

TOTAL VALUE BOATS AND GEAR 1953:	£1,055,232
TOTAL VALUE BOATS AND GEAR 1952:	£ 795,497
INCREASE:	£259,735

CHEYNE BEACH WHALING COMPANY

The Hon. Minister for Fisheries, Mr. L. F. Kelly, has received advice from the Commonwealth's Acting Minister for Commerce and Agriculture that approval has been given for this Company to take 100 humpback whales during the 1954 season. The Acting Minister stated that examination of the statistics seemed to indicate that the stock on the west coast was being over-exploited, however as the evidence was not considered to be sufficiently conclusive as yet no recommendation is being made to reduce the number to be taken.

MARLIN

A letter has been received from Mr. G. P. Whitley of the Australian Museum, Sydney, stating that in his opinion the marlin recently washed up on Cheyne Beach was probably a Black Marlin (Istiompax australis), which incidentally is often blue in colour. He has this opinion because of the erect pectoral fin which in the Black Marlin is very difficult to lie along the body, whereas in the Blue Marlin it is adpressible.

Mr. Whitley remarks that it would be very helpful if, when marlins are encountered, the measurements were taken of:-

- (a) the length of the sword from the eye socket,
- (b) the diameter of the eye,
- (c) the height of the lobe of the first (spinous) dorsal fin,
- (d) the depth of the body (between the parallels, not around the curves).

The colours should also be noted in as much detail as possible, preferably with a painting, and a strip of the skin with some of the lateral line pores on it should be preserved. These, he points out, are some of the key characteristics.

Any other details such as length, locality, sex, stomach contents, fin counts, number of vertebrae, etc., all help a positive identification. The extent of the groove along the belly may also be of importance.

Mr. Whitley went on to say there seem to be several species of marlin off eastern Australia and it is quite possible that there are several in the west too. Our blue marlin may be a January-February visitor.

#### 1954 SALMON RUN

Inspector G. C. Jeffery reported that 18 tons of salmon were caught at Cheyne Beach on the evening of the 19th February and on the following morning another 12 tons were caught. A 12-ton haul was also made at Bremer Bay.

#### MULLET BITING

Inspector S. W. Bowler has submitted an official report stating that on the 21st February he observed over 25 mullet being caught at the Greenough River with lines and bare hooks. This poses the question "How hungry can they get"?