

Sperm oil has been for many years a valued product of the sperm whale, which so far has not been synthesised owing to its chemical makeup. It is unique among oils in that it contains fatty alcohols which make it suitable for particular uses. There is a good demand for it in the leather and fur trades and also in the textile industry for finishing cotton and rayon thread. Because of its penetrating powers and rust preventive properties it is widely used in industry. Milady must thank sperm oil for the lustre in her high quality shampoos.

Spermaceti, another product from the head of the sperm whale, is used in the preparation of cosmetics, shaving and cold creams, ointments and pill coatings.

1954 WHALING SEASON

The table on page 337 sets out the whaling statistics for the 1954 season. Although the three stations did not commence operations till some time after the season officially opened on May 1, full quotas were taken for the second year in succession.

The bulk of the whale oil output was "sold forward" to Holland and Germany at a price of approximately £A100 per ton. This figure is slightly higher than last year's value of £A94 per ton. Unlike previous years, when irregular visits by tankers to take away the oil created many difficulties, this year oil loading operations went forward without undue delay.

By-products were again sold on a ready market. Whale meal, which is used as a stock food, commanded a price of about £A48 a ton, while solubles, which are also used as stock food, sold at £A65 a ton. The solubles, which were dried this year for the first time, contain an extremely high percentage of protein. It is interesting to note that a market has now been found for baleen, which for some time has been a drug on the market. Many years ago, it was in great demand for use as "whale-bone" in certain women's garments.

STATION	WHALES TAKEN				AVERAGE LENGTH		P R O D U C T I O N							
	Males	Fe- males	Sex X Unknown	Total	Males	Fe- males	O i l (in barrels)			Baleen bales	Meal tons	"Pet meat" tons	Solu- bles tons	Ferti- liser tons
							Total	Per whale	Per Whale- foot					
				ft.	ft.									
Point Cloates (Nor'West Whaling Co.,)	271	318	11	600	38.9	40.2	28,200	47	1.19	337	1,325	-	-	-
Carnarvon (Australian Whaling Commission)	351	249	-	600	38.5	40.6	28,612	47.7	1.21	-	1,682	-	1,425	-
Albany (Cheynes Beach Whaling Co.,)	68	52	-	120	39.4	41.4	6,143	51.2	1.27	-	53	180	-	72
TOTALS	690	619	11	1,320	38.8	40.5	62,955	47.7	1.21	337	3,060	180	1,425	72

X Only portion of whales recovered - remainder eaten by sharks.

This year the average length of each whale was slightly less than last year. This partly explains the fact that the tonnage of oil taken was slightly less than last year's take. It is also reflected in the output of oil per whale. In 1952 the average was 8.7 tons of oil, in 1953 8.5 tons, while this year the average dropped to 7.9 tons.

Economically the season has again been very successful. Taking into account the sales of oil and the by-products associated with its production, the approximate value of each whale caught is about £A975. The industry is therefore worth something like £A1,287,000 annually to this State.

The plate comparing the 1953 and 1954 catches of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company has been reproduced from the original diagram compiled by Inspector G.C. Jeffery.

It graphically presents the shift of the take this season when 36 whales were taken in June compared with 24 in June, 1953, representing an increase of 150 per cent for the month. The July catch was 53 whales in 1953 and, coincidentally, 54 in 1954. The same rate of improvement on 1953 figures was achieved in August as in June, the August figures being 23 in 22 days last year and 30 in 20 days this year.

CHEYNES BEACH WHALING CO. PTY. LTD.

MALE ■
FEMALE □

