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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE

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THE FESTIVE SEASON

For the younger members of the staff Christmas and its attendant festivities come all too infrequently, but to some of us older officers (there is no need to mention names !) the year's end comes far too quickly.

Be that as it may, the Christmas-New Year period, the traditional time of foregathering and of burying the hatchet, of taking stock and of new resolutions, is one to which all of us, young and old, look forward with really pleasurable anticipation. It gives us the opportunity of meeting our colleagues under more congenial circumstances than our daily avocations normally permit, and anything which allows that is well worth while.

It is because the Christmas feeling is in the air that we hold our annual inspectors' conference in December. It is not always possible in the hurly-burly of modern times to live in complete harmony with all our fellows - differences of opinion must come to the surface, and with the multiplicity of personalities to be found in a staff the size of our own, it is impossible to avoid some clashes. However, at Xmas time, we can bring to our conference an approach that might not be possible at another time, and we know that at the forthcoming meeting there will be few discordant notes.

All the Head Office staff are looking forward very much indeed to meeting their country colleagues again, and would like to convey to their wives and families all good wishes for the festive season.

(A. J. Fraser)
SUPERINTENDENT.

NEW HEAD FOR N.S.W. FISHERIES



Mr. N. V. HARRIS
(Block courtesy "Outdoors and Fishing")

Following the retirement of Mr. Theodore C. Roughley from the position of Superintendent of Fisheries in New South Wales in September, Mr. Noel V. Harris has been appointed head of the N.S.W. State Fisheries administration.

Mr. Harris, who was a fellow-officer of the Superintendent for W.A. (Mr. Fraser) while the latter was on the staff of the N.S.W. Department, graduated to his present position through the administrative side of the office. He has had over 30 years in the public service, and this Bulletin wishes him every success in his new sphere.

TOUR BY SUPERINTENDENT AND TROUT HEAD

During the first week of November the Superintendent (Mr. Fraser), accompanied by the President of the Pemberton-Warren Trout Acclimatisation Society (Mr. A. R. Kelly), made an extensive tour of Great Southern districts on a preliminary survey in relation to the possibility of acclimatising trout in certain non-perennial rivers (e.g., the Avon, Hotham, Arthur, and Kalgan) and of introducing fish-farming practices in various types of farmers' dams.

The districts visited were York, Beverley, Pingelly, Kojonup, Katanning, Kendenup, Mount Barker and Albany, and a meeting with members of the local road board and interested residents was held in the evening at each place underlined above.

There appears to be every justification for the belief, regardless of previous ideas on the subject, that trout will do very well in some of these streams. Although they cease flowing during the summer, and become merely a succession of pools, many of these pools are upwards of a mile long and of considerable depth, with temperatures which do not seem to be too high for trout. The two visitors were amazed at the abundance of life in the rivers concerned - shrimps and other crustaceans, small fishes of several species, water boatman, beetles, etc. - and although our present knowledge does not suggest that trout will reproduce naturally, there is no reason why annual re-stocking with yearling trout should not result in worthwhile fisheries.

Many dams - notably soakage dams - contained an abundance of aquatic life, and with proper farming methods should be able to support trout if annual, or even biennial, stockings are made.

A small committee, consisting of the Superintendent as Chairman, Mr. K. Sneard, of Division of Fisheries, C.S.I.R.O., Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins, Government Entomologist, and Mr. A.R. Main, of the Zoology Department of the University of W.A., has been set up to prepare a preliminary report on freshwater fish farming generally for the consideration of the Department.

OPEN SEASONS FOR WILD DUCK

The Hon. Minister administering the Fauna Protection Act and Regulations, the Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, has announced the following open seasons for the shooting of wild ducks -

From 5 o'clock in the afternoon of December 20, 1952, to May 31, 1953, in the Northampton, Upper Chapman, Geraldton-Greenough, Irwin, Mingenew, Three Springs, Carnamah, Dandarragan, Moora, Gingin, Victoria Plains, Chittering, Wanneru, Swan, Mundaring, Darling Range, Armadale-Kelmscott, Serpentine-Jarrahdale,

Mandurah, Murray, Drakesbrook, Marradong, Harvey, Capel, Dardanup, Collie Coalfields, Preston, Balingup, Greenbushes, Bridgetown, Upper Blackwood, Busselton, Margaret River, Nannup and Manjimup Road Districts.

From 5 o'clock in the forenoon of December 21, 1952, to May 31, 1953, in all that part of the State lying outside the abovementioned road districts.

Wild ducks of all species are still wholly protected throughout the whole year in all the following areas which have been exempted from such open seasons -

- (a) The whole of the area within a radius of twenty miles of the General Post Office at Perth.
- (b) All Municipalities and Townsites within the boundaries of the South-West Land Division.
- (c) The whole of the Rockingham Road District.
- (d) The whole of the waters of Lakes Leschenaultia and Seppings and Bambang, Wagin, Nambung, Mungala and Wannerup Lakes and all those portions of land lying within twenty chains of the shore of the said lakes.
- (e) The whole of the waters of Leschenault, Vasse and Wonnerup Estuaries and all those portions of land lying within twenty chains of the shores of the said estuaries.
- (f) The whole of the waters of the Vasse, King and Kalgan Rivers, and all those portions of land lying within twenty chains of the banks of the said rivers.
- (g) The whole of the waters of Oyster Harbour and Princess Royal Harbour and all those portions of land lying within a radius of twenty chains of the shores of the said harbours.
- (h) The whole of the area of the Yanchep Caves Reserve, No. A9868.
- (i) The whole of the Harvey Catchment area.

- (j) The whole of the area lying within a radius of two miles of the Post Office at Mandurah.

No person shall take wild ducks in any greater quantity greater than fifteen in any one day.

The co-operation of the sporting public in returning to the Fisheries Department, Perth, any aluminium band found on the leg of any duck, with information as to the species of the duck and the approximate locality where the duck was taken, would be appreciated.

THE CLEARING HOUSE

The Electric Harpoon

Five Years' Work Concluded

After nearly five years of investigation and development work by the General Electric Co., Ltd., in close co-operation with United Whalers, Ltd., a recent expedition off the Norwegian coast successfully concluded the work of establishing the economic superiority for modern whaling of the electric harpoon over the present explosive-nose Svend Foyn harpoon. So claims a statement issued this week by the G.E.C.

Sir Vyvyan Board, chairman of United Whalers, who accompanied the expedition with Mr. Robert Marsden, of the G.E.C., stated on his return: "We are entirely satisfied with the principle of the electric harpoon and the electrical equipment". Orders have been placed for further complete sets, and the development of their use will be pushed forward as training facilities and equipment become available.

The recent expedition killed the largest fin whale of the season, 65 ft. in length and weighing approximately 70 tons. This whale was brought alongside the catcher, inflated with air and left floating with the houseflag flying within 10 minutes of the firing of the harpoon.

Whale Instantly Paralysed

The system appears to kill nearly instantaneously, or in a matter of a minute or so at the most. A whale thus hit is undoubtedly unconscious and paralysed in a

rigid state immediately the harpoon penetrates and comes to the surface in this state even if hit at the moment of sounding.

From the commercial viewpoint, the saving in time is great. There is no need to "play" the whale by feeding out hundreds of fathoms of heavy line, since the mammal, when struck, lies in the water without struggling and fighting to escape. In addition, the saving in oil and meat products is quite considerable, apart from the very much lower risk of infection such as frequently follows the internal destruction caused with the explosive-nose harpoon. Another advantage is the latitude allowed to the gunner, since the harpoon head need only penetrate the blubber layer in any part of the body to be immediately effective.

The Pirelli-General Cable Works, Ltd., and the Elektrohval Company, of Oslo, have worked in close collaboration with the G.E.C. and United Whalers in these experiments from the beginning.

("The Fishing News", London, October 25, 1952).

Turtle-Fishing in Kenya

An unusual method of turtle-fishing is practised by native fishermen in Kenya. Sucker fish are first caught by fishing with cut fish bait or even cooked bait. When caught, the fish are tied through the gills and mouth, the line is made fast to the boat and the sucker fish fasten themselves upon the bottom of the boat. When ten or more have been caught, the fishermen proceed to the turtle fishing-grounds.

The sucker fish are then removed from the bottom of the boat and a long line attached to their tails. They again attach themselves to the bottom but, immediately on scenting a turtle (or even a shark), they leave the boat for their prey to which they stick. The line is let out and when the turtle has tired itself out, it is pulled in and gaffed. As the turtle is hauled out of the water, the sucker fish let go and re-attach themselves to the boat.

("Fish Industry", London, September 1952).

Fishery Research in West Africa

The first major survey of West African waters by the West African Fisheries Research Institute's vessel "Cape St. Mary" has begun. Regular visits will be made during the next few years to the waters of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, to undertake research and exploration in close co-operation with local fisheries officers.

The capital cost of establishing the Institute was met by a grant made under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts. Half the recurrent cost over a period of five years is being paid by the U.K. Government, and the four West African Governments are sharing the other half.

The "Cape St. Mary" will be working in comparatively unexplored waters at depths ranging from 6 to 100 fathoms. It is hoped that the research carried out in the vessel - one of the best equipped of its kind - will determine the areas where fish are to be found in sufficient quantities to warrant commercial exploitation, the species most suitable for exploitation, the methods by which they may be found and caught, and the maximum quantities which may be caught without depleting the stock.

Experiments with types of fishing gear will also be made under the supervision of an experienced master fisherman.

("New Commonwealth", London, September 15, 1952).