

GENERAL FISHING

The figures hereunder show that while the salmon season has been exceptionally poor this year, the catch of tommy ruffs, a closely related species, has been good. Although the run of ruffs in the Fremantle district has been very poor, it has been offset by a great increase in the Albany district which has produced 706,901 lb. or approximately 80% of the catch so far this year.

When comparing the figures it should be remembered that almost all the annual catch of both species is taken in the first half of the year.

	<u>Salmon</u> lb.	<u>Tommy Ruff</u> lb.
Total Catch, 1956	4,821,941	767,407
Catch for 6 months ended June, 1957	3,524,061	873,746

LOSS OF THE "WATERWITCH"

On July 1, the 47' fishing boat "Waterwitch" licensed in the name of Mr. Frank Burton, of Geraldton, struck the Port Gregory reef and sank within seconds. Two of the crew members were asleep in their bunks at the time of the mishap, but they and the skipper, Mr. Joe Burton, were able to reach safety though not without first being extensively cut and bruised on the reef. When last licensed, her owner valued the "Waterwitch" at £5,000 and her gear at £500.

WHALING

Reports from Inspector B.A. Carmichael, of Albany, indicate that the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company expects to complete its quota of 120 whales before the end of this month. Inspector Carmichael advised that a whale, which had been killed near Albany

on July 8, was found to contain twin calves. This was the first record the Company had of twins occurring in whales and it is believed that the phenomenon of twins in humpbacks is rare. One of the whales caught towards the end of July was among the largest ever taken by this Company. It was a female over 45' in length, but unusually big in the body and the Company expected it to yield about 80 barrels of oil.

Assistant Inspector R. McKay, reporting from the Nor-West Whaling Company's Carnarvon Station, advised that up to July 31, 464 whales had been taken by that Company's chasers. As the first whale was only taken on June 12, the total was very satisfactory. Mr. McKay referred to the increased efficiency in handling the whales due to better techniques and equipment which had reduced the average flensing time of each whale from 30 minutes in June, to 24 minutes in July. The Company, he wrote, was carrying out experiments in the extraction of protein meal from the whale blood which was normally wasted. The Manager of the Station expected that techniques would be developed which would be incorporated as part of the usual procedure next year. Mr. McKay added that, while the small whales were in good condition, the majority of the large whales taken was on the thin side with poorer blubber and dry meat. Reports from the chasers indicated that a large number of smaller whales were moving up the coast, but only a few large size whales were accompanying them.

The suggestion had been made, Mr. McKay said, that the larger whales were moving farther out to sea each year, and this year they were all having to be towed long distances to the Station.