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MONTHLY SERVICE BULLETIN
WESTERN AUSTRALIA FISHERIES
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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE

DEPARTMENT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MONTHLY SERVICE BULLETIN

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STAFF NOTES

Messrs B.R. Saville, H.B. Shugg and G.C. Ferguson, of Head Office and Relieving Inspector A.K. Melson and Technical Officer J.S. Simpson commenced annual leave during the latter part of December. They will return to duty in January. Messrs B.K. Bowen and A.J. Buchanan returned to duty from leave during December. The latter visited Melbourne to attend the Olympic Games. While there he took the opportunity of calling on the Director of Fisheries and Game (Mr. A.D. Butcher), who introduced him to a number of his staff. He was also, through Mr. Butcher's good offices, taken to Snobb's Creek Trout Hatcheries where he spent an instructive time.

The Minister for Fisheries (Mr. Kelly) has gone to Rottnest for the holidays and is not expected to return to his office until January 14.

The congratulations of the whole staff are tendered to Mr. and Mrs. B.K. Bowen on the birth of their first child (a daughter).

Inspector S.W. Bowler, of Mandurah, will start three months' long service leave on January 2. During his absence from Mandurah, Inspector A.V. Green, of Albany, will relieve him. Assistant Inspector R.J. Baird will relieve Mr. Green, and Assistant Inspector T.B. Baines will take over from Mr. Baird at Lancelin.

Assistant Inspector D. Wright will on January 7 report to H.M.A.S. Leeuwin for six months' National Service training with the Navy.

Mr. Geoffrey Hanley commenced duty as Cadet Inspector on December 3. Mr. Eric Barker, who has also been appointed Cadet Inspector, is expected to take up duty on January 2.

Assistant Inspector S. LaRoche has been transferred to the research vessel "Lancelin". Cadet Inspector R. McKay has been transferred to p.v. "Kooruldhoo" in place of Mr. LaRoche.

OBITUARY

It is with the very greatest regret that we report the death at his home at Bridgetown of Leslie William Duncan, who had been a Cadet Inspector with the Department for 1 year 7 months until he was compelled a few months ago to resign for health reasons. Leslie, who was 19 when he died, was one of the most promising young officers the Department had ever had. During his service with us he had been stationed at Head Office, at Lancelin, at Pemberton trout hatchery, and as crew member of the "Kooruldhoo" patrolling the Abrolhos crayfishery. The deepest sympathy of the entire staff is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Duncan and sister Jean.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of inspectors will this year be held in the week commencing February 25 when all field officers, with the exception of just a few, will be required to be present at Head Office. For this purpose, in accordance with previous instructions, public transport only may be used, and equivalent train or bus fares will not be paid to officers who use private vehicles.

CRAYFISH CONSERVATION

The Government has approved of all waters within one mile of the coast lying between the 30th and 33rd parallels of south latitude being closed against the taking of crayfish by means of pots, traps or any fixed engine. The prohibition will commence on January 15 and terminate on November 15.

The purpose of the closure, which has for some time been advocated by a number of Fremantle fishermen and was the subject of a strong recommendation by the Fishermen's Advisory Committee to the Minister, is to ensure that fishermen keep away from the shallower inshore waters, where immature and small crayfish are quite abundant. The prohibition is not being applied during the "white" crayfish season. This is because in the latter half of November and in December the majority of Fremantle fishermen look to the "whites" for their livelihood. During the period the "whites" are running they are found only on sand bottom, on which all pots then are set. Red crayfish are not found on these sand bottoms, hence they are not caught during the "white" run. Amateur fishermen will likewise not be permitted to use pots or any fixed engine, but the capture of crayfish by hand will be allowed.

RETIREMENT OF INSPECTOR W. DAVIDSON

Inspector Davidson, of Fremantle, who is now fast approaching the retiring age, will finish 37 years' service on February 27. It is no doubt obvious to the staff that Mr. Davidson's retirement will necessitate a number of changes, including one or two promotions. The Department will be pleased to hear from inspectors who may be interested in receiving the Fremantle appointment, or in transfer or promotion to any consequential vacancy. Any such vacancy will of course be gazetted in due course, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act, but the Superintendent would be pleased if in the meantime any officers who would like to be considered would drop him a personal note.

CONVICTIONS RECORDEDOctober 1 to December 31, 1956

Date	Defendant	Court	Charge	Result
11.12.56	Burt, C.W.	Albany	Net in closed waters	Fined £5
14.12.56	Kendle, T.	Bunbury	Undersize Fish	" £5
14.12.56	Sofilas, M.	do.	do.	" £5
1.10.56	Greco, G.	Fremantle	do.	" £3
8.10.56	Travia, F.	Ger'ton	Undersize Crayfish	" £2
do.	Merendino, A.	do.	do.	" £2
do.	MacDonald, D.	do.	do.	" £10
do.	White, W.	do.	do.	" £2
do.	Pearce, A.	do.	do.	" £2
do.	Hewitt, K.	do.	do.	" £10
do.	Kijenia, M.	do.	do.	" £10
do.	Bumback, S.	do.	do.	" £2
do.	Horseman, J.E.	do.	do.	" £4
do.	Crooks, R.B.	do.	do.	" £5
do.	Grigsby, N.	do.	do.	" £4
30.10.56	Head, F.E.	Perth	Undersize Fish	" £2
29.11.56	Vaughan, J.	do.	Net in closed waters	" £5
7.11.56	Baird, Allan	Pinjarra	do.	" £5
do.	Jones, C.	do.	do.	" £5

OPENING OF DUCK SEASON

Although on opening day ducks appeared to be reasonably plentiful, the average bag was not, according to reports, much larger than six or seven ducks. The legal limit is 15.

The Fauna Protection Officer (Mr. Shugg) with the acting Fauna Warden (Mr. Carmichael) visited Gundaring Lake, near Wagin, on the opening day. About 120 shooters had assembled there for the explosion of a plug of gelignite at 5 a.m. to announce the opening time. Less water than usual was in Gundaring, and shooters were able to proceed farther into the lake and to get reasonably good cover. Shooting was quite good.

In the Beverley district a feature of the opening was the large number of mountain duck taken. Duck-shooting in recent years had not been particularly good in this district, but quite good bags were recorded on the opening day.

At Lake Mears, where thousands of ducks are usually congregated just before Christmas, shooting is said to have been particularly poor. It is believed that thunderstorms in this and many other country areas just prior to the opening date had the effect of scattering ducks from a number of their usual haunts.

CRAYFISH - SHARK BAY

Inspector McLaughlan has reported that in November and December, L.F.B. "Saturn" was operating a number of craypots off Dirk Hartog Island, Shark Bay. Using South Passage as an anchorage, "Saturn" set his first line of 100 pots south-west of False Entrance on October 30, and then gradually moved the lines northwards, eventually reaching the vicinity of Herald Heights.

Mr. McLaughlan has been told that the results obtained south of South Passage were not encouraging, but when the pots were set north of the Passage, the daily catch increased from 4 to 5 bags to about 10 to 12 bags, and was still improving.

Because of the steeply shelving nature of the bottom westward of the islands, it seems considerable prospecting will need to be undertaken before the best crayfish grounds are located. "Saturn" found that because her pots were rigged for depths not exceeding 30 fathoms, and that depths of up to 60 fathoms were met with in fairly close proximity to the coast, her fishing activities were confined to a relatively narrow strip. One major problem was the difficulty in obtaining fish bait.

From a catch of 15,225 lb. of crayfish in the first 5 or 6 weeks, only 600 lb. fell into the "midget" and "small" categories. Practically the whole of the remaining 14,625 lb. were graded as "medium".

"Saturn" returned to Fremantle just before Christmas, but it is expected she will return to her new grounds early in the New Year. She will probably spend several months in the area.

CRAYFISH EXPORTS

The following details of exports of crayfish tails and whole crayfish from Western Australia during the years 1950-1956 are interesting -

<u>Year</u>	<u>Frozen Craytails</u> lb.	<u>Frozen Whole Crayfish</u> lb.	<u>Total Weight</u> lb.
1950	1,876,920	26,195	1,903,115
1951	2,539,465	66,739	2,606,204
1952	2,746,043	24,036	2,770,079
1953	2,855,553	55,780	2,911,333
1954	3,280,235	27,118	3,307,353
1955	4,274,975	172,043	4,447,018
1956	3,170,790	41,805	3,212,595

The figure for the past year is lower than for a couple of years. The expected catch for 1956 will probably be in the vicinity of 9,000,000 lb., compared with 11,000,000 lb. in 1955. Quite a few factors were involved in the reduced catch.

THE CLEARING HOUSE

Norwegians May Withdraw From Whaling Agreement

The Oslo newspaper Aftenposten reported last month that among Norwegian whaling operators there was a strong feeling in favour of withdrawing from the international whaling agreement. Through the Norwegian Whaling Association they have informed the Norwegian Government to this effect, and the Government in turn has submitted the operators' proposals to the Norwegian Whaling Council. According to Aftenposten, the Council has by a majority of five to two given the proposals its support.

In its letter, the Whaling Association refers to the big expansion of foreign whaling expeditions in spite of the fact that the total annual catch quota in the Antarctic is only 15,000 blue whale units. The Association urges that unless a satisfactory control system can be devised, Norway should notify its withdrawal from the present agreement.

In a press interview, the whaling operator, Anders Jahre, said that he believed that the estimates made of stocks of whales in the Antarctic were too conservative and that the position was better than the scientists had declared. On the other hand, whaling as an economic proposition had deteriorated owing to the expansion of foreign participation and the failure in some cases to observe the international regulations.

("The South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review" South Africa November, 1956)

Aluminium Dinghies Built for Rock Lobster Fishing

A new type aluminium craft to come from the yards of Fred Nicolls (Pty.) Ltd. this year is a 12 foot dinghy specially designed for rock lobster fishing.

The introduction of line production methods has reduced costs so that the aluminium boat is now competitive with the wood and fibreglass boats.

(ii)

The craft are designed so that they can be stowed in a "nest" - one inside the other without damage and without wasting any time either when stowing or launching from the parent craft.

Like all aluminium craft coming from the firm's workshops, the dinghies carry an unconditional five-year guarantee. They are all-welded by the Argon welding process.

Measuring 12 ft. long and with a 5 ft. beam, a few of these craft are already operating in Cape waters where their qualities are subject to searching tests.

In addition to dinghies for the rock lobster industry, a number of craft of the same design have been supplied to private owners in various parts of the Union.

Other small aluminium craft of slightly different design are in service in the Rhodesias and East Africa. The Union Department of Irrigation and the Natal Parks and Games Board also use them.

At present there are 24 in use at St. Lucia where fishermen can hire them and fit their own outboard motors.

("The South African Shipping News and Fishing Industry Review" South Africa November, 1956)

Pacific Salmon Conservation Plans
Agreed by Canada & U.S.

Agreement was reached recently by Canadian and United States delegates at a conference called to work out means for joint control and regulation of the 15,000,000 dollar a year pink and sockeye salmon industry in the Juan de Fuca-Fraser River area of the Pacific coast. It was agreed that this objective might best be achieved by expanding the authority of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission, by amendment of the Sockeye Salmon Convention of 1930, thus permitting the commission to investigate the pink salmon stocks of the Fraser River and regulate the fishery.

The commission's objective would be to maintain the pink salmon stocks at the level of maximum sustainable productivity and ensure, insofar as practicable, an equal division of the catch of pinks by Canadian and U.S. fishermen. The agreement provides that the commission may begin regulation of the fishery immediately after entering into force.

The International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission established in 1937, consisting of three representatives each from Canada and the United States, was responsible for the investigation and management of the sockeye salmon of the Fraser River system. Its work has been outstanding.

The agreement will allow division of the catch and will increase the size of the Commission's Advisory Committee by adding one member from each country in order to give broader representation from the industry.

It also provides for a co-ordinated investigation by research agencies of the two governments and the commission of pink salmon stocks which enter the water described in the convention. A meeting will be called in the seventh year after entry into force to review the results of this investigation and to determine what future arrangements concerning pink salmon conservation might be desirable. The agreement has been referred to the two governments for signature.

The conference also took note of the serious threat which off-shore net fishing poses to the conservation of both pink and sockeye salmon stocks and adopted a resolution calling this matter to the attention of the governments and recommending immediate action on their parts to solve the problem.

("The Fishing News" London November 30, 1956)

United States Governmental Expenditures In
Fiscal 1956 for Fishery Research.

United States and state agencies and international fisheries commissions spent \$13,975,000 (approximately £A5,900,000) in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1956, on research and services for commercial fisheries,

according to a report released August 2 by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

Categories considered in the report include expenditures for biological research, hatchery and river basin studies, exploratory fishing and gear research, technological studies (refrigeration, utilization of products, etc.), collection and publication of statistics and market news data, economic studies, market development and education activities, and various other types of research and services.

Of this total expenditure, \$9,292,000 was from regular Fish and Wildlife Service appropriations (\$2,811,000 of which was from funds made available by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act), \$4,015,000 was supplied by States, and \$668,000 by International Commissions.

Of all the funds spent on fishery research, the report shows that \$4,733,000 was spent in salmon research and services; tuna activities got \$1,504,000 of which \$1,386,000 was spent on the Pacific fishery; oysters got \$1,068,000 of which \$984,000 was spent on Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico problems; for sardines \$1,184,000 was spent with \$957,000 going to the Pacific; while \$613,000 was spent on the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery. The menhaden and halibut fisheries each got \$245,000. Research services for all varieties of fresh-water fish amounted to \$917,000. The remainder of the funds were distributed among numerous other fish including rockfish, flounders, ocean perch, mackerel, mullet, striped bass, scallops, clams, crabs, and northern lobsters.

More than half of the \$4,015,000 supplied by States went to three varieties of fish: salmon research and development work getting \$983,000, eastern and southern oyster projects receiving \$706,000, and \$638,000 for work on the Pacific sardine.

Funds of the international fisheries commissions were distributed in the interests of three fisheries: salmon, \$282,000; tuna, \$198,000; halibut, \$188,000.

The annual catch of fish varies from year to year but approximates 4.5^{billion} pounds. The value of the catch also varies but it approximates \$350 million a year.

The report puts shrimp in first position in value of the catch at the boat, third at the level of the processor and primary wholesaler, and second at the retailer level. Tuna ranks first for the processor and primary wholesaler, first for the processor and primary wholesaler, first for the retailer, and second for the fisherman and boat owner. Salmon is second for the processor and primary wholesaler, third for the retailer, and third for the fisherman and boat owner.

As far as volume is concerned, menhaden is far ahead with a catch of about 1.7 billion pounds annually, or about 38 percent of the total catch. Menhaden, which is used for meal and oil, ranks in sixth, seventh, and ninth positions in value, respectively, to the processor, fisherman and boat owner, and retailer.

Alaska is first among the states and territories in number of fishermen with 14,000 out of a total of 153,000. California heads the list of fishing craft in operation with more than 10,000 out of a total of about 87,000 craft. California, Massachusetts and New Jersey are rated one, two, three in volume of catch; California, Massachusetts, and Florida are one, two, three in the value of the catch.

("Commercial Fisheries Review" Washington, D.C.
September, 1956.)

WHALING

Whale and sperm oil output up in 1956 : World production of whale and sperm whale oils in 1956 is forecast at 425,000 and 105,000 short tons, respectively, as compared with 418,000 and 93,000 tons last year (table 1). This increase was due to high yields and came in spite of the cut in the Antarctic catch quota from 15,500 blue whale units to 15,000 per season. Although there was a slight increase in the Antarctic production, most of the increased output came in other areas.

Antarctic whaling, including that done by 3 South Georgia coastal stations, is expected to account for nearly 90 percent of the world output of baleen whale oil this year. The same area, however, is

TABLE 1

Whale and Sperm Oil Estimated World Production,
by Major Producing Country, Annual 1954-56

Country	Whale Oil			Sperm Oil		
	1/ 1956	2/ 1955	1954	1/ 1956	2/ 1955	1954
(1,000 Short Tons).....					
Norway	136	138	188	25	26	7
United Kingdom	76	77	90	12	11	9
Japan.....	85	73	58	27	23	15
Netherlands.....	16	11	17	3	1	1
Panama.....	27	27	-	3	3/	10
Union of South Africa	20	21	31	9	6	4
Soviet Union...	29	33	32	15	15	15
Australia.....	19	18	19	-	-	-
Argentina.....	8	9	10	3/	3/	3/
Chile ..4/.....	3	3	2	4	4	5
Portugal.....	-	-	-	4	4	4
Others.....	8	8	7	3	3	7
World Total ..	425	418	454	105	93	75

1/ Forecast. 3/ Less than 500 short tons.
2/ Preliminary. 4/ Production of Azores &
Madeira Islands.

TABLE 2

Whale and Sperm Oil Antarctic Pelagic Production, 1954/55 and 1955/56

Country	Whale Oil		Sperm Oil		Total	
	1/ 1955/56	2/ 1954/55	1/ 1955/56	2/ 1954/55	1/ 1955/56	2/ 1954/55
			(Short Tons)			
Norway	122,227	125,258	24,316	25,833	146,543	151,091
United Kingdom	64,294	64,403	12,140	10,420	76,434	74,823
Union of South Africa	15,042	15,460	5,349	3,169	20,391	18,629
Netherlands	15,901	10,888	3,411	1,195	19,312	12,083
Japan	63,254	58,799	13,058	9,686	76,312	68,485
Panama	27,329	27,193	2,714	409	30,043	27,602
Soviet Union	26,723	30,249	1,972	1,871	28,695	32,120
Total ..	334,770	332,250	62,960	52,583	397,740	384,833

1/ Provisional

2/ Revised

expected to turn out only about three-fifths of the world supply of sperm oil. The major part of the increase in 1956 sperm oil production is expected to come from Japanese operations, both in the North Pacific and off the coast of Japan.

Although the number of expeditions engaged in Antarctic pelagic whaling in the 1955/56 season was the same as in the previous year (table 2.), each expedition added one or two catcher boats thereby increasing its production potential. Thus the season lasted only 58 days, a considerably shorter period than the 72 and 76 days of the two previous seasons. The total catch amounted to 14,875 blue-whale units, which is 125 less than the 15,000 units maximum stipulated by international agreement.

The International Association of Whaling Companies, following a meeting in June, reportedly announced that British, Norwegian, Japanese, and Dutch whaling companies had agreed to limit the number of whale-catching vessels for the 1956/57 season to a total of 210, excluding those to be used by the Soviet Union. The agreement stipulates the maximum number of catchers to be used by the companies or groups of companies, but allows the groups to apportion the number of whale catchers among their different expeditions. The total number of catchers used by all expeditions during the 1955/56 season was 257.

("Commercial Fisheries Review"

Washington, D.C.
September, 1956.)