

COMPARATIVE WHALING STRENGTH

The particularly strong position occupied by Nor'-West Whaling Co. Ltd. - the operators of the Babbage Island whaling station at Carnarvon - is obvious from a comparison of results of Whale Industries Ltd., which through a subsidiary operates the Tangalooma station on Moreton Island (Queensland).

The following figures are taken from the latest balance sheets of both concerns -

	<u>N.W. Whaling</u>	<u>Whale Industries</u>
Paid capital	£270,000	£535,000
Reserves	511,726	487,211
Net profit	274,266	172,000
Income tax	189,500	117,000
Dividend	30%	20%
Current assets	223,434	696,890
Current liabilities	215,591	231,606
Fixed assets	1,088,726	424,227
Annual whale quota	1,000	600

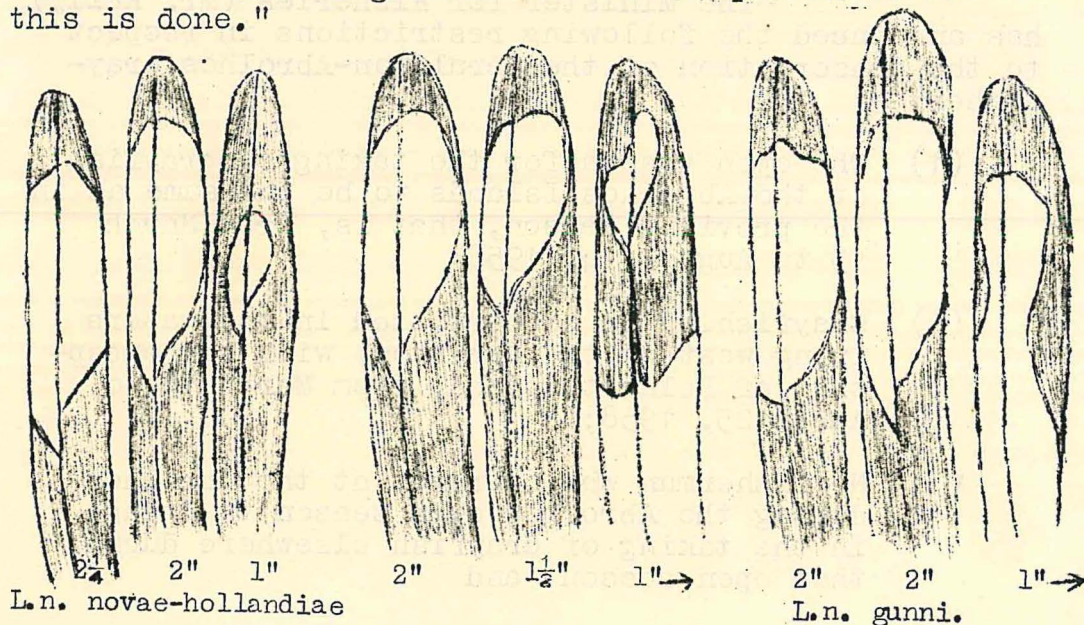
THE SILVER GULL IN AUSTRALIA

Dr. R. Carrick, Principal Research Officer of the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, has given us some notes on the characters of regional races of the silver gull in Australia. His Section is anxious to secure the wings of dead silver gulls so that the characteristic white "mirrors" in the black terminal areas of the three longest wing primary feathers may be studied.

Dr. Carrick says in relation to the "mirrors" -

"These white 'mirrors' are supposed to reach their highest development in the Tasmanian breeding birds, and to decrease in number and size along the coast northward to Queensland and possibly also westward to Western Australia. In Tasmania, the 'mirror' on the third longest primary opens into the white area of the basal part of the feather. At the other extreme, the third longest primary may have no white 'mirror' at all. The right and left wings of the same bird may not be quite similar, and it has been found in New South Wales that the same breeding colony may contain a wide range of these feather types. Therefore, these three longest wing primaries from both wings should be collected from breeding adults during the breeding season wherever possible so that a really large sample of birds breeding at each locality may be obtained. Most colonies provide some natural casualties.

"If adult gulls are being captured for banding, the extent of the 'mirrors' should be noted in a simple formula. Estimate the length of each 'mirror' to the nearest quarter of an inch, list the three in order beginning with the largest feather, and if the 'mirror' on the third largest feather opens into the white basal part of the wing indicate this by an arrow after the figure giving the length of the 'mirror'. The diagram below and example shows how this is done."



(Smaller than natural size)

Dr. Carrick also gives the following information in relation to length of bill -

"This character has to be related to sex, so it is only of value when a fresh specimen can be dissected. The bill of the male is longer than the female on the average in the same population, and there is a decrease in size of both from north to south."

We have with regret had to advise Dr. Carrick that any collecting undertaken by departmental officers could only be incidental to other duties. At the same time we have promised to assist whenever possible by asking our staff to collect dead gulls and terns if they happen to come across them in the course of their normal work. Any wings so collected should, if in reasonably good condition, be sent to Head Office with appropriate details. No live birds may be taken for this purpose.

GERALDTON-ABROLHOS CRAYFISHERY

The Minister for Fisheries (Mr. Kelly) has announced the following restrictions in respect to the conservation of the Geraldton-Abrolhos crayfishery -

- (1) The open season for the taking of crayfish at the Abrolhos Islands to be the same as in the previous season, that is, from March 15 to August 14, 1958;
- (2) Crayfishing to be permitted in the waters lying west of the Abrolhos, with the exception of Pelsart Island, from March 15 to April 25, 1958;
- (3) No fisherman who operates at the Abrolhos during the Abrolhos open season to engage in the taking of crayfish elsewhere during that open season; and