

ARTIFICIAL HABITATS FOR OCEAN FISH.

One or two overseas publications have carried reports or stories of recent attempts to create new game fish habitats in hitherto barren ocean waters. In some of the States of the U.S.A., notably Alabama, California, Maryland and North Carolina, "junked" motor cars, disused street cars (trams), and even artificial rocks purchased from a Hollywood film company, have been deposited in the sea for this purpose. The Californian project, says that State's Department of Fish and Game, was designed "to take advantage of the well-known fact that fish tend to congregate around sunken ships, rocks and other objects in the water".

Apparently the project is fairly expensive. One report says that in 1955 the Alabama Fish and Game Commission spent \$70,000 dumping 250 disused car bodies in ocean waters to a depth of 10 fathoms. That sort of money (it is the equivalent of almost £50,000 in our money) is just not available here, despite the fact that we would like to carry out a few experiments. Another fly in the ointment, of course, is the scarcity of old automobile bodies in this State, as compared with the American States.

The efficacy of underwater objects to attract fish has been proved even in Western Australia. Many years ago, around the turn of the century, an Italian fisherman whose dinghy had sunk in Safety Bay was searching for it and was greatly surprised when he located it to find that the waters in its immediate vicinity were teeming with snapper. He conceived the idea of providing an artificial "wreck" to see whether this was mere coincidence. He nailed or lashed together a number of old packing cases and sunk them in the Bay, and the same thing happened, and continued to happen. The result was that all fishermen working the snapper season in Warnbro Sound commenced the practice of using "wrecks," as they are always known, and the practice survives to the present day.

MUSEUM WANTS MAMMALS.

Dr. W. D. L. Ride, Director of the W.A. Museum, is at present attempting to collect material for a handbook on the mammals of Western Australia that he intends to publish. Dr. Ride has requested that any specimens of small mammals such as rats, mice and bats which are found, should be placed in a jar of methylated spirits and sent to the Museum.

To ensure that the specimen is properly preserved, a slit should be made in the lower abdomen with a pair of scissors to allow the spirit to gain direct contact with the viscera (organs of the body). The slit will not harm the specimen even though it may be large, as it can be easily repaired. If the slit is too small, or is not made at all, the specimen will certainly be worthless.