Inspectors stationed with district officers must submit diaries and reports for scrutiny and initialing by the district officer. Travelling and mileage claims also should be similarly dealt with.

## 2. Metropolitan Area.

Policy concerning the future of the Swan River was discussed in the light of its potentialities and value as a fishery and its future as a means of recreation for the population of the metropolitan area. The general view was that for the time being and the immediate future the value of the River as a training ground for young inspectors is great and in consequence the present status quo should not be disturbed. It was further considered that fish production is on a scale worth maintaining.

"Borrowing" of staff in the metropolitan area for work in other districts is one for negotiation between the district officer and the Metropolitan Inspector.

## 3. Monthly Service Bulletin

The conference was unanimous that the Bulletin is enjoyed particularly by country inspectors and that it be continued. Officers are invited to furnish the Department with items of interest for publication.

## 4. Reporting Damage and Loss etc.

Instances involving the Department in considerable expenditure were remarked upon and the conference informed that where such occurred through negligence the regulations laid down the procedure to be followed. In the future this course



will be applied in all instances. All cases where accidentally or otherwise involving loss and damage must be reported in writing. This requirement includes items found to be missing or damaged on completion of inventories and handing-over statements. Head Office stocks, materials, etc., are now in the charge of an officer in the clerical division who will issue requirements only after a signature.

5. Assistance in Albany.

It was decided that during the whaling season an Assistant Inspector be made available to the district inspector at Albany and accordingly Assistant Inspector L. Oliver has now been stationed there.

6. Section 28 and Regulation 7.

The Fisheries Act and Regulations do not specifically provide for the furnishing of names and addresses on request except under certain circumstances. A recent occurrence indicates the desirability of power being specifically provided to enable an inspector to ascertain names and addresses in all reasonable instances. It is considered that Section 6 (mf) of the Act as amended enables the promulgation of the necessary regulations and accordingly action will be taken thereunder.

7. Section 46(2) - Closed Water Permits.

The desirability of refusing certain persons a permit to pass through closed water under the above section came under discussion but it is thought that no grounds exist for refusing an application unless the applicant has a recent previous conviction in connection with closed water operations. Accordingly action should be taken along these lines in future.

8. Sale of confiscated gear.

Policy in this regard was determined as follows -

- (a) Where the return of a net is sought by the original owner the request will be referred to the relevant district officer for his view.
- (b) Valuation of confiscated nets is to be near market value.



- (c) Where confiscated gear is classed as poor or worse a recommendation should be made as to its being "stripped".
- (d) A lead and cork pool has again been created and will be maintained from stripped gear.

9. Amateur and Professional Licenses.

No present action.

10. 2-inch aperture in craypots.

To ascertain the best method of implementing this requirement the Department will conduct experiments.

11. Standard cray rule.

A rule of the caliper type will be given a try-out at Geraldton during the current season. It is thought that this is the type of rule which will prove to be most likely to be satisfactory.

12. Amateur fishing.

It was generally agreed that the Department follow a policy of setting aside small areas or waters for amateur recreation. These localities would comprise those with no future possibilities as areas of professional fishing. With our rapidly-increasing population pressure is bound to come for access to many of our fishing areas and it is thought that the policy now decided upon will considerably relieve such pressure. Two rivers which attract numbers of holiday-makers and which are at times favoured too by professional fishermen are those mentioned below and the following action in respect of these was decided upon.

(a) Greenough River.

The present only restriction concerning this water is a minimum mesh of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins. It is now decided to restrict net lengths to 66 yds. per boat.

(b) Murchison River.

Similar remarks apply here as in the case of the Greenough River and it is decided that the River be closed entirely to net fishing upwards for a quarter of a mile from its mouth.



13. Policy re percentage of undersize fish.

This matter was raised by several inspectors with a view to some consideration being given fishermen where fishing operations have been unduly arduous or catches of a magnitude which preclude or render difficult the measuring of fish. However it is considered impossible to approve any allowance for short-length fish or any percentage. Breaches of this nature must be reported and the circumstances fully described. The Department has always adopted the policy of prosecuting only where such is warranted but it is essential that Head Office be fully informed in each case. It is a practice followed by district inspectors to give verbal warnings from time to time. These when given should be reported upon to Head Office when such will be placed as a matter of record on the file of the fisherman concerned.

14. Prawn dredge nets and season.

A proclamation concerning the Murray River near Mandurah prescribed that the only net permissible for prawn fishing is one which is held in the hand and has a diameter not exceeding 2 ft. During the recent prawning season in that area a net was evolved which, although coming within the scope of the description laid down in the proclamation, was used in the manner of a dredge in that the aperture to the net was shaped in the form of a half-circle and the handle elongated to enable the gear to be pushed along the river bed. Drop nets were also used in a certain part of the river with considerable success. The mesh permitted for the capture of prawns is not permitted to be less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. and the minimum length for greasy-back prawns is 2 ins. Discussion on the matter presented the view generally held that the minimum length should be increased and that possibly a larger mesh size could be permitted. It was finally decided that tests with  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. and larger mesh will be carried out by Inspectors Murray and Gallop. Experiments in the use and affect of the dredge nets described will be undertaken and the question of a season for the taking of prawns will be deferred for the time being. The inspectors mentioned are to furnish weekly samples of prawns of various sizes from the Murray River and these will be forwarded for examination in the Eastern States. Action concerning the closure of the upper portion of the Murray River against prawn fishing will be decided following an investigation to be carried out in the area concerned.



15. Policy re Trout Administration.

Inspector J. Simpson outlined the difficulties of control particularly as to transport arrangements and maintenance matters. He feels that the whole of the control policy should be reviewed and that the matter of transport of trout should be a responsibility of the local society. It was finally decided that the Superintendent and Inspector Simpson would meet the Pemberton Trout Society Council and discuss the whole matter.

16. Fauna Act, 1950 (proclaimed 1/7/52.)

An outline of the major features was given by the Superintendent and implementation of the Act discussed. Certain sections of the Act came under criticism but it was pointed out that the Act is the direction of Parliament after they had considered the original Bill and accordingly we have to accept the law as it stands.

The Department is conducting a duck-banding experiment and a description of this is given elsewhere in this Bulletin.

17. Fishermen's Advisory Committee.

Discussion on the value of, representation upon and the necessity for any change in the Committee was discussed. No finality was reached.

FAUNA PROTECTION ACT, 1950, AND REGULATIONS

By Proclamation published in the "Government Gazette" on June 13, 1952, the Fauna Protection Act, 1950, and Fauna Protection Act Regulations, 1952, were proclaimed to come into operation on the 1st instant. A copy of the regulations has been issued to each Inspector.

Under the Act, all fauna, except to the extent which the Governor declares by Proclamation, is wholly protected throughout the whole of the State at all times. No protected fauna may be taken without license issued in accordance with the Regulations and no fauna which has been declared not protected or for which an open season has been declared, may be taken for the purpose of gain or reward without a license issued in accordance with the regulations. Any person may take and kill any fauna that has been declared "not protected", but should