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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE

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FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
MONTHLY SERVICE BULLETIN

Vol. VII. No. 12.

December, 1958



**"TEAL" WE "MEAT"
AGAIN!**

A *Happy Xmas
and
A Prosperous
New Year.*

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF OF THE
• **FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.**

STAFF NOTES

The Superintendent (Mr. A.J. Fraser) returned from the Interstate Fauna Authorities Conference in Sydney, on November 27. The proceedings of the conference concluded on November 21, but owing to the recent air-transport trouble, Mr. Fraser was compelled to return by rail.

Officers proceeding on annual leave during December include Mr. W.K. Cherrington, of Head Office, on December 1; the Fauna Warden (Mr. S.W. Bowler) on December 15 and Messrs A.J. Buchanan and H.B. Shugg, of Head Office, on December 29.

Technical Officer L.G. Smith will return to duty after annual leave on December 8.

The Pearling Inspector (Mr. R.J. Baird) will sail from Broome on December 12. While he is enjoying biennial leave, Inspector B.A. Carmichael, of Albany, will act in his stead.

Inspector J. Traynor will be in charge of the Albany district during Inspector Carmichael's sojourn in Broome.

Assistant Inspector S. LaRoche and Cadet Inspector D.H. Smith will be stationed at Lancelin from December 2.

Assistant Inspector D. Wright and Cadet Inspector R.G. Emery will be stationed at a mobile camp near Snag Island and will patrol the coast south to Lancelin Island.

The Research Officer (Mr. B.K. Bowen), accompanied by Technical Officer J. Simpson, will visit Pemberton on December 4 to collect trout for planting in selected experimental dams on various farm properties.

At a small function at Head Office on November 21, a presentation of a barometer and other articles was made to Mr. J. McK. Mitchell on the eve of his marriage. Deputising for the Superintendent, who was absent in the eastern States, the Clerk-in-Charge (Mr. B.R. Saville) warmly congratulated Mr.

Mitchell and on behalf of all his fellow officers, extended to him and his bride-to-be best wishes for their future happiness. Mr. Mitchell responded suitably and particularly requested that his thanks be conveyed to all those officers who had not been able to be present.

The Senior Inspector (Mr. J.E. Munro) will carry out patrols of 3 to 4 days duration during the crayfish season in the Safety Bay-Long Point zone.

MOVEMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL VESSELS

The research vessel "Lancelin" reached Fremantle on November 24. Mr. A.J. Bateman, fleet maintenance officer, will organise her annual overhaul. Mr. C.R.C. Haynes, Mate, proceeded on sick leave immediately with a fractured elbow, and will commence annual leave after returning to duty for a week. Cadet Inspector R.G. Emery, who acted as crew member, will commence annual leave on December 1. Assistant Inspector R.J. McKay, who was acting as Technical Officer during the cruise of "Lancelin", is engaged on re-sorting the material collected during the voyage.

* * * * *

The p.v. "Kooruldhoo" left Fremantle on November 28, to patrol the Lancelin-Beagle Island crayfishery. She is under command of Inspector G.H. Lyon, assisted by Inspector S.C. Stokoe, who will take command of the vessel when Inspector Lyon commences annual leave on December 10. Inspector Stokoe will then be assisted by Cadet Inspector E. Barker.

* * * * *

The p.v. "Misty Isle" left Fremantle on November 26 for a continuous patrol of the Jurien Bay area. She is under the command of Assistant Inspector H.D. Kavanagh, assisted by Cadet Inspector G. Hanley.

The p.v. "Silver Gull" is patrolling the Fremantle-Rottnest area. Assistant Inspector E.I. Forster is in command, and he will be assisted by Cadet Inspector E. Barker until the latter transfers to the p.v. "Kooruldhod".

ISSUE OF COMMONWEALTH LICENSES

In Vol. VII, No. 7, the August issue of this Bulletin, the attention of inspectors was drawn to the direction of the Minister for Fisheries (Mr. Kelly) that more active policing of the issue of licenses under the Commonwealth Fisheries Act was to be carried out by inspectors. It was pointed out that inspectors were required to notify fishermen that they must hold licenses under the Commonwealth Fisheries Act if they were intending to fish outside Western Australian waters. Furthermore, they were directed to advise Head Office, at the end of each month, the names of all fishermen working outside Western Australian waters who had been told of their responsibilities but had failed to comply. Commonwealth licenses, when necessary, must be issued simultaneously with licenses under the State Fisheries Act. It appears that these instructions are not being carried out very thoroughly and inspectors are requested to give them their particular attention.

All inspectors should note that every fisherman requiring any license under the Commonwealth Fisheries Act must make a written application on the requisite form. It is emphasised that this also applies to fishermen seeking a renewal of a license.

In a recent letter drawing this point to our attention, Mr. F.F. Anderson, Director of the Fisheries Division of the Department of Primary Industry, said that a legal opinion had been obtained that completion of an application form was required by law before any license could be issued.

ROYALTY LIFTED FROM GREY KANGAROO SKINS

The Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Kelly, recently advised that he had acceded to a request from the Farmers' Union of W.A. (Inc.) to lift the royalty payment of 9d. per skin from all grey kangaroo skins for a trial period of two years. The amendment to the Fauna Protection Act Regulations would be published in the next issue of the Government Gazette and from that time all kangaroo skins would be royalty-free. Mr. Kelly advised, however, that licenses to authorise the sale of skins of kangaroos taken in the South-West Land Division were still required.

On the present low market price of 4/- per lb. for first-grade skins, occasioned by a falling off in overseas demand, the royalty payment absorbed an unfair proportion of the hunters' net return, Mr. Kelly said. The rate of 9d. per skin had been set when prices ranged up to and beyond 12/6d per lb. and had then been a reasonable levy.

The Farmers' Union hoped that the lifting of royalty would bring about increased activity by professional shooters and amateurs in those areas where kangaroos were over-plentiful and causing serious damage.

"A careful watch will be kept by my officers during the trial period to ascertain whether this hope will be realised, and to ensure that these otherwise attractive animals are not exterminated. This is the main reason why it is necessary to retain the existing licensing system", Mr. Kelly concluded.

MURRAY TROUT ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY

For the information of all concerned attention is drawn to an amendment to the rules of the above Society which was published in the Government Gazette on October 17. Rule 8 now reads :

"8. Annual subscription and fishing license for members resident within the area controlled by the Society shall be ten shillings (10s.). Annual subscription for non-resident members including license to fish shall be two pounds (£2)."

ANTIBIOTICS AND FISH PRESERVATION

A letter was recently received from the Fishing Industry Research Institute of South Africa, setting out in some detail the results of investigations, not only in South Africa but also in other oversea countries, in relation to the use of antibiotics, principally aureomycin and terramycin, in fish preservation. The experimental work so far undertaken has encouraged the Institute to conduct large-scale industrial experiments, and if the results confirm present knowledge, formal application will be made to the authorities for permission to use one or both these antibiotics for preserving fish.

The Institute concluded by asking for the views and policy of this State in the matter.

The Commissioner of Public Health, in reply to an enquiry from this Department, has replied to the effect that the use of antibiotics for the preservation of foodstuffs is not allowed in this State nor in any other State of the Commonwealth. It seems the matter was discussed at a meeting of the National Health and Medical Research Council held in Sydney in November, and the prohibition was confirmed.

In the circumstances the importation of fish treated with antibiotics is not permissible. The S.A. Fishing Industry Research Institute has been advised accordingly.

ST. PAUL AND AMSTERDAM ISLANDS

Interest in the crayfisheries of St. Paul and Amsterdam Islands, situated in the South Indian Ocean, has recently been aroused in this State by the decision of a well-known Western Australian crayfisherman to try his luck there.

There has just appeared, in "Biological Abstracts" of October, 1958, an abstract of a paper concerning these French possessions by Patrice Paulian.

It seems fishing around the islands is limited by the narrowness of the shelf (from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile) and prevailing rough seas on the western and southern sides of each. The fishery, it is said, can support only one boat of 500-ton refrigerated cargo capacity. The commercial species are Jasus lalandii ("rock lobster") and five species of scale fish.

The lobsters become abundant in November, but decline to a non-economic level by February 15. Through the years 1950 to 1956 there has been a steady take of lobsters of approximately 230 tons annually (cf. Western Australian production of around 6,000 tons in 1957-58).

It is proposed, for the protection of the lobster fisheries, to prohibit fishing from March 1 to November 15, to limit the catch to 200-210 tons a year, and to prohibit lobstering for one year whenever the catch per unit effort shows any significant decrease.

The deeper waters and the shelf to windward of the islands provide, it is said, adequate sanctuary.

PEARLSHELLING BY FOREIGN VESSELS

The Minister for Fisheries (Mr. Kelly) has received the following letter (dated November 22) from the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. McMahon) -

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I refer to your letter dated 4th November, 1958, enclosing copy of a letter received from the Chairman, Broome Shellers Association, regarding pearling operations during next season. I wish to confirm my telegram of 10th November :

"ARRANGEMENTS JAPANESE PEARLING 1959 SEASON IS QUESTION FOR INCOMING GOVERNMENT AND HAS NOT EVEN BEEN CONSIDERED (STOP) THERE IS NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING JAPANESE TO OPERATE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION THIS SEASON (STOP) DAILY NEWS REPORT OF YOUR STATEMENT WIDE OF MARK (STOP) WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ACTION YOU COULD TAKE TO CORRECT WRONG IMPRESSION"

You will appreciate that consideration of the arrangements for Japanese pearling operations during the 1959 season will be the responsibility of the incoming Government which will give full consideration to your representations. In any case you can be sure that no action will be taken to license foreign luggers in order to make up the difference between the maximum figure of 50 already agreed upon and the lesser number to which the Australian fleet may have to be reduced because of the market situation.

No doubt, as a result of the fleet operations carried out by the Japanese, specific areas are more thoroughly fished than in the individual operations carried out by Australian based vessels. However, there is no justification for statements that the Japanese fished more than the quantity of shell allocated to them by the Commonwealth Government, nor that they fished undersized shell.

In accordance with the assurance given by the Prime Minister to your Premier, the operations of the Japanese were carried out under close and continuous surveillance by an officer of my Department on a Naval vessel and we are sure that the quota of shell was not exceeded, nor did the Japanese fish undersized shell.

As indicated above, your representations will be given every consideration when the question of the 1959 season's operations is being examined.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

William McMahon

OPEN SEASON FOR WILD DUCKS

The Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Kelly, announced recently that he had accepted a recommendation from the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee to open the 1958/59 season for wild ducks on the traditional week-end before Christmas. It would, however, close a month earlier than usual - on April 30 instead of May 31.

Details of the opening given by the Minister were as follows -

- (a) at 6 p.m. in the evening of Saturday, December 20, in the Augusta-Margaret River, Balingup, Bridgetown, Bunbury, Busselton, Capel, Collie-Coalfields, Dardanup, Greenbushes, Harvey, Manjimup, Nannup and Preston road districts;
- (b) at 5 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, December 21, in the remainder of the South-West and Eucla Land Divisions not included in the road districts mentioned above.

Duck-shooting will be unlawful in any of the following areas which have been set aside as sanctuaries -

- (a) The whole of the area within a radius of twenty miles of the General Post Office, Perth.
- (b) All municipalities and townsites in the South-West Land Division.
- (c) The whole of the Rockingham Road District.
- (d) The whole of the waters of Lakes Leschenaultia, Yealering and Seppings, and Bambun, Wagin, Nambung, Mungala, Nannerup and Wardering Lakes, and all land within twenty chains of their shores.
- (e) The whole of the waters of the Vasse, King and Kalgan Rivers and all land within twenty chains of their shores.

- (f) The whole of the waters of Vasse and Wonnerup Estuaries and all land within twenty chains of their shores.
- (g) All the waters of the Leschenault Inlet extending southwards from a line drawn south-east from Waterloo Head (Belvedere) on the west foreshore to a point on the opposite foreshore.
- (h) All that portion of the Capel River between the Capel and Stirling Bridges and all land within twenty chains of the river's banks.
- (i) The whole of the waters of Oyster Harbour and Princess Royal Harbour and all land within a radius of twenty chains of their shores.
- (j) The whole of the area of the Yanchep Caves Reserve.
- (k) The whole of the Harvey catchment area.
- (l) The whole of the area within a radius of two miles of the Post Office at Mandurah.
- (m) The whole of the area within a radius of two miles of the Post Office at Boyup Brook.
- (n) The whole of the area within a radius of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Post Office at Balingup.
- (o) All that portion of the Avon River in the Toodyay road district between the northern boundary of Avon Location 3 and a point opposite road 2069, and all land within twenty chains of the river's banks.
- (p) All that portion of the Avon River from Dumbarton Bridge to the railway bridge north of Toodyay, and all land within twenty chains of the river's banks.
- (q) All that portion of the Serpentine River from road 8629 at the southern end of Goegrup (Willies) Lake to Peel Inlet near the Old Mill, and all land within twenty chains of the river's banks.

- (r) All State forests, timber reserves, town reservoirs and other areas where shooting is prohibited under the provisions of any other Act, Regulation or By-law.

It had been decided to close the season earlier, the Minister said, in accordance with numerous requests received from shooters and observers who for some time had been concerned with the effect of shooting in the early days of winter. Information received suggested that a considerable percentage of the ducks paired off in May and if these birds were disturbed by shooting, nesting would be delayed.

The Department's research programme was being continued, and on opening day departmental officers would again examine as many ducks as possible on the shooting grounds before they were plucked and drawn.

Every shooter is requested to co-operate in the programme if they are notified that the official team is in their area, said Mr. Kelly. They are also asked to return all bands recovered as soon as possible with the date and place of the recovery and also to complete a scorecard at the end of the season. Supplies of the cards will be available from the Fisheries Department and all gun clubs.

Emphasising that the close season extended right up to the week-end before Christmas throughout the whole of the South-West and Eucla Land Divisions, Mr. Kelly made a direct plea to all shooters not to try to beat the gun as there were many young ducks still in the flapper stage. Any person apprehended while shooting in the close season, or in any of the prohibited areas listed, could expect to have his firearm seized and be prosecuted, the Minister warned. He also drew attention to the following restrictions which were designed, he said, to conserve duck stocks -

- * The use of traps is entirely prohibited throughout the State.
- * Spotlights are an illegal device.

- * The sale of wild ducks is forbidden.
- * No person shall keep wild ducks in captivity.

Reports indicated, Mr. Kelly concluded, that the season had been a very good one for breeding, not only on account of the favourable climatic conditions, but also as a result of the decrease in the number of foxes. In many areas there was still a lot of surface water about and ducks could be expected to remain well dispersed for some months.

PROHIBITED AREAS FOR SPEARFISHING

In the Government Gazette of October 17, two additional areas closed to spearfishing were announced. The areas given were described as follows :

- (a) that portion of Geographe Bay contiguous to the Busselton Road District 440 yards wide measured from the high water mark between the prolongation of the eastern alignment of Ford Road and a prolongation of the western alignment of Lennox Drain; and
- (b) that portion of the Indian Ocean contiguous to the Wanneroo Road District 100 yards wide measured from the high water mark between a prolongation of the northern alignment of Marmion Lot 105 and a prolongation of the southern alignment of that lot.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE

The Supervising Inspector (Mr. J.E. Bramley) and the Fauna Protection Officer (Mr. H.B. Shugg), will each commence three months' long service leave in January. Mr. Bramley will be relieved by the Senior Inspector (Mr. J.E. Munro) and Mr. Shugg by Mr. A. Buchanan. Mr. Bramley will commence his leave on January 5 and Mr. Shugg on January 14.

THE CLEARING HOUSE

Trout Fishermen Are a Friendly Lot

Angling for the wily trout is not just a sport - it is a patiently acquired art, deeply rewarding to its devotees. Last Sunday the willow crowned banks of the Vasse River at Busselton hummed with quiet activity as visiting trout men cast their lines into the placid depths.

It was the official opening of the Vasse as a trout stream. A party of Serpentine-Jarrahdale Trout Society anglers had made a special trip and a Fisheries Department officer accompanied them.

Said visiting society liaison officer Mr. M. Cheeseman : "It only takes the catching of one trout to make a trout fishermen". An enthusiast, he said that he had organised the party to help the Busselton society become established.

He added that he had one definite trout "strike" in the early morning and had identified others in the water. This proved that at least some of the young fish released by the local society had become acclimatised in the Vasse.

This year in Serpentine waters had been "the best ever", and Mr. Cheeseman said many fine fish had been taken.

On the way down, the visitors had stopped at Harvey and landed four trout there.

Extremely friendly and ever ready to convey hints on the best use of rod, reel and line, the Serpentine anglers fished the river from the butter factory to the lily pond. Suitable equipment, they said, cost about £15. They tried spinners and worms, but had few "rises".

The railway bridge was a favourite spot and although the fishing was quiet, visitors and

onlookers alike were deeply impressed with the peaceful charm of the river. A large golden perch created a flurry, but was not caught.

Visitors included Serpentine club vice-president Mr. F. Griffiths and a very keen trout angler from Canberra. He was Mr. C. Deans, whose experience included fishing the waters of the Snowy Mountains.

Busselton Trout Society president, Dr. K.J. Cullen, honorary secretary Mr. L.N. Weston, and other members, were interested observers. In stocking the Vasse with trout, one of their aims has been to provide for the district still another tourist attraction.

When the gentle souled philosopher Isaak Walton soliliquised on the banks of English streams over 300 years ago, he could little have dreamed that the art he developed should find its way to the then unknown Southland.

("Murray Times" Harvey November 7, 1958)

Trout Technique

Serpentine-Jarrahdale Trout Society members are experimenting with a method of finding out what becomes of trout released in their streams.

They have started fin clipping and when fish are caught and logged, members will be able to ascertain how far they have travelled.

It has been considered, they said, when fishing the Vasse at Busselton last Sunday, that natural breeding is superior to re-stocking.

Busselton Trout Society officials were attentive listeners.

("Murray Times" Harvey November 7, 1958)

Funny Fish Behaviour Blamed on
Ocean's Shifting Circulation

Scientific opinion - in which fishermen generally concur - is that the anomalies of fish behaviour and migration manifest this season are the result in large part of variations in oceanic currents of the North Pacific.

Through 1957 and much of 1958 the warmer currents of the eastern North Pacific appear to have been displaced several hundred miles north of their normal paths.

Dr. John F. Tully, chief oceanographer of the Fisheries Board of Canada's research station at Departure Bay, B.C., believes that the northward trend started about Christmas, 1956, and that the turning point was reached in July, 1958, with a counter swing to be anticipated over an indeterminant period.

Effect of the shifting oceanic circulation on the fisheries appears to be northward displacement of normal migration patterns, bringing Albacore to the Pacific Northwest in largely increased volume; and at the same time causing the species repelled by warm water, such as the Sockeye salmon, to hold to higher latitudes, with consequent delay in timing of the runs, and shifts in their routing, such as that which has taken an exceptional percentage of the Fraser Sockeyes through Johnstone Strait.

Although they have recognised the existence of high surface temperatures for months, oceanographers in August were amazed at the depth to which the elevated temperatures extend.

This was emphasised by Dr. Maurice Rattray, Jr., scientific chief of a University of Washington oceanographic cruise, upon its termination in August. He reported the warm water extending to much greater depths than had been thought possible.

(c)

Sardines Thrill Monterey
With Promise of Comeback

Visions of the "good old days" of a dozen years ago danced through the minds of central California's sardine industry - fishermen, boat owners, suppliers, canners and brokers - when with the end of the August dark some 1,000 tons of sardines had actually been landed by boat at Monterey Bay canneries.

These were the largest landings of fish to be caught in the immediate vicinity of Monterey in many years. The total deliveries of sardines for central California canneries to September 4 was 5,348 tons, of which 4,348 tons approximately were caught in the Avila-Morro Bay area and trucked to Monterey Bay and San Francisco plants.

Canners were packing approximately 20 cases to the ton, which would make a pack in the area to date of about 106,960 cases. Last year to September 3, only 568 tons of sardines had been processed at Monterey plants and all of those fish were trucked in.

The 1958 sardine catch consists of small fish, primarily of sizes which were not acceptable to the canneries in the heyday of the fishery, according to Richard E. Croker, Marine Resources Chief for the California Department of Fish and Game. He said this year's sardine catch has been averaging a bit over eight inches, mostly year-old fish.

A normal fish population includes many age groups so that one or two poor spawning years would not greatly harm the fishery. Now, however, Croker said, the sardines need a chance to rebuild their numbers in Central and Northern California waters without being exploited the moment they show signs of revival.

"There is some concern among informed fishermen and canners", he warned, "that by heavily harvesting the year-old sardines we may be "killing the goose" before it has a chance to lay its golden egg."

(ci)

Canners were not only kept busy with sardines but approximately 700 tons of jack mackerel were landed in Monterey, with a pack of about 14,700 cases, and some 370 tons of squid were landed, with a pack of about 16,280 cases.

Purse seiners were put on 30-60 ton limits by central California fish canners, of which only seven remain - J-D Packing Co., San Francisco; Enterprise Packers, San Xavier Fish Packing Co.; California Packing Corp.; Carmel Canning Co.; and Hovden Food Products Corp.; Monterey; and Santa Cruz Canning Co., Moss Landing.

What was the market like? "Demand is fair to good," stated California street observers. "Ovals are selling at around \$8.75 to \$9.25, and talls, \$6.75 to \$7.25. The export market is dull on account of foreign competition."

("Pacific Fisherman" Portland, Ore. October, 1958.)

Plucky Icelanders Spearhead Fight for World Recognition of 12-Mile Fish Limit

Fisheries interests throughout the world are watching the tiny island of Iceland, where the government has unilaterally set up a 12-mile headland-to-headland fishing limit, backing it up with an armed coastguard. About 60 British trawlers, protected by Royal Navy frigates, fished the forbidden waters last month causing numerous incidents, but no violence. Canada so far has no official opinion, although Iceland has the complete sympathy of the Canadian fishing industry.

Iceland has brought the tired problem of territorial seas and fishing limits to the attention of the world, abruptly, through the medium of threatened violence.

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Unsuccessful, with other countries, in their efforts to obtain a wider limit at the unwieldy International Conference on the Law of the Sea last year in Geneva, Iceland this summer refused to sit back with other fisheries nations (e.g. Canada) waiting for the next conference. Alone, without the practical support of any other nation, except perhaps Russia, the Icelandic government set up a 12-mile fishing limit, on a headland-to-headland basis, and prepared to keep out British fishing vessels with a small fleet of gunboats.

To many people throughout the world, the incidents which followed seemed humorous. First, the Icelandic gunboat "Albert" purposely ran over and destroyed the trawling gear of British dragger "Burfell". As any fishermen can imagine, a few angry words were thrown back and forth. The British fishermen were ready with bottles and water hoses to repel boarders, but before it came to a fight, the Royal Navy frigate "Eastbourne", its guns manned and sighted, drew alongside the Iclander. The smaller gunboat withdrew.

A few days later, Icelandic coast guard sailors boarded the British trawler "Northern Foam" in an attempt to confiscate the vessel and take her into Reykjavik. Sailors from the "Eastbourne" however soon "recaptured" the British vessel holding the Icelandic sailors prisoner. These Icelanders, from the gunboat "Thor", refused to return to their ship, and according to the latest report, are still aboard the British frigate "playing cards, watching movies, and developing friendships with the British sailors".

Soon after, British crews used axes and crowbars to repel boarders from the Icelandic gunboat "Maria Julia", when the Icelanders tried to "capture" the trawler "Lifeguard". The British fishermen cut the rope the gunboat had tied to their trawler with axes, and then proceeded to spray the Icelandic sailors with icy North Atlantic seawater.

However, fishing in the disputed area was desperately poor, and many British trawling skippers

(ciii)

started grumbling in mid-August that they did not relish the idea of being used for guinea pigs when they could be making money elsewhere. By the first week in September, only 24 of the original 60 British trawlers were still fishing inside the new 12-mile limit, and they were catching next to nothing.

Although the issue was being clouded with accusations that Iceland's unilateral action was prompted by communists in the government, and concern about the effect of the dispute on the NATO alliance, the plucky Icelanders have brought the question of territorial waters before the public with a hundred times more force than did last year's international law conference. Popularised in the press as the "Cod War", the dispute between Britain and Iceland, long friends and NATO partners, is causing deep concern among all fishing nations, and should precipitate another conference on the law of the sea soon. Informed officials in Ottawa speculate that another conference will be held next year.

Neither Britain nor Iceland shows any signs of backing down. The Icelandic government has remained adamant, and will not consent to talks unless they are on the basis that the 12-mile limit will be recognised. The British answer by accusing Iceland of doing nothing to bring about a solution. An earlier conference in July, attended by the two disputants and other NATO diplomats broke down.

Meanwhile, Canada has announced no official stand in the matter. External Affairs Minister Sydney Smith said on August 30 that "Canada does not favour the taking of unilateral action by states in respect of fishing zones so long as there is hope that a new international conference on the law of the sea will be convened in the near future."

"We are anxious about this dispute between the United Kingdom and Iceland," said Mr. Smith. "We have expressed our anxiety in this regard to the governments directly concerned; that is the Canadian attitude."

(civ)

By the end of September, all British trawlers will likely have left the disputed area, and the argument will be carried on in the more comfortable and less dangerous surroundings of the conference room. When the great fishing nations of the world, Britain, U.S. and Japan particularly, finally recognise the rights of other nations to place a 12-mile border around their coasts for fishing purposes, Canada and other nations with shoreline fisheries will owe much to the defiant Icelanders, who thumbed their noses at the mighty British navy, and forced on the attention of the world the problem of territorial waters and fishing rights.

("Western Fisheries" Vancouver, B.C. September, 1958)

Price Cutters Will be "Black-balled"

W. Aust. Crays for N.S.W.

Arrangements were finalised this month to give Sydney regular supplies of West Australian crayfish. Peter Manettas, a leading importer and wholesaler, made the deal. He has linked up with Theo Kailis, managing director of International Fisheries, Perth, who visited Sydney this month.

Poor Tassy Crop

Mr. Manettas said he has been appointed N.S.W. agent for the West Australian company.

Sydney's crays were usually supplied by Tasmania, but the season this year had been very poor.

Mr. Manettas said that crayfish were caught all the year round in Western Australia, and would be freshly cooked and shipped to Sydney regularly.

He anticipates an average supply of 1,000 cases of crays a month. The crays will be distributed through approved wholesalers at agreed prices. Distribution will be strictly policed.

(cv)

Wholesalers who don't "play the game" and cut prices will be "black-balled" he said.

Mr. Manettas, who is the principal of P. Manettas and Coy., recently sold his Victory Cafe in George Street, Sydney, after 20 years in business. A family syndicate of Greeks bought him out. He is operating temporarily from the Rawson Cafe, Rawson Place (MA5737).

He will shortly commence building new cold rooms under the Sydney Fish Market from where he will conduct his growing wholesale business.

With this in view, Mr. Manettas recently acquired the oyster opening premises of Paddy Murray in the market basement.

These will be sub-divided into an engine room for the cool rooms and an oyster opening section.

("Fish Trades Review" Sydney October, 1958)

Fishermen's Vain Protest

Legal Size on Prawns to be Lifted

Despite protests by fishermen and a last-minute deputation to the Chief Secretary this month, the legal size for prawns is to be abolished in N.S.W. The abolition is to come into force at an early date.

Mr. Frank O'Grady, chairman of the Union of Fishermen's Co-op. (the largest organised body of fishermen in Australia) led the protest deputation.

Mr. O'Grady said that fishermen were opposed to the complete lifting of size restrictions on prawns. They had sought a reduction of only half-an-inch on the present legal size of $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.

N.S.W. State Fisheries biologist, Dr. A. Racek, had recommended the complete abolition of size limits.

(cvi)

Mr. O'Grady said, "We were told it wasn't much use the Government paying Dr. Racek £3,500 a year if they weren't going to take his advice."

That's logical but fishermen have yet to be convinced that it's sensible.

"We have been promised by the Government that should prawn prices fall to an uneconomic level the law will be reviewed immediately.

"We have also been promised that Dr. Racek's recommendation will be given a 12 months' trial only", he said.

Mr. O'Grady said the coastal rivers were full of small prawns. Only 10 percent of some catches were legal sized.

Fishermen fear a collapse of prices when the restrictions are lifted.

("Fish Trades Review" Sydney October, 1958.)

POLLUTION - Let's Have Some Facts!

When will inshore and commercial river fishermen be told if pollution is helping to put them out of business? What's being done about pollution?

The news that the Lancashire and West Sea Fisheries Committee is to provide one of their members with specialised training that will make him an expert on water pollution comes like a ray of light on a very foggy subject. Although the intention is to provide an independent assessment of river pollution, to the eventual benefit of the salmon fishery, there is every hope that this move may help to clear up the situation in coastal and estuarial waters. That such a body have seen fit to take such a step is a measure of the seriousness with which they regard a situation in which fishermen are met with a frustrating lack of knowledge, or evasive answers when they ask - is pollution going to put us out of business? If so we have a right to know.

This question does not only affect salmon fishermen, it is being asked with increasing urgency in other areas, such as the Thames Estuary, once a source of livelihood for hundreds of fishermen, and of late almost devoid of shrimps and prime fish.

Within living memory, cod were caught at Barking, and a thriving shrimp fishery existed above Gravesend. Today cod are unheard of 40 miles below Barking, and most shrimpers in the estuary have given up the struggle. A few soles, and fewer plaice are still caught below Southend, while the hardy dab and skate become scarcer each year. Mussels, which once filled the unwary fisherman's trawl off Herne Bay, have almost disappeared, leaving only mudbanks to mark their going. The sprat season has been a failure for the last two years.

In all fairness, we must, however, consider the possibility of overfishing by the present day fleet of Diesel-powered vessels, with modern gear. These modern aids do not, however, replace the hundreds of fishing craft that have disappeared from the area during the last 30 years, as more and more men left the sea to find employment ashore. Even sprats, which were landed in quantity in the early 50's, were caught in far greater quantities in the 30's when fleets of stow netters from Essex maintained a thriving barrel-ling industry. Add to this, the rigid adherence to mesh regulations today, and overfishing can be dismissed.

Since industry and big towns first graced the lower Thames, there has been a line above which sea fish were not caught, and since the days of cod at Barking, that line has been moving steadily down river. That is logical and inevitable - it is "the March of progress". Within the last few years, however, it has been moving with frightening rapidity, and its acceleration began around 1950. What happened around 1950? Here is a possible side-track, for odd things happened in the North Sea and the Channel at that time, and scientists are at a loss to explain it. What we do know, however, is that this was the period when giant oil refineries were built, when paper-mill production began to get back into its stride, and when detergents became an essential part of industrial and domestic life.

But does effluent not travel down to be lost in the sea? Hardly, for a tide travels only 15 miles ebb at best, before the flood takes most of the effluent back upstream. Experiment with "tagged isotopes" showed that sand from hopper barges and therefore sewage from London, that is dumped in the Black Deep, find their way back up-river. So then does the woodpulp and chemical effluent from the paper mills, and some 4,000 tons of detergent used by the London and Medway area each year. This cannot be broken down by bacterial action in the same way as other sewage, so that it is feasible that it becomes more concentrated in water and organisms as time goes on.

This supposition leads logically to three questions, to which World Fishing has tried to find answers:

- Q. What is the concentration of detergent or other toxic substances in the fishing area, and is it increasing?
- A. The taking of water samples for such tests has not so far been included in any research programme.
- Q. Does detergent affect fish or the lower forms of life on which it depends, directly or indirectly, for its food?
- A. "Undoubtedly pollution does have an effect on the life chain of plants and animals on which fish feed, but there is far too little positive knowledge on this subject to make any generalisations at the moment." (A Canadian pollution specialist biologist). This same laboratory found that detergent affected fish even after passing through sewage treatment. Before this, it was toxic to them. British sources consider that detergent could upset the oxygen exchange between air and water, on which sea life relies. Again, this calls for research, which has yet to be carried out.
- Q. What is being done?
- A. There is a Committee sitting on pollution, but it is not known whether its effect on coastal fisheries

is to be considered. More hopeful, the Shell Chemical Co. have developed a new type of detergent which can be broken down by sewage bacteria, and this will be in production in a year or so.

Meanwhile, the question remains unanswered - is pollution to blame for this sudden decline, and if so, will a cure be found in time? If not, then many fishermen, with every penny tied up in boats and gear, or committed to Grant and Loan repayments, have a right to know, before bankruptcy triumphs over optimism and faith in the providence of nature.

The Thames Estuary is only one of many areas in which pollution, both industrial and domestic, is increasing unchecked. In the rivers, anglers have already banded together in a Protection Society, the better to fight the fouling of our rivers and streams. Now, at Hastings, there is fear that an atomic power station may soon be taking its toll of marine life, with its gigantic thirst for cooling water.

No one is fool enough to imagine that these considerations will hold back the expansion of industry or the building of bigger and better refineries, but often the bays and inlets where industrial and urban development takes place are the breeding ground for fish, on which other industries rely. It is not too much to ask that any new project should be assessed in its effect on local fishing, and local Sea Fisheries Committees informed. It is not too much to ask that a Government which encourages inshore fishing by financial aid, should try to set fishermen's minds at rest as to whether the repayments will last longer than the fish on which they depend.

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It has been reported that pirates are raiding Uganda fishing grounds. Armed with shotguns and rifles, they operate from hideouts along the shores of Lake Victoria, sweeping down on native fishing vessels to seize nets, tackle and catch.

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Wide-space Traps Release Immature Lobsters

Widening the lath-spaces in lobster traps to allow the escape of small immature lobsters has produced no unfavourable effects on catches of lobsters of legal size, while liberating more than 80 percent of the small lobsters, according to Mr. W. Templeman, a Canadian fishery scientist.

In a paper published by the Fisheries Board of Canada, tracing the history of regulation of the lobster fishery of Newfoundland, he recalls that since the war many experiments have been made with wide space traps having only one space on each side between the two lowest laths. During the capture of 15,000 lobsters in nine localities the traps with 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces retained only 40 percent of the short lobsters below 7 inches, but caught more legal lobsters than the traps with small lath spaces.

Lobster fishermen have objected to the wider lath spaces, saying the bait disappears more quickly from the trap with wider spacing. "The practical conclusion that quicker disappearance of bait reduces the relative number of lobsters of legal size caught in traps with widely spaced laths has been disproved," says Mr. Templeman. "Actually, judging from the usual experiences with baited hooks and fish caught on longlines, most bait in most areas is likely to be consumed by tiny crustacea which can pass equally well through the narrow or wide spaces of traps.

"Even if a few of the smaller legal lobsters do escape, lobsters migrate little, and they should be available in approximately the same area the following year or in later fishing in the same year. If their numbers are reduced, their weight as a group should as a rule be as great."

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