

Department would like to have more information from its district inspectors on this year's invasion and particularly how far westwards the fish have travelled. All officers visiting Augusta and other ports in the South-West are asked to make inquiries of the local fishermen.

In some years the invasion is on such a scale that the Barracouta occur as far north as Fremantle. Perusal of old departmental reports yield interesting particulars.

Thus in 1903 Inspector A. Abjornsson reported that Barracouta appeared in small numbers at Fremantle about the beginning of May and entered the Swan River as far as the Narrows. "The fish were very poor, yet sold well at from 4s. to 8s. per dozen." This seems to be the only record we can trace for the Swan River estuary. In the Albany district the same year $8\frac{1}{2}$ tons of Barracouta were caught commercially. In 1904 the fish apparently were not plentiful north of Bunbury but large shoals were present in the vicinity of Cape Leeuwin. In 1905, however, Barracouta again invaded the Fremantle area; large catches were made, flooding the market, "thus affording the public cheap fish." In the winter of 1906 Barracouta were much less plentiful on the west coast and were unrecorded in later years until 1912. For that year the Bunbury statistics record 50 lb. being caught at Bunbury. There have been a few invasions on the west coast since that date but records are scanty and were not well kept.

The invasion of Barracouta may be correlated with other unusual fish occurrences this winter. Inspectors should make inquiries on the subject and notify Head Office.

WHALING

Operations are reported to be proceeding satisfactorily at both the Babbage Island and Frenchman's Bay stations. The Nor'-West Whaling Company, which it will be remembered acquired the Australian Whaling Commission's station just before the commencement of the season and decided to conduct all its operations from that base, had taken 289 whales by July 21.

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Up to the same period the Cheyne Beach Whaling Company had taken 73 whales, including a fin whale measuring 66'6". As the Commonwealth Whaling Act lays down that one blue whale is the equivalent of two fin whales or $2\frac{1}{2}$ humpbacks, the fin whale will count as the equivalent of one humpback in the Company's 1956 season quota.