

SPERM WHALE TAKEN

During October, information was received that a sperm whale was taken by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. at Albany. The company (which completed taking its humpback quota early in August) has been maintaining a skeleton staff in expectation of taking a number of this species which are not subject to quota or season restrictions. The whale caught was a male, 41' in length, but the oil yield obtained from it was reported to be poor, and the throat and stomach worm infested.

The minimum length prescribed for sperm whales under the Commonwealth Whaling Act and International Regulations is 35 feet, but they have been known to grow to 65 feet. It is the largest of all the toothed whales and it is in this species that the once precious product, ambergris, is formed. In years gone by, sperm whale oil was highly valued for the manufacture of clear-burning candles. The immense blunt front of the head contains a great oil "reservoir" from which up to 30 barrels have been obtained from one large animal.