FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MONTHLY SERVICE BULLETIN

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STAFF NOTES

The Superintendent (Mr. A.J. Fraser) on October 26 visited Katanning where he officially opened the Wild Life Show organised by the local Naturalists' Club. Mr. Fraser also attended the official opening of Museum Week earlier that month, and was present at a civic reception tendered by the Lord Mayor of Perth to Professor M.S. Thacker, Director of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in India. This month he will attend the Trout Acclimatisation Council's quarterly meeting to be held at Serpentine, and on this occasion will be accompanied by the Clerk-in-Charge (Mr. B.R. Saville) and Technical Officer J.S. Simpson.

We welcome to the staff Mr. A.J. Buchanan, who commenced duties at Head Office on October 10. Mr. Buchanan was transferred from the Department of Industrial Development to take over the duties of Statistical Officer, formerly occupied by Mr. B.K. Bowen. Prior to his appointment Mr. Buchanan had made arrangements to take his annual leave to visit Melbourne for the Olympic Games, and will leave Perth on November 21.

Inspector B.A. Carmichael, who commenced annual leave on October 29, was that afternoon presented with a crystal water set with the best wishes of his fellow officers for his forthcoming marriage to Miss Rona Atley, of Geraldton. Mr. Carmichael particularly asked that his appreciation be conveyed to those officers who were not able to be present.

Our congratulations are extended to Assistant Inspector R.J. Baird, whose second daughter, Delma Patricia, was born on October 9. Mr. Baird will commence annual leave on November 5, and return to duty on November 26.

Miss M.R. Carter, who had assisted at Head Office for a short period, resigned from the Service on October 4.

Fauna Protection Officer H.B. Shugg will accompany Dr. D.L. Serventy and Mr. N. Stewart of the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., to Gingin on November 2 for an inspection of the nesting site of the straw-necked ibis and a survey of an adjacent reserve. Later in the month Mr. Shugg and Technical Officer J. Traynor will accompany a small party, including Mr. Peter Scott, M.A., O.B.E., Director of the Wild Fowl Trust, Goucester, England, on a 3-day inspection of faunal areas in the lower South-West.

In addition to Fauna Warden G.C. Jeffery, who will commence annual and long service leave on November 12, Technical Officer L.G. Smith and Inspector S.W. Bowler each propose to start their long service leave on January 2, 1957.

Relieving Inspector A.K. Melsom and Technical Officer J.S. Simpson will go on annual leave immediately after the Christmas break.

MOVEMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL VESSELS

The research vessel "Lancelin", skippered by Captain H.C.W. Piesse, will test Cockburn Sound and adjacent waters for prawns and will carry out live bait trolling for tuna late this year and in January of next year. Early in February the "Lancelin" will sail for Shark Bay for a survey of the prawn and scallop resources there. At the moment the "Lancelin" is on the slip at Fremantle, but she should be ready for sea in approximately 3 weeks.

The p.v. "Kooruldhoo" is expected to be ready for patrols in the Lancelin-Jurien Bay area in the next few days. Initially Inspector G.H. Lyon, assisted by Assistant Inspector S. LaRoche, will form her crew.

The p.v. "Garbo" will remain in Geraldton for the time being under charge of Inspector R.M. Crawford.

FREMANTLE FISHERMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

Slightly reduced sales of crayfish were reported by this co-operative for the year ended June 30, 1956, in the accounts presented to the annual meeting of members held on October 8.

During the financial year ended June 30, 1955, cray sales totalled £380,291 - last year they dropped to £370,322. Advance payment at the rate of 2/- a lb. accounted for £248,812 of this sum, and general expenses for £41,040, leaving a balance of £80,470 to be distributed to members. This will bring the final figure to approximately 2/8 a lb. for the whole of the catch.

The retail fish section of the co-operative made a gross profit of £7,226; the wholesale fish section, £10,197; the gear and chandlery section, £1,479 and the fuel section £1,178. Losses of £2,668 in the engineering section and £979 in the bait section brought gross trading profit down to £16,433. Expenses amounted to £15,517, leaving a net profit of £918 for the year.

Share capital amounts to £41,645. Stocks and debtors are shown at £58,595, fixed assets at £103,539 and deferred assets at £1,674. Liabilities at £40,713 include overdraft, £17,837, and creditors, £22,876.

This co-operative has had many ups and downs since its inception. However, it seems very much as if the present management has been able to

bring some stability into the concern. The future is now less uncertain than it has been during the whole of its early life.

SOUTH AFRICAN FISHING COMPANIES COMBINE

A report from Cape Town says that nine of the largest fishing companies in South Africa and South-West Africa have combined to form a central selling organisation. The new setup is designed to regulate the production of fish and the sale of their products on local and world markets.

Total assets of the combine exceed £5,000,000. It hopes to save duplication of effort and cheapen distribution costs.

South and South-West Africa's fish production is about eleven times that of the whole of Australia.

TOWARDS BETTER LETTERS

The General Services Administration of the United States Government has produced a new correspondence manual. It lays down 17 rules designed to improve correspondence and submissions in Federal Departments.

They may perhaps assist departmental officers in producing better letters and memoranda. We consequently reprint them -

For Shortness

1. Don't make a habit of repeating what is said in a letter you answer.

2. Avoid needless words and needless information.

3. Beware of roundabout prepositional phrases such as "with regard to" and "in reference to".

4. Watch out for nouns and adjectives that derive from verbs. Use these words in their verb form more frequently.

5. Don't qualify your statements with irrelevant "ifs".

For Simplicity

6. Know your subject so well you can discuss it naturally and confidently.

7. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.

8. Be compact. Don't separate closely related parts of sentences.

9. Tie thoughts together so your reader can follow you from one to another without getting lost.

For Strength

10. Use specific, concrete words.

11. Use more active verbs.

12. Don't explain your answer before giving it. Give answers straight away, then explain if necessary.

13. Don't hedge. Avoid expressions like "it appears".

For Sincerity

14. Be human. Use words that stand for human beings, like the names of persons and the personal pronouns "you", "she", "we", and so on.

15. Admit mistakes. Don't hide them behind meaningless words.

16. Don't overwhelm your reader with intensives and emphatics.

17. Do not be obsequious or arrogant. Strive to express yourself in a friendly way and with simple dignity.

ANOTHER DIVER DIES

A report from Broome says that a 26-year old Malay, Bull Hassan bin Jacob, died on October 2 while the pearling lugger "Dove" was making a 90-mile dash from the Cape Mangrove shell beds to Broome. Bin Jacob showed signs of paralysis on the afternoon of September 29, after working in 15 fathoms. He was put down to that depth again for 9 hours and brought on board again after he had signalled that he felt much better. The next day, however, the paralysis recurred and the lugger set sail for Broome. He was the third diver to lose his life this season.

PRAWNS IN THE SWAN

Senior Inspector J.E. Munro reports that prawns were taken from the Swan River last month - the first time for many years that they have been seen in October. In the early 40's professional fishermen used to net fair hauls in October, but for some unknown reason, Mr. Munro says, prawning was discontinued at that period. Early last month, however, river prawns were on sale at two city shops, and although they were not of a large run, there was a keen demand for them.

BARRACOUTA

In a previous issue of this bulletin (Vol. 5, No. 8, of August, 1956) it was reported that barracouta were invading Albany waters.

Since that issue Inspector Green, who is stationed at Albany, has reported that tremendous schools of barracouta made their appearance in King George Sound and surrounding waters towards the end

of May, 1956. By early June fishermen were finding it difficult to hook fish such as tuna and bonito because of the "plague" of barracouta which were taking spinners as soon as they touched water. Mr. Green did not inspect the gut of any of the barracouta caught, but professional fishermen told him that they were in full roe during the latter half of June. However, by mid-July most were spent. The barracouta occurrences had declined appreciably by mid-August, and by the end of September only an odd one was being taken.

Incidentally, most of the fish caught were riddled with worms.

ICE BAGS FOR LOBSTERS

In "Food Technology in Australia", October, 1956, issue, comes a report of a new icing method in the transport of live lobsters and crabs. A firm in Billingsgate, England, has commenced using polyethylene plastic bags as ice containers, which ensures that fresh, healthy and dry crustaceans reach the markets in Europe. The use of free ice in transport containers, especially in warm weather, permitted the live fish to come into contact with a considerable amount of fresh water, which spoilt the flavour. The new method, it is reported, prevents this and the waterproof polyethylene presents a better solution to the problem than the sawdust used formerly. The polyethylene plastic tube is cut to the required length, heat sealed at one end and filled with water and then completely heat sealed. The bags of water are then frozen solid and, after freezing, are packed in cartons in layers on which the lobsters and crabs are placed, padded with wood wool. It is said that the inherent properties of the polyethylene film, which include flexibility at low temperatures, toughness and durability, make it especially suitable for this purpose. As it is completely waterproof, the melted ice is retained in the bags, which are five to nine inches wide and about 15 inches long.

TROUT DELIVERIES

On Monday, October 15, Technical Officers Simpson and Traynor proceeded to Pemberton to transport trout fingerlings to various country centres. On the first trip, fish were delivered to Pinjarra, Rockingham, Cockburn and Perth, and on subsequent trips to Beverley, Quairading, Wagin and Kulin.

At Rockingham 4,000 fish were placed in Lake Richmond in the presence of members of the Rockingham Road Board. Thomson's Lake and Bibra Lake were also stocked, each receiving 2,000 fish.

Plans had been made to air-freight 1,000 fish to Onslow and Ravensthorpe and 500 to Esperance. They were to be sent in plastic bags filled half with water and half with oxygen. However, due to the poor condition of the fish when they arrived in Perth, the Ravensthorpe and Esperance orders were not sent. The Onslow fish were forwarded, but as anticipated the majority of them died before they reached their destination.

The remaining four deliveries were carried out without incident, and the fish arrived at the farmers' dams in excellent condition. A frequent comment by the farmers was to the effect that the fish were smaller this year than in previous years. This was confirmed by Mr. Simpson, who reported that whereas last year 1,000 fish displaced $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches of water in his measuring can, this year 1,000 fish displaced slightly less than 1 inch of water.

Mr. Simpson anticipates that he will finish this season's fingerling deliveries by the end of November. He has yet to deliver fish to Lake Grace, Moora, Narrogin, Cunderdin, Harrismith, Highbury and Beverley.

SPERM WHALING

Attracted by the absence of quota restrictions on the taking of sperm whales, the Cheynes Beach

Whaling Co.'s chaser "Cheynes" began exploratory sweeps early in 1955. From indications then offering it appeared that the sperms could be located along the edge of the continental shelf, south of Albany. Though initial trips were not successful, sufficient evidence was obtained to encourage further work at the close of the 1955 season.

In its first cruise in October, 1955, the "Cheynes" was successful in the capture of one sperm whale and further kills added up to a total take of seven for the season. The present season has already proved a much more successful one, for up to October 31 the Company had obtained 34.

Sperm whales often feed at great depths, and have the ability to stay submerged for long periods. They remain in open water and are much harder to sight. Weather conditions, therefore, have a large influence on operations, particularly as the sperms, unlike the humpbacks, seem to prefer to stay about 25 miles or more off the coast.

KATANNING WILD LIFE SHOW

This year's show at Katanning was a grand success. Conducted by the Katanning Naturalists' Club, it was officially opened on October 26 by the Superintendant (Mr. A.J. Fraser) in the capacity of Chief Warden of Fauna. The large attendance must have been very satisfying to the organisers and, from the many enthusiastic comments, there is no doubt that the public was surprised at the high standard of the exhibits.

In the absence on leave of Senior Inspector J.E. Munro, who usually looks after matters of this nature, the Departmental exhibit was prepared and attended by the Relieving Inspector, Mr. A.K. Melsom. Captain H.C.W. Piesse, of the research vessel "Lancelin" (who was spending some annual leave in the district at the time) also assisted. As usual, many complimentary remarks were passed about the Department's contribution.

BASIC WAGE INCREASE

Following a recent decision of the Arbitration Court, the Public Service Commissioner has instructed that the basic rate for government employees should be increased in accordance with the new basic wage. As from October 29, officers over the age of 20 years will receive an increase of 3/10 per week in the metropolitan area, Shark Bay and Broome; while those at Geraldton, Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany will receive an additional 4/2½ per week. Junior officers will receive pro-rata increases according to their age.

DEFINITIONS OF NETS

Some doubt exists in the minds of fishermen and others regarding the definition of set nets and hauling nets.

Neither of these terms is defined in the Fisheries Act. It is consequently necessary that the ordinary meanings of "set" and "haul" be applied, and in ascertaining those meanings recourse has been had to Webster's International Dictionary.

Webster defines "set" as to "place in position". Hence any net which is merely placed in position for catching fish, and not otherwise "worked", is regarded by us as a set net. There is now no requirement that a set net be "attended", although there was formerly.

"Haul" is interpreted by Webster as to "pull or draw with force, or drag". Any net therefore that is "worked" in this manner is deemed to be a hauling net.

Incidentally, the term "seine" is used quite freely in this State. Webster's definition is as follows - "A large net, one edge of which is provided with sinkers, and the other with floats. It hangs vertically in the water, and when its ends are brought together or drawn ashore encloses the fish". Actually, the Department does not use the term "seine" officially, preferring "hauling net."

THE CLEARING HOUSE

Paint - Will Do Much for Your Vessels!

by Donald Ross,
Technical Editor.

The first thing to do to get a good paint job done on a fishing boat, is to select a good paint; a paint when properly applied sets and hardens to a flint-like surface. This is the giant boat protector and the best economy is to put on two coats instead of only one. The first coat should be a filler coat with plenty of linseed oil for her planking to soak up, so that when the second coat is put on its oil will remain in the paint and harden to the proper tough and leathery coating it is meant to be. When only one coat is used the wood robs the paint of its oil and leaves the mineral barren and chalky on the surface; but when the second coat is added, both coats are then bonded to the ship; and one to the other, thus giving the ship its proper coating.

The short sighted owner will say, "But you are using twice the labour and twice the material", losing sight of the fact that he will be getting twice the wear and at least three times the protection. And also losing sight of the fact that the coverage on the second coat is much faster, and the material on the first coat is much thinner. The two-coat system is the only equivalent of the good paint job.

Then there is the great importance of preparing the surface for painting. This should be a painstaking job with scraper, chisel and electric sander; and in the very tough places, the blow-torch and paint remover. It is a mistake to balk at or evade this preliminary work. It is the only way to get an effective paint job and give the paint a chance to penetrate. Also it makes the actual brushing on of the paint much easier and faster. Piling up paint on top of dirt and cracked, worn out and weather depleted paint is useless painting. Paint must penetrate and adhere to protect. It cannot do this through a crust of dead paint.

Rust is a great destroyer, besides being the greatest dirtier and contaminator of paints and marine coatings and a destroyer of the ship's beauty. I broke off with my bare hands, from the forward bollards, flakes of rust as big as a large envelope and ¼ of an inch thick. Rust is rotting metal. These pieces broke in my hands like molasses cookies. The only way to handle this is to clean that rust off right down to the original metal: bollards, gallows, winch, chaffing gear, turnbuckles, etc.

Do this by chopping with peening hammers, and rasping with files and steel wire brushes. When you have reached the raw metal brush all loose dust off. Then paint with Rust-Oleum - 769 Danyr Proof Red Primer. This product seems to be a most successful rust arrestor and, as rust is the most destructive menace to metal and paint on a fishing boat it will more than pay to do this job very thoroughly. So get all the rust off before you apply the Rust-Oleum.

On your natural woodwork be just as thorough. Remove the old varnish with any good paint remover; get down to the natural wood. Then bleach it by applying Clorox, bringing out the beauty of the natural wood. Next use a coat of orange shellac and when dry apply a coat of good spar-varnish. Wherever natural wood is used on the boat it is for beauty - the steering wheel, the berths and coamings, etc. - keep them beautiful. A paint and finish neglected fishing boat, is a cheap looking piece of property.

Then comes the care of the bottom and here preparation is no less important. After the boat is hauled out on the ways the first thing to do is scrape and wash the bottom while the moss and barnacles are still wet and more easily removed. The bottom then should be permitted to dry thoroughly, after which it should be smoothed with a sander, chisels, or short block planes. All little jabs from doors, or any other abrasions should be worked out and end seams caulked and filled. Get the bottom as smooth as a dinner plate if you can.

Then apply the copper bottom paint using it lavishly. This product has been improved and is

now made in a plastic copperus coating, a tough enamel-like paint that must wear off and not wash off as the other copper paints were calculated to do. As that was the method of protection, it gave the parasite no footing to hold to; when the ship got under way the parasite was washed off by the surface of the paint giving away leaving the bottom clean until all the paint was washed off.

Now remember the first thing for a good paint job is the selection of good paints, enamels, spar-varnish, etc. In the pages of Fishing Gazette will be found many firms that are manufacturers of the highest grade of marine paint products. Firms that have been thinking in terms of paint chemistry for the past century.

("Fishing Gazette" New York August, 1956.)

Canada Wants 12-Mile Limit

The intention to seek general international acceptance of Canada's desire to extend its territorial waters from the present three mile limit to 12 miles offshore, was announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. Louis St. Laurent, in the House of Commons on Monday, July 30.

Saying that they did not want to base their claim on the number of divisions in their armed forces, the Prime Minister said that they did not want to make a unilateral claim of sovereignty 12 miles to sea. Even if the proposed new limit was generally recognised, Canada would have to allow historic fishing rights of certain countries within that limit.

He also indicated, says Reuter, that when the subject comes before the United Nations General Assembly next autumn, Canada will seek international acceptance of another principle - that the limits be measured outwards from a baseline stretching from headland to headland instead of from the actual coast.

The Prime Minister was replying to an Opposition question as the House studied a Bill to write into the Canadian Shipping Act the terms of the international agreement prohibiting ships from dumping oil within 50 miles of coastlines.

He said Canada would not have to get unanimous consent of all countries to the 12 mile limit, but there would have to be recognition by, for instance, the United States, France and other countries which had historic fishing rights on the Grand Banks off the east coast.

As for the method of drawing the territorial water limits, he said Canada was seeking general international acceptance of a principle embodied in a decision of the International Court of Justice. The Court had "set a principle which we think should be applicable to our own shores."

("The Fishing News" London August 3, 1956.)

New Plastic Lifeboat Passes Ministry of Transport Tests

The Ministry of Transport has tested and passed a new design of lifeboat made entirely of glass-reinforced plastic produced by Messrs. Woodnutt and Co., St. Helens, Isle of Wight.

The boat is 24 ft. in length, 8 ft. in breadth and 3.3 ft. in moulded depth. She has a davit weight of 33 cwt. and a capacity and seating of 42 persons, compared with the normal 36.

The lifeboat is constructed in one piece with integral built-in buoyancy, and Messrs Woodnutt, who have been making the more conventionally designed boats in the accepted materials since the middle of the last century, chose one material for this boat - FRP.

FRP is basically a beetle polyester developed by British Industrial Plastic Chemicals Ltd., with fire-retarding chemicals linked into its chemical structure during manufacture and containing no additives to leak out with the passage of time.

The resulting material has several advantages over conventional boat-building materials :

It has a great structural strength and is easy to cast into large structures with unskilled labour.

It does not corrode or rot and is impervious to marine borers.

It is light, solid, and almost non-absorbent and, since the substance is in itself colourless and any colour can be incorporated in the material, it does not need painting.

It has also been found that the material used (FRP) has excellent fire-resisting properties and a model built from it and floated in salt water resisted a fierce fire of about 500 deg. C. in temperature for eight minutes and was still floating.

The FRP keel has withstood without damage a test load of no less than 11 tons concentrated against about 3 ft. of its length.

During the Ministry of Transport tests in July the lifeboat was dropped from a height of 8 ft. above the water with complete equipment and stores and two people on board.

("The Fishing News" London September 21, 1956.)

Waste Oil Dumping is Now Illegal

As from last Saturday it became an offence against an Act of Parliament for any British ship to discharge persistent waste oils within 1,000 miles of Britain's Atlantic coastline.

This regulation and others are contained in the new Oil in Navigable Waters Act, 1955, which is an attempt to prevent the pollution of the sea by oil waste from ships.

The Chairman of the Co-ordinating Advisory Committee on Oil Pollution of the Sea, Mr. James Callaghan, M.P., said in London that in order to

improve the situation it was necessary for the United States, Panama and Liberia to take similar steps.

Although several other nations besides Britain had passed similar laws, said Mr. Callaghan, these did not include the largest tanker-owning countries, which were United States, Panama and Liberia, controlling betweem them 14 million tons of tankers.

The Committee would in the coming years do its best to stir up opinion in America and try to influence the nation into taking similar steps against oil discharges into the sea, he said.

"It will be a long time before we rid the seas of this filth", Mr. Callaghan said. "But if British shipowners can do it, so can others. The nation should be grateful for the co-operation we have had from British shipping interests and from the officers and men of the Merchant Navy. The committee intends to go on agitating until it is illegal for any ship of any country to dump oil anywhere throughout the seven seas."

("The Fishing News" London September 21, 1956.)

Five Hundred tons of Trout Taken from Taupo in a Season

Many executives in the fishing industry are (somewhat surprisingly) keen anglers and eagerly turn from fish in business to fish in sport.

With that in mind they may be interested to have some practical details of the famous trout fishing in New Zealand (now more and more easily accessible by air). According to a recent release by the New Zealand authorities, in a normal angling season over 500 tons of trout are taken from Lake Taupo and the rivers flowing into it.

And the quality of the fish is higher than anywhere else in the world. Keeping trout in good condition is not a matter of jealously guarding them from the angler. The more fish caught, the bigger grow

the survivors, because they get a greater share of the available food.

Statistics prove that trout thrive on adversity. In 1924, Taupo rainbows averaged 10½ lb.; during the war years, when nobody had time for leisurely fishing holidays, the trout bred unmolested, and the average catch dropped as low as 2¼ lb. Today, the average has increased to 4½ lb. Current management methods are based on the results of extensive research done in the area by the Department of Internal Affairs. It is confidently expected that these methods will raise the standard of Taupo fish still higher.

One of the steps that the Internal Affairs Department has taken to improve the quality of Taupo fish has been to extend the angling season to nine months - from October 1 to June 30. Sixteen thousand licenses were issued last summer; 9,000 during the winter, and of the total of 260,000 fish caught, 30,000 were taken during the winter months.

Although most people think immediately of rainbow trout in connection with Taupo, there are two other varieties in the area - brown trout and fontinalis.

Brown trout average 7½ to 8 lb. and a 10-pounder is not uncommon. They are more wary than rainbow, and therefore harder to catch.

Fontinalis, called "brook trout" in their homeland, America, were first introduced in the Taupo district in 1952. Already they are averaging 3 lb. - equal to their average weight in their homeland - and it is not unlikely that in a few more years they will provide yet another world's record for Taupo.

By changing their fishing-spots throughout the months, year-round anglers can get first-class fishing at any time during the nine-month season.

("The Fishing News" London August 10, 1956.)

Patrol Ship Scatters Shark School

A large school of basking sharks concentrated in the Canadian salmon fishing areas on the west coast of Vancouver has been decimated and scattered by a Federal Fisheries patrol vessel fitted with a razor-like ram on its bow. The vessel moved in on the big mammals early in April and soon accounted for 67 sharks, says Trade Fisheries, Ottawa. Biggest bag in one day was 31 sharks rammed in Barkley Sound.

Operations against the basking sharks were begun last year at the urgent request of salmon fishermen. The sharks, which have no commercial value, have caused damage to salmon gill-nets and to trolling gear. The big fish, some up to 8,000 lb. in weight and 35 ft. in length, become entangled in fishing gear, causing heavy financial loss to the fishermen.

The ram used by the research vessel is a curving blade of boiler plate steel, sharpened at the front edge and fitted to the curve of the bow. The blade is bolted in position and secured by chains to provide a certain degree of elasticity. In the majority of runs the shark is caught square in centre and killed instantly.

("The Fishing News" London August 10, 1956.)

Seaweed for Slimming

German scientists have discovered the slimming powers of seaweed. By drinking a simple concoction made from seaweed jelly the appetite is reduced and the need for drastic diet in order to slim vanishes.

The drink, which is harmless and contains no fattening matter, forms a jelly-like lump in the stomach, which takes several hours to digest and thus discourages eating. The drink is prepared by dissolving the jelly in water.

("The Fishing News" London September 14, 1956.)