

28°S and 30°S during that open season, shall be endorsed to the effect that they shall not during its currency engage in crayfishing at the Abrolhos.

The committee's recommendation followed its meeting in Geraldton in November when evidence was taken from a number of Abrolhos fishermen.

The position is that for a number of years - although the practice has grown in more recent times - some fishermen have commenced crayfish operations at the Abrolhos when the season opened, and when fishing is normally good, and after a few weeks, during which time they have taken the cream of the fish, have returned to Geraldton to fish in onshore waters. The Abrolhos men by and large are dependent on these onshore waters for their livelihood during the 7 months close period at the Abrolhos, but if any number of men return from the Islands before the open season is finished, they will to some extent fish the onshore areas "dry" before the general body of fishermen return at the close of the season. It was felt by the Committee that the interests of the men who were prepared to spend 5 months at the Abrolhos, where conditions are far less favourable than at Geraldton, should be safeguarded, and this was the reason for its recommendation.

The open season at the Abrolhos in 1954 will be the same as it was in 1953, i.e., from March 15 to August 15.

WEST AUSTRALIAN WHALING

Though Western Australian shore-based whaling activities for the current season commenced some time after the official opening of the 1953 humpback season on 1st May, full quotas were taken by all companies for the first time since the industry began operations in 1949. The season normally extends over six months, but with sightings numerous, operations at sea were completed in little over three months. Activity at shore stations was maintained near to full capacity by the catching of 1300 whales, the average length of which was 40 ft.

The quantity of high grade edible whale oil produced, together with the by-products of whale meal and solubles are shown hereunder -

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>
	tons	tons
Whale oil	11,000	10,383
Whale meal	3,200	2,200
Solubles	1,809	3,205

The latest figures suggest a small decline in the average quantities extracted. An average of 8.5 tons of oil per whale was realised from the 1953 catch as compared with 8.7 tons in 1952.

Oil prices remained comparatively steady during the year, varying between £A90 to £A93 per ton whilst solubles averaged £A25 per ton. The Australian market price for whale meal ruled at about £A41 per ton in comparison with £A60 in overseas markets. On the basis of these prices and with the production of whale meal distributed equally between the local and export markets, the average return per whale was £A900 to £A925.

Due to the irregular visits of suitable vessels, the shipment of whale oil has presented many difficulties. However, arrangements were made for the bulk of this year's production to be shipped to the Continent and Sweden whilst the remainder will be absorbed on the Australian market. In past years, owing to a shortage of suitable stock foods and fertilisers, whale meal has been retained on the local market, but improved supplies of competitive products have permitted limited exports of this year's production. Whale solubles, with a high protein content are used mainly for stock feed purposes. Sales have been made on the Australian market whilst useful exports have been made to the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Singapore.

The whaling industry is also conducted on the east coast at Moreton Bay, Queensland. A full quota of 700 whales was caught and processed at the Tangalooma shore station during the season.