

Vol. VIII, No. 3.

March, 1959

STAFF NOTES

Mrs. V.T. Priest, Typist, Head Office, is resigning from the public service on March 6. Mrs. Priest, who joined the Department in April, 1954, as Miss Valma Hogan, continued in the service after her marriage in April, 1957.

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Officers still on long service leave are Fauna Protection Officer H.B. Shugg and Supervising Inspector J.E. Bramley. Inspector R.M. Crawford resumes duty at Geraldton after long service leave on March 1.

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Inspector R.J. Baird resumed duty at Broome on February 23 after biennial leave.

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Following an undertaking by the Minister of Fisheries to the Geraldton Professional Fishermen's Association that officers would be stationed at each group of the Abrolhos for a fortnight from March 1 to ensure that no fishermen would "beat the gun" for the start of the crayfishing season on March 15, r.v. "Lancelin" and p.v.

"Kooruldhoo" sailed from Fremantle on February 24 with the following officers on board - "Lancelin", Inspector G.H. Lyon (skipper), Assistant Inspector D. Wright (mate) and Assistant Inspector R.J. McKay: "Kooruldhoo", Inspector S.C. Stokoe (skipper), Assistant Inspector E.I. Forster and Cadet Inspector E.H. Barker. Mr. Forster will be stationed in the Pelsart Group and Mr. McKay in the Wallabi Group. The Easter Group is being manned by Inspector B.A. Carmichael, who has just completed a term of relieving at Broome. "Kooruldhoo" will remain at the Abrolhos for the whole of the open season, but "Lancelin" will return to Fremantle soon after March 15. Mr. Barker is being transferred to Geraldton as Inspector Crawford's assistant.

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Inspector J. Traynor, who has been relieving at Albany, has now returned to Perth to take over the metropolitan district.

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Mr. Clement Glyn Buckley has joined the staff at Head Office in the capacity of junior clerk.

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P.v. "Silver Gull", with Assistant Inspector H.D. Kavanagh and Cadet Inspector G. Hanley aboard, has now moved from the Jurien Bay area to Lancelin. Crayfishing has been temporarily suspended at Jurien Bay.

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The Clerk-in-Charge (Mr. B.R. Saville), accompanied by Inspector A.K. Nelsom, of Fremantle, visited Lancelin for a few days in the last week of February to check on outstanding licenses.

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In company with Messrs Roland Smith, W. Matthei and G. Travia, members of the Fishermen's Advisory Committee, and the acting Secretary (Mr. A.J. Buchanan), the Superintendent visited a number of centres in the South-West to as far south as Augusta from February 9 to 13. Inspections were made of numerous



fishing grounds, and meetings were held with the local fishermen's association at Mandurah and with the South-West Licensed Fishermen's Association at Busselton. Inspector A.V. Green attended the committee at Mandurah, and Inspector T.B. Baines, of Bunbury, was present with the members in the lower South-West.

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Technical Officer L.G. Smith played a most important role in tagging "Willy the Whiting" - for whose recovery the local Fishpot Committee in collaboration with Ampol Petroleum Ltd. had offered a prize of £7,500 - and other whiting and yellow-eye mullet at Mandurah on the morning of February 28. All members of the committee, as well as Ampol's representatives, were loud in their praise of Mr. Smith's knowledge of and ability with the tagging process. Fishing for "Willy" will cease at noon on March 2.

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Relieving Inspector G.C. Jeffery will take up duty in the metropolitan area again on March 3 after a tour of duty totalling 6 months in all in the Shark Bay and Geraldton districts.

#### NEW MARKETS FOR CRAYS?

Mr. John McGowan, managing secretary of the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-op., left Perth by air on February 22 to commence a round-the-world flight as a member of a trade mission sponsored by the Federal Government.

Mr. McGowan will first visit the Pacific coast of the U.S.A. and Canada. Thence he will fly to New York and later on will cover most European countries seeking out new markets for the Co-op. He said just before he left that now was the time to look for new markets for W.A. crayfish - the time when crays were selling readily.

On the west coast of the United States he hopes to increase craytail sales and to create markets for cuttlefish, octopus and good lines of scale-fish. The former, he says, are increasing in popularity, particularly in California.

In Europe Mr. McGowan will endeavour to interest buyers in W.A. crayfish, and as a final touch to his world tour will call at Singapore on a sales-boosting campaign.

Mr. McGowan expects to be away for nearly three months.

#### PERSONAL PAR

Mr. Allan Gerdau, President of the Otto Gerdau Coy., of New York, the principal buyers of Western Australian pearlshell, visited Broome and Porth during February. Among other things he was seeking financial support from the Government to further the world-wide publicity campaign which is now being developed to boost the sales of pearlshell in the face of rapidly increasing competition from plastics. During his two or three days' stay in Perth Mr. Gerdau had discussions with both the Minister (Mr. Kelly) and the Superintendent (Mr. Fraser).

#### GAUGE FOR MEASURING CRAYFISH

Officers will remember that we have very often been asked by fishermen's associations to legalise a gauge by which crayfish could be more easily measured than by means of a standard rule. Most fishermen, and inspectors too for that matter, have constructed gauges, but as they are not a standard rule made by a reputable maker, they cannot be accepted as giving an exact measurement. For this reason suggestions that the Department should have a suitable gauge made for sale to fishermen cannot be approved.

Recently (June, 1958) Dr. F.G. Walton Smith, Director of the Marine Laboratory of the University of Miami, Florida, U.S.A., in a paper on the spiny lobster industry of Florida, pictured what appeared to be a very simple gauge in use in the Bahamas. Dr. Walton Smith was asked whether he could make one available to us, but his reply was to the effect that although the gauge was used in the Bahamas, and that he considered it the most practical device for its purpose, it had never been accepted in Florida.



An enquiry subsequently made of the chief fisheries officer at Nassau resulted in drawings of the gauge (in this case  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " ) and of the method of application being sent. These are reproduced at page 40.

The gauge is merely sawn from waterproof plywood, and its construction is so simple that the Department will shortly have two or three made and sent to inspectors to test. They will not of course be  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " , but of a size to correspond with our minimum legal carapace measurement of  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " .

Although this type of gauge will undoubtedly be suitable for use as a rough-and-ready test of carapace length, it will not be sufficient to reject any crayfish on the evidence of the gauge alone. It will always be necessary to use a standard rule of reputable make to determine the actual measurement of "borderline" crays.

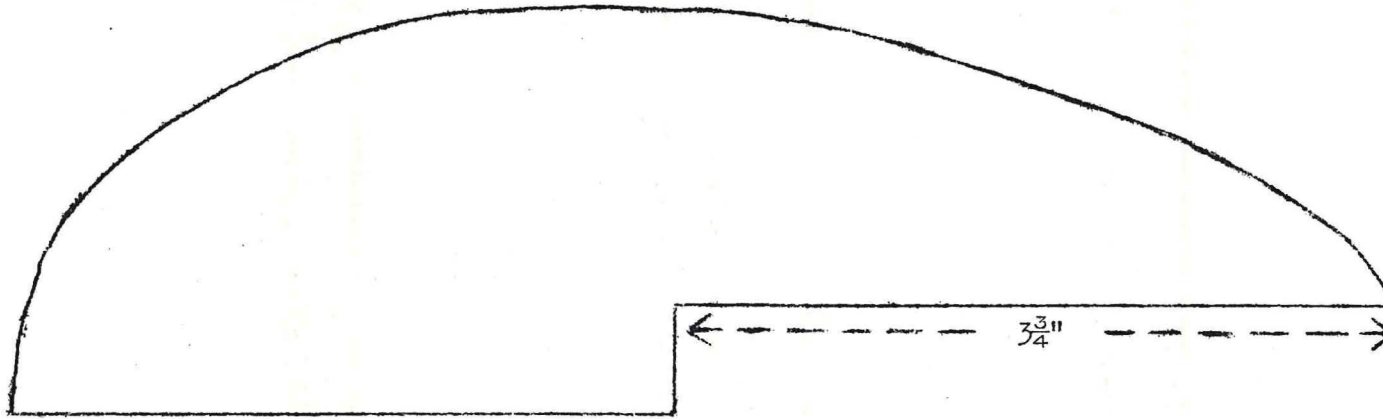
#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF GOODS

The Controller of Stores (Mr. G.F. Nairn) has written to the Department setting out certain procedure to be adopted by officers on the receipt of goods supplied on requisition. The following instructions are published for the information of all outstation officers.

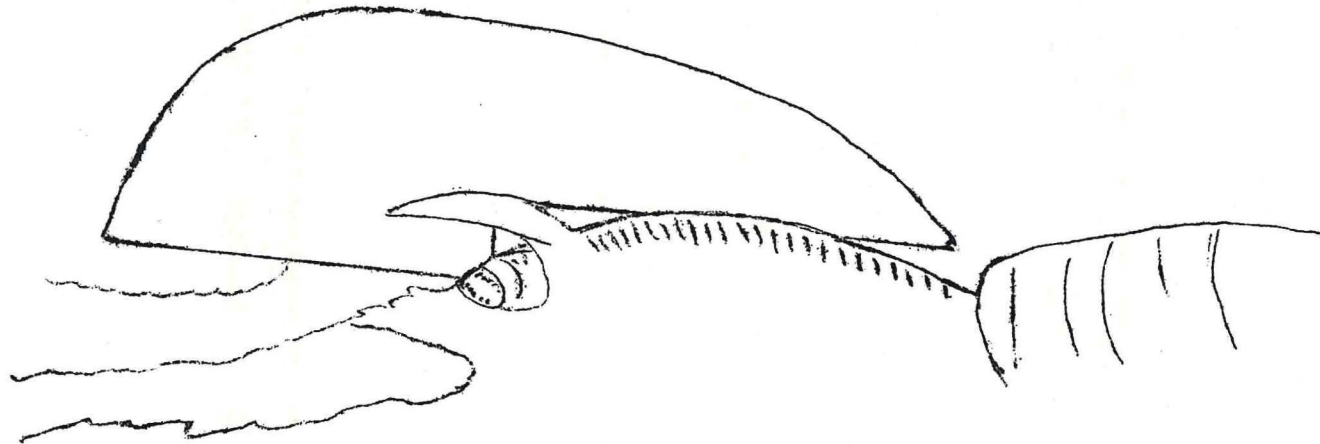
- (1) This\*department gives effective service in the procurement of Stores of every description under a system that ensures supply to any desired departmental destination following the receipt at this\* office of an approved departmental requisition.
- (2) Payment for goods supplied is made by this\*department on proper authority and is recouped monthly from the respective departments concerned.
- (3) When goods are ordered for direct supply by merchants to departmental destinations we are still required to pay, but we are obliged to withhold payment until we have evidence that the goods have been supplied. It is unfortunate that so many Receiving Officers do not realise the importance of acknowledging to this\* department the receipt of goods. Our ordering system is such that the Receiving Officer

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\*i.e. Government Stores.



Drawing of a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " crawfish gauge sawn out of waterproof plywood.



Method of applying gauge to "cape" of crawfish.



is supplied with duplicate of the order on which is printed our requirement that on receipt of goods as per order the duplicate is to be signed and forwarded direct to the Controller of Stores. As all goods sought on any one order may not be supplied at one and the same time, provision has been made for progressive acknowledgment of items as they are received. A printed form for this purpose is available and all Receiving Officers should ensure that they have copies for use as required. This\* department has hundreds of claims for which no acknowledgement of delivery has been received.

- (4) This matter has been brought to notice on many occasions and it is desired that all Receiving Officers be directed to follow the procedure necessary for efficient and economical working.
- (5) Previous advices have made it clear that goods are supplied either from Government Stores or by direct delivery by merchants to consignees.
- (6) Our requirements are that all goods received be examined promptly to ensure that the case or packing is intact, that the contents are correct, and that an acknowledgment of receipt of the goods received is forwarded at once to this\* department.
- (7) Goods forwarded from the Store are notified to the Receiving Officer by Advice Note which is prepared so as to require a minimum effort by the Receiving Officer in acknowledging receipt of the goods.
- (8) For goods ordered for direct supply the duplicate of the order is forwarded to the Receiving Officer when the goods are ordered. It is thus in the hands of the Receiving Officer before the goods could possibly be received. There can be no excuse for failure by the Receiving Officer to sign and return the duplicate to the Controller of Stores immediately the goods are received, or alternatively - if the order is only part supplied to forward acknowledgment on the form provided and referred to in para 3 of this memorandum.

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\* i.e., Government Stores.

- (9) The failure of Receiving Officers to realise the importance of this procedure is causing thousands of pounds to be under claim and for which this\*Department has no authority on which to make payment. Government departments as a whole are thus being subjected to severe criticism.
- (10) It is desired that all Receiving Officers be reminded of their obligations in this matter and the importance of their duties in the receipt and acknowledgment of supplies. It is suggested that a copy of this circular be made available to all officers concerned.

"CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS..."

Recently Technical Officers L.G. Smith and J.S. Simpson had occasion to visit the Toodyay district to make tests on the survival of trout in farmers' dams. The following letter, which is out of the ordinary run, was later received from one of the farmers whose dams were netted.

Wicklow Hills,  
Toodyay.

February 25, 1959.

Chief Inspector of Fisheries,  
Perth.

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank you for your Department's making available the services of Mr. Smith and Mr. Simpson, two of your inspectors, to assist some of us in this area in an attempt to produce our own fish. Too often are we prone to make jokes about civil servants (and you will agree many of them are justified!) without offering praise when praise is due, to officers who are really out to assist, in every way they can, increasing production and in this case a really worthwhile amenity.

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\* i.e., Government Stores.



We could not have had more co-operation from these officers. They worked hard and to us "mugs" the whole thing, netting, etc., was most exciting, as well as the fund of information they gave us, not only on trout raising, but fishing in all its aspects. To me who saw most of them it was an extremely interesting day.

In recent years most farmers will agree that the Department of Agriculture is doing a splendid job in sending out as often as possible well trained, enthusiastic men who are out to help in every way. I think it would be a tribute for me to say that some of us who have met the gentlemen referred to are prepared to place the Fisheries Department in the same category.

Messrs F.P. Atwell and C. Davy join me in this.

Yours sincerely,

E.O.P. Hayes.

#### ONE-MILE CLOSURE RELAXED

Following representations by inshore fishermen and enquiries by the Department, the Minister has approved that the prohibition against the taking of crayfish within one mile of the coast between parallels 30°S and 33°S be lifted for one month from February 23. It seems that towards the end of February larger crayfish normally move inshore from the outside banks, remain for a few weeks and then return to deeper waters. During the period of invasion of the larger crays, undersize and "borderline" crays are conspicuously absent.

The relaxation in this case has been approved as a trial, and future policy will to a large extent be determined by the results of the period of test.

#### FERTILITY OF TROUT OVA

An apparent falling-off in the fertility of the brood trout kept at the Pemberton-Warren Trout Acclimatisation Society's hatchery and ponds at Pemberton has prompted some work on the part of the Department to determine whether the fertility-decrease is real and, if so, to determine its cause. Research Officer B.K. Bowen and Technical Officer J.S. Simpson, who are

carrying out the requisite experimental work, were compelled to start from scratch. This was because no figures had ever been kept at the hatchery, and the opinion expressed by Curator F.W. Shoobridge that the trout were now less fertile than formerly was based on empirical data alone.

As a preliminary to the investigation Mr. Bowen last year applied the acetic acid test to large numbers of eggs stripped at Pemberton. He found that there was a wide variation in the fertility of different batches. In fact, the infertility figure lay between 8 and as high as nearly 30 per cent of eggs taken on different days.

This year four separate strains of eggs will be stripped and fertilised. These will be wild fish + wild fish; male wild fish + female hatchery-bred fish; male hatchery-bred + female wild; and hatchery-bred + hatchery-bred. This is being done to test Mr. Shoobridge's theory that the longer a hatchery-bred stock is allowed to breed within itself, the greater will be the infertility of the eggs produced in each succeeding year.

#### NEW FISH COLLECTION FOR MUSEUM

What was described by Dr. W.D.L. Ride, Director of the Western Australian Museum, as its most important fish accession for many years, was a collection made in the Shark Bay, Exmouth Gulf and Montebello Islands areas by Assistant Inspector R.J. McKay, whilst acting as technical officer of r.v. "Lancelin" last year. The collection, which contained approximately 450 specimens embracing some 300 species, has been presented to the Museum by the Fisheries Department. The great bulk of the specimens was obtained in the trawl while testing for prawns and scallops, but some were secured by line or by diving.

Dr. G.F. Mees, Curator of Vertebrates at the Museum, is now studying the specimens. There are many species new to Western Australia - some apparently even new to science - and it is hoped that a paper will in due course be published giving complete details of the collection.



## THE CLEARING HOUSE

### Danish Fish Inspection Service

A law designed to maintain and foster the quality of Danish fishery products was passed in 1950. Known as the Quality Law, it was later revised in 1954. This law pertains to all aspects of trade in fishery products as well as methods of catching, storing, transporting, freezing, preserving and the handling of fish and fish products. Fish for export and domestic use as well as imported fish come under the jurisdiction of the law.

Poor quality fish are defined as those products which because of pathological spoilage, contamination, faulty preparation, or any other reason, must be considered unfit for human consumption. The consumer is further protected by the next clause of the law which states that products must not be sold which, although fit for human consumption, are not absolutely fresh. Furthermore, if the products are to be transported and cannot be guaranteed to reach their destination in good condition, they will not be passed by the inspector.

Fish which are found to be unfit for human consumption are destroyed or used for fish and animal fodder. Fish of good quality but which are judged to be unable to reach their destination in satisfactory condition are withheld from export but may be used for domestic sale.

Denmark, which has an area of only 17,000 square miles, is divided into 39 fisheries inspection districts. The de-centralised control body which is known as the Fisheries Inspection Service places at least one fish inspector in each district. The division of the inspection district and the number of inspectors in each is in accordance with the position and the importance of the fishing ports. At the present time there are 112 people in the Fisheries Inspection Service and the 39 fisheries inspection districts are supervised by three superintendents.

The fish inspector is present when the fish is landed, when it reaches the processing plants, the freezing houses, and until it is ready for the wholesale and export trade. He is also called upon to inspect the processing plants, the sanitation control, quality of the raw materials, production in general, quality of the products, and the labelling or marking of the products.

However, the supervision of the inspection of fish-processing plants is the responsibility of the Danish Inspection Service for Fish Products. The more highly technically-skilled personnel of the centralised body who comprise this Inspection Service tour the different plants to check that they are meeting the requirements of the Ministry of Fisheries. On these occasions they meet with the local fish inspectors and discuss new regulations which affect both bodies. This service also takes care of the more technical and scientific problems and are consultative to the Ministry of Fisheries in questions regarding fish-processing plants and quality control.

Furthermore, a Quality Committee has been established to assist the Minister of Fisheries in all matters pertaining to the quality control of fish and fish products. The committee consists of five trade representatives, one representative of the health authorities, and one representative of the Ministry of Fisheries.

The quality law contains rules which must be adhered to virtually as soon as the fish is caught right up until the moment the housewife is serving it to her family. In general these provisions state that clean and sanitary conditions must be maintained wherever fish and fish products are stored or handled. For example, aboard fishing vessels, the fish must be stored in such a way that the bottom ones are not destroyed by those on top.

Another important provision of the law states that fish which are not caught alive must be iced and cleaned immediately. If the fish is caught alive, it must be kept in water of good quality until it reaches the consumer. When transporting fish, steps must be taken to provide proper protection against wind and weather.

Those merchants involved in the wholesaling or exporting of fresh or frozen fish must first obtain a permit from the Ministry of Fisheries. A similar provision is in force for the retail trade.



Quality assessment of fish is usually made by organoleptic (judging the quality of fish by texture, appearance, odour, and taste) testing, although several objective methods have been suggested and are used to some degree.

The quality laws also provide the Ministry of Fisheries with the power to determine what establishments shall engage in the manufacturing, freezing, or processing of fish and fish products. Authorisation is granted to those establishments which meet the requirements of the Ministry of Fisheries, the Public Health Authorities, and the Directorate of Labour Inspection.

(Trade News, November, 1958, quoted in U.S. F.W.S. Fishery Products Report, January 15, 1959.)

#### Nigeria "Grows" Its Fish

A unique "Grow Your Own Fish" campaign is helping to increase food supplies in Western Nigeria.

The cultivation of fish in reservoirs and ponds in order to produce fresh fish on the spot and at cheap prices has been undertaken by the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Most of Western Nigeria's fish comes from the sea and rivers, supplemented by a considerable quantity of smoked fish from the neighbouring Northern Region and stockfish imported from overseas.

But Western Nigerians who live far from the sea and rivers have been getting a very small share of fresh fish because of transport and preservation difficulties in this tropical, under-developed country. In consequence, the price of fresh fish has been very high and the quality very poor in most areas.

The contribution which the "Grow Your Own Fish" drive is beginning to make to the diet of the people of Western Nigeria to-day is evident from the fact that over 100 tons of fresh fish were removed from the 35 fish ponds and 12 reservoirs during the past year.

The Inland Fisheries and Fish Culture section of the Ministry's Fisheries Division stocked the first barren reservoir at Oyo in 1950, with only 48 fish. To-day the Oyo reservoir is yielding nearly a ton of fish a year.

The Eleiyele reservoir at Ibadan is alone producing over 40 tons of fresh fish a year and provides the Ibadan District Council with a regular revenue from the sale of fishing licenses.

("The South African Shipping News and  
Fishing Industry Review            Cape Town            January, 1959.)

USSR Saury Fleet Creates Sensation Fishing off Japan

Appearance of a U.S.S.R. \*saury-fishing fleet off the northern coast of Honshu, the main island of Japan, during the late fall months created a sensation in Japan, where the population generally reacted in a way indicating the feeling that only the Japanese were entitled to fish the high seas off their coasts.

The Soviet operation centered around a factory ship of about 2,000 tons, served by a number of fishing vessels which seemed to be attracting the fish by means of lights - the system used by the Japanese - actually capturing them by suction from powerful pumps.

The fishing vessels were reported to be about 300 tons gross in size. Also it was reported that the factory ship was served by about a dozen refrigerated transports which were carrying the prepared fish to port.

The Japanese were reported to have experimented in the fall of 1953 with the suction method of fishing saury, but by the time the equipment was ready the main schools had moved south from Hokkaido, where the experiment was undertaken. As result, the fish were too scattered to provide a fair test of the economic soundness of the scheme. In traditional Japanese fishing, sauries are caught by attracting a large school to one side of a fishing vessel while a large "blanket" or lift net is being set in the dark sea on the opposite side. When the net is ready the lights are turned off over the school of fish, being immediately switched on above the net.

("Pacific Fisherman"            Portland, Ore.            January 1, 1959.)

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\* A mackerel-like fish.