

The procedure in future will be that upon application by any person so convicted, the licensing officer will advise the applicant that the Minister's approval is first necessary, and that application for the license must be made in writing to the Director. At the same time a comprehensive confidential report in relation to the applicant's general behaviour since his conviction should be forwarded, as well as any other information which might assist the Minister in arriving at a just decision.

COMMONWEALTH-STATE CONFERENCE OF FAUNA PROTECTION.

Representatives of all State fauna authorities and of a number of Commonwealth Departments conferred in Canberra on August 5, 6 and 7 at the invitation of the Comptroller-General, Department of Customs and Excise. The conference had been called to discuss fauna protection laws throughout Australia and the possibility of making them uniform. Delegates also had to consider the general question of exports of native birds and mammals.

It was agreed that the introduction of common policies on protection and preservation of fauna was not practicable on account of the different conditions experienced in each State. General agreement was reached, however, on interstate and overseas export procedure. The new rules should close loopholes in the permit system. It was also agreed to extend invitations to the Commonwealth Departments of Customs and of the Interior to attend future bi-ennial interstate conferences.

WHALING.

The humpback whaling season finished at Albany on August 22 and at Carnarvon on September 21, with a total take of 700 humpback whales, 12 blue whales, 1 fin whale and 1 sperm whale. While the Nor'West Whaling Co. had a poor season, the Cheynes Beach concern recorded its best take since the company commenced operations.

The production table is set out on page 133. A comparison with other years shows that production, and the average length of whales taken, have both declined. A decrease is also recorded in the ratio of males to females captured.

The Cheyne Beach Whaling Co. re-commenced whaling on sperms on September 7. The take to September 30 was 58 whales. Provided sperms remain plentiful, the company intends to operate until December 1.

HUMPBACK WHALING 1959.

STATION	WHALES TAKEN				AVERAGE LENGTH.		PRODUCTION				
	MALES	FEMALES	TOT-AL	% OF MALES IN TOTAL	MALES	FE-MALES	OIL			MEAL ETC.	SOL-UBLES.
							TOTAL	PER WHALE	PER WHALE FOOT		
Carnarvon	256	285	541	47.32	feet. 37.72	feet. 39.70	barrels 24,640 (a)	barrels 44.88 (a)	1.14 (a)	tons 1586 (a)	tons 1150 (a)
Albany	75	84	159	47.17	38.71	40.44	8,244 (b)	49.96 (b)	1.23 (b)	347 (b)	-
TOTALS	331	369	700	47.29	37.94	39.87	32,884 (c)	46.06 (c)	1.16 (c)	1916 (c)	1150 (a)

(133)

(a) includes 6 blue whales, 1 fin whale and 1 sperm whale.

(b) " 6 " "

(c) " 12 " " 1 fin " " 1 " "

Note: 5.999 barrels = 1 ton.

(134)

The disappointing season experienced by the Nor'West Whaling Co. was referred to by the Company's deputy chairman, Mr. G. M. Bunning, at its annual meeting in Perth on September 26. Mr. Bunning reported that the catch was the equivalent of just over 550 humpback whales, little more than half the quota. Mr. Bunning said that the reduced catch suggested that the stock of humpbacks off our coast might be diminishing. It was understood, he said, that this was the personal view of some officers of the Fisheries Division, C.S.I.R.O. Mr. Bunning maintained, however, that the only definite evidence available suggested that seasonal conditions, rather than a decrease in the population, could have been the reason for the abnormally low number of whales taken. The directors of the Company express their confidence in a return to normal conditions next season. They thought this year's operations could not be considered as a guide to the industry's future. The chairman was reported as saying that the directors had always been conscious of the hazards attached to the industry, and had made every effort during the company's ten years of existence to bring operations to the highest efficiency.