DEPARTMENT
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STAFF NOTES.

The Director, Mr. A. J. Fraser, as Chairman of the Fishermen's Advisory Committee, went to Geraldton on October 28. He was accompanied by the Secretary, Mr. H. B. Shugg, and members of the Committee, Messrs N.K. Swarbrick and W. Matthei. The third fisherman-member of the Committee, Mr. G. Travia, joined them at Geraldton.

On November 1, Mr. Fraser will attend a special meeting of the Trout Acclimatisation Council at Harvey, Towards the end of the month he will fly to Hobart as this State's delegate to the annual Commonwealth-State Fisheries conference. He will spend two or three days in Adelaide en route.

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The Supervising Inspector, Mr. J. E. Bramley, and Senior Inspector J.E. Munro carried out a patrol along the coast northwards as far as Green Head from October 27-30. They worked in association with the "Kooruldhoo".

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Inspector B.A. Carmichael, of Albany, will commence annual leave on November 1. Relieving Inspector G. C. Jeffery, who will be in charge of the district during Mr. Carmichael's absence, spent some weeks in Bunbury during the month assisting Inspector T. B. Baines.

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Mr. C.R.C. Haynes, mate of the "Lancelin", will begin 3 weeks' annual leave on November 2.

Other officers to proceed on annual leave this month include Messrs G.C. Ferguson and J. M. Mitchell, of Head Office, who will commence leave on November 2 and November 30 respectively.

Miss P. J. Pegrum and Mr. H. B. Shugg, of Head Office, resumed duty after annual leave during the month, as also did Inspectors J. Traynor and E.I. Forster and Assistant Inspector E. H. Barker.

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Fauna Warden S. W. Bowler visited Katanning during October. In addition to carrying out special patrols in adjoining areas he was in charge of the Department's exhibit at the Katanning Wildlife Show. On October 25, Mr. Bowler accompanied a bird-banding group to the island sanctuaries in Shoalwater Bay.

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Assistant Inspector N. K. Henry is at present in the Mandurah district where he is assisting Inspector A. V. Green.

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Mr. W. K. Cherrington, of Head Office, has had the misfortune to suffer a severely cut foot and will be absent on sick leave for one week or more.

PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS.

Dr. Mary Gillham, Lecturer in Botany at the Exeter University, England, called on the Director during the month. Dr. Gillham, who is an expert on the plant ecology of bird islands, hopes to visit most islands north to Shark Bay before leaving the State at the end of this month. She has already been taken to Carnac Island and the larger islands in Shoalwater Bay.

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Another visitor to Head Office during the month was Dr. Klaus Immelmann, a young German zoologist who is studying the breeding and flocking habits of Australian finches. Dr. Immelmann intends to work at the Kimberley Research Station for some months and later at Alice Springs before going to Queensland.

DEPARTMENTAL VESSELS.

On October 27, the p.v. "Kooruldhoo", under command of Assistant Inspector C. J. Beabrook with Inspector H. D. Kavanagh as pilot and Assistant Inspector Dudley Gordon as crew member, sailed from Fremantle to carry out a patrol of the waters closed to crayfishing as far north as Jurien Bay. After completing that patrol, she was forced to take shelter from heavy seas and gale force winds which have delayed a projected patrol in the Abrolhos Islands area.

TRAWLER PURCHASED.

Mr. Norman Young, Chairman of Directors of the Southern Trawling Co. Ltd., announced recently that his company had purchased a modern 500-ton diesel trawler. She is the "Princess Elizabeth", a 160-ft vessel with a holding capacity of approximately 150 tons. She will operate from Port Adelaide and will undertake exploratory trawling to test the Bight's fishing resources and determine whether a permanent industry can be established. This is the company which has been established by the Commonwealth Government, using moneys standing to the credit of the Fisheries Development Trust Account (the "Carnarvon whaling money").

NEW JOBS CREATED.

The following new permanent positions have recently been created in the Fisheries Department. They were gazetted as vacant on October 23.

1. FLEET MAINTENANCE OFFICER, G.II.2 (salary range £1,143 - £1,173).
   Duties: Subject to Director to be responsible and make all necessary arrangements for refitting and maintenance of all units of Department's fleet wherever situated.

2. MASTER, RESEARCH VESSEL, G.II.6 (salary range £1,488 - £1,533).
   Duties: To take command of new research vessel "Peron" and, subject to Research Officer, be responsible for all fishing operations, construction and care, etc., of equipment and gear.
   Qualifications required: Certificate of competency as coastal master or equivalent; license to operate ship-shore radio; good working knowledge of marine diesel engines; wide experience of experimental fishing.

3. ENGINEER, RESEARCH VESSEL, G.II.3 (Salary range £1,218 - £1,263).
Duties: To sail in r.v. "Peron" and be responsible for all motors and refrigeration.
Qualifications required: Completed apprenticeship in diesel engine fitting; knowledge of refrigeration; certificate of competency as marine engine driver of engines 175 H.P. or more.

4. MATE, RESEARCH VESSEL, G.II.2 (Salary range £1,143 - £1,173).
Duties: Mate of r.v. "Peron".
Qualifications required: Certificate of competency as master of fishing-boat, or equivalent; license to operate ship-shore radio.

5. WARDEN (Fauna Protection Act), G.II.1 (salary range £1,083 - £1,113).
Duties: Subject to Fauna Protection Officer to carry out patrols and inspections as necessary in relation to administration of Fauna Protection Act. Headquarters initially Perth, but may later be changed to anywhere in State.

6. INSPECTOR, GRADE 2, G.II.1 (Salary range £1,083 - £1,113 + £60 p.a. responsibility allowance).
Duties: To act as skipper and engine-driver of new patrol vessel "Dampier" (45 feet); to supervise operations of fishermen as directed by Supervising Inspector.
Qualifications required: Certificates of competency as master of fishing-boat and engine driver of marine diesel engines, 10-175 H.P., or equivalent.

7. ASSISTANT INSPECTOR, G.VII.1/2 (salary range £888 - £1,011).
Duties: To act as mate and second inspector of p.v. "Dampier".
Qualifications: Certificate of competency as engine-driver of marine diesel engines, 10-175 H.P., or equivalent.

NOTE: Officers proceeding to sea are paid a daily subsistence allowance while at sea of 12/- a day if married or 8/- a day if single.

PEARL SHELL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN.

The story of pearls and pearlshell was told at the Department of Industrial Development's Pavilion at the Royal Show last month. Highlights of that Department's display were eleven cultured pearls from Kuri Bay in the Kimberleys, valued in all at £5,000, and samples of half-pearls, both processed and before removal from the shell.

The various stages of pearl button manufacture were illustrated most effectively in a solid perspex block. This display piece of 12" x 12" x 6" was made up in U.S.A. and is valued at £400. The overall setting of the exhibition featured a pearling lugger tied up to a jetty. Four Western Australian fashion manufacturers contributed garments with the accent on pearl buttons and accessories. These were modelled most effectively by leading Perth mannequins. Pearl and pearlshell jewellery was also displayed. Two photos published elsewhere in this issue give some idea of the attractive nature of the Department's exhibit.

BASIC WAGE INCREASE.

As a result of the recent quarterly declaration of the Court of Arbitration, the basic rates payable to officers of the public service will be amended as from October 26, 1959. Adjustments will be made in the pay period ending November 19, when increases at the rate of £7 per annum, in the metropolitan area, and £10 per annum, in all other districts, will be paid.

RECORD CRAYTAIL EXPORT.

The Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. C. F. Adermann) has announced that production of craytails has increased substantially in Western Australia, and to a lesser extent in Victoria and Tasmania. Exports from Western Australia comprised 82% of the craytails sent to U.S.A. last financial year and brought in almost $7,000,000. The 1958/59 production in W.A. totalled 17,516,000 lb. live weight, which is more than double the 8,100,000 lb. produced seven years ago.

The categories "midget" and "small" comprised 57% of the total W.A. exports, and there was a decline from 22% to 19.3% in the volume of "medium" craytails, which bring top prices on the U.S. market.

QUEENSLAND FOLLOWS SUIT.

Mr. E. J. Coulter, Chief Administrative officer of the Queensland Department of Harbours and Marine, has announced that licenses have been granted to use areas of water in Torres Strait for the cultivation of cultured pearls. Several firms were trying to start propagating cultured pearls, he said, as they considered conditions were suitable. A Brisbane pearl expert, Mr. P.H. Mendis, pointed out that a cultured pearl industry in Queensland would benefit the State and provide employment for many Torres Strait islanders.

FREMANTLE - CERVANTES - LANCELIN CRAYFISHERY.

The Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Ross Hutchinson, announced recently that he had approved a number of recommendations made by the Fishermen's Advisory Committee after its meeting at Fremantle last month. They were:-

(a) that the season open on November 15 in the waters between 30°S and 33°S;

(b) that the one-mile offshore closure be applied again from January 1;

(c) that unbaited pots be allowed to be set from November 1.

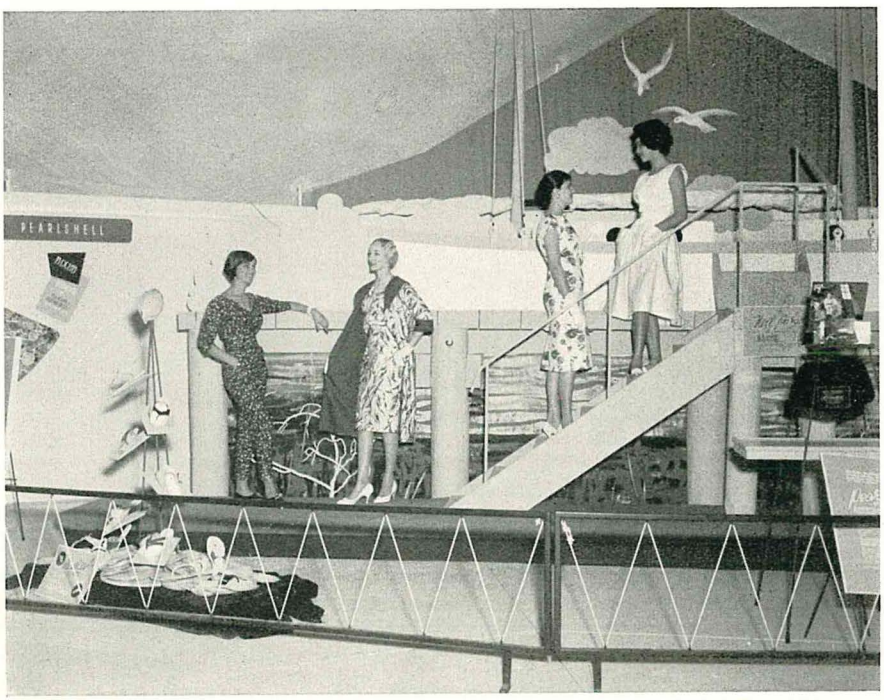
The last decision represented a concession to Fremantle-based fishermen on account of the restricted facilities of the Fremantle fishing boat harbour. Any craypots found baited before November 14, the Minister warned, would be seized by departmental inspectors. After pointing out that the opening date was the same as last year and that the one-mile offshore closure was designed to give protection to undersize fish which normally found their way into shallow waters during mid-summer, the Minister concluded with the following remarks:-

"Information I have received indicates there will be an increase this year of the number of boats entering the crayfishery. Although last year's production of crays was an all-time high, indications are that the fisheries are now being subjected to strain, and that we must not expect record catches to go on forever. It stands to reason that more men, and bigger and better boats, can have only one result - smaller individual catches and uneconomic fishing. Let us hope that fishermen will take a rational view of the matter and not overcrowd the fisheries with more men and boats than they can safely accommodate".

BLESSING OF THE FLEET.

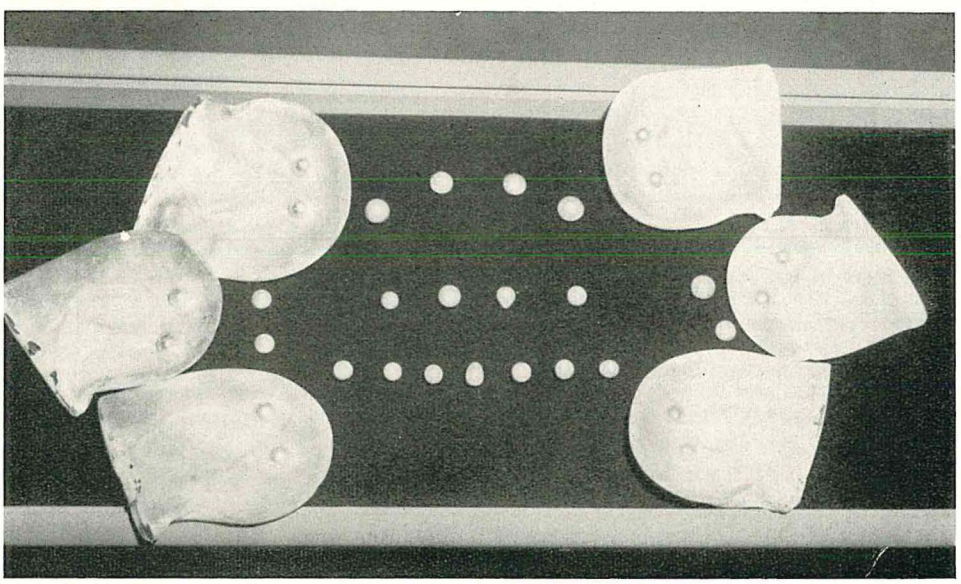
Fremantle assumed a festive air on Sunday, October 18, when the tenth annual ceremony of blessing the fishing fleet was performed by Monsignor A.T. Langmead. Various vantage points were crowded as the procession left St. Patrick's Church in Adelaide Street and moved down to the Esplanade. Police were kept busy moving sightseers from the road to make room for the eight fishermen in formal dress who carried the decorated statue of Our Lady of Martyrs, and for 16 girls dressed in white who carried the Statue of Our Lady of Capo D'Orlando. These two groups

PEARLS AND PEARLSHELL AT THE SHOW



Portion of the Department of Industrial Development's Display at the 1959 Royal Show designed to promote the use of W.A. pearlshell

(Government Printer)



In this photo there are 11 W.A. culture pearls valued at £5,000. Half pearls are produced as shown on the shells at left and right.

(Courtesy W.A. Newspapers)

headed the 500-strong procession, the remainder of which was formed by young girls in colourful national costumes, two bands and several groups of brightly dressed school children.

The gaily decorated "Canberra" took pride of place and led a dozen flag-bedecked fishing boats crowded with people in several sweeps of the bay. After the ceremony, the procession returned through the streets, members singing as they marched. People blocked the roads as they fell in and walked behind.

GERALDTON ABROLHOS CRAYFISHERY.

The Fishermen's Advisory Committee met in Geraldton on October 29 and 30 to take evidence and consider suggestions concerning the conservation of the crayfisheries north of the 30°S. The Advisory Committee was constituted as follows:-

Mr. A. J. Fraser, Director of Fisheries, Chairman.
Mr. N. K. Swarbrick, of Albany, representing deepsea fishermen.
Mr. W. Matthei, of Mandurah, representing beach and estuarine fishermen.
Mr. G. Travia, of Geraldton, representing crayfishermen.
Mr. H. B. Shugg, Secretary.

An apology was received from Mr. Roland Smith, the representative of persons not commercially engaged in fishing, who was out of the State.

The Committee interviewed more than 30 fishermen and the managers of two processing works. Some of the more important suggestions received by the Committee were:-

1. that the Abrolhos season open on March 1 in lieu of March 15;

2. that a close season be proclaimed to protect spawning crayfish in the area between the 27° and 30° parallels - the closure to operate from the end of the Abrolhos season until November 15, when the onset of the white crayfish "run" is expected;

3. that an inspector be stationed on each island group before the opening as was done last season;

4. that a patrol vessel be stationed permanently in Geraldton waters, to supervise the area during close season as well as open season.

The Committee's recommendations on the above matters and on a number of others will be presented to the Minister in due course. His decision will be announced as soon as possible.

APPROACHING OPEN SEASONS.

All officers are reminded that the open season for stubble quail in that part of the state north of the 31° parallel will commence on December 1. In that area stubble quail may be taken until March 31.

The open season for marron, which usually commences on December 1, will be delayed until January 1, as part of an additional effort to conserve the dwindling stocks of these popular crustaceans, if the recommendations of the various trout acclimatisation societies are accepted.

ROTTNEST BIOLOGICAL STATION COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the above committee attended by the Director (Mr. A. J. Fraser), Chairman, Dr. E. P. Hodgkin of the University of W.A., Dr. K. Sheard, of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., and Mr. B. K. Bowen (Secretary), was held at the Department on October 5. Dr. Hodgkin reported that discussions had taken place with regard to the fencing of the central portion of the island by the Rottnest Board of Control. This was considered necessary to allow natural regeneration and regrowth of the flora which hitherto had been over-grazed by quokkas. A special sub-committee which had been appointed to report on this matter was requested to formulate a further report for submission to the Board on additional areas to be fenced. Included in other matters dealt with by the Committee, was the completion of the booklet on the history of the Station and containing a review of scientific work in progress at Rottnest published by the Royal Society of W.A. The writers of the various sections, it was agreed, should be commended for the excellent standard achieved.

LARGE KINGFISH CAUGHT.

Mr. Clem May, of Kellerberrin, successfully landed a 45-lb. kingfish from a beach at Mandurah on October 18. The fish was caught on a 20-lb. line and had to be played for half an hour before it was landed. Observers consider that fishing off the coast should be back to normal this summer after several comparatively poor seasons.

KATANNING WILDLIFE SHOW.

The Katanning Parents & Citizens Association successfully staged a wildlife show in the local Town Hall from October 14 to 16, inclusive. The function was organised by Messrs N.A. Beeck and E.C. D'arcy-Evans, assisted by a vigorous committee. Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler entered a small exhibit on behalf of this Department. This featured departmental posters and pictures and a trout exhibit to publicise the 'Fish for the Inland' scheme. The Director of the Western Australian Museum, Dr. W.D.L. Ride, declared the show open officially.

LICENSING OF PLEASURE CRAFT.

A further approach by the Western Australian League of Professional Fishermen's Associations to the Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Hutchinson, that pleasure craft be controlled, has been rejected. In his reply to the League the Minister pointed out that the incidence of mishaps on the water, in relation to the large number of people involved, was very small and their frequency appeared to be declining rather than increasing. Mere payment of a fee would not stop the odd irresponsible or foolhardy type from getting into trouble. The overwhelming majority of ordinary people, he said, would be irritated by the introduction of controls and the licensing of pleasure craft, for they regarded the boat they owned as one of the few surviving freedoms. The matter had been considered at Cabinet level, the Minister continued, and concluded with the advice that it was Cabinet's considered opinion that a better effect would be achieved by educating owners and users of pleasure craft on the need for safety rather than the introduction of licenses which, of themselves, would not improve the safety features of any vessel.

RARE WHALE FOUND.

As a result of the advice and co-operation of Inspector A. K. Melsom and Assistant Inspector C. J. Seabrook, the Director of the W.A. Museum, Dr. W.D.L. Ride, has been able to obtain the skeleton of a rare whale. It had been washed up on the beach at Point Peron and was reported to the Department on October 8. The skeleton proved to be an 18-foot male specimen of the genus of rare beaked whales Mesoplodon, but the species has not yet been determined.

PROHIBITED MIGRANT SHOT!

On October 23, at a spot approximately ¼ mile from main wharf at Princess Royal Harbour, Albany, a bird of peculiar appearance was shot in the belief that it was a Ceylon crow. Inspector B. A. Carmichael obtained the body and forwarded it to Head Office for identification. We were subsequently advised by the W.A. Museum that the bird was a Common Myna (Acridotheres tristis) This species is native to India and portions of Asia. In recent years it has spread down Malaya and is now a resident breeder on Singapore. It has been declared "vermin" in this State and its importation prohibited.

An Indian ship, and two other vessels from Asian ports, had called at Albany during October, and it is presumed that the bird escaped from one of them.

INFORMATION ON DEER REQUIRED.

The Director of the W.A. Museum, Dr. Ride, who is currently engaged in preparing a handbook of the mammals of W.A., urgently requires information on the acclimatisation of deer in this State. On various occasions, deer have been reported in the area between Serpentine and Harvey and a herd in the country north-east of Geraldton has also been reported on one occasion. If any inspector has information on their presence or reports of their occurrence, or is able to suggest possible sources of information, would he please notify this office or advise Dr. Ride direct.

BANDING OF SEA BIRDS.

On October 25 the Fauna Warden, Mr. Bowler, accompanied a bird-banding group organised by the W.A. Naturalists Club to the island sanctuaries in Shoalwater Bay. The group was led by Mr. Julian Ford, an Honorary Warden. The other members were Dr. G. F. Mees, of Western Australian Museum, and Mr. G. M. Storr, of the Zoology Department of the University of W.A.

Mr. Bowler reported that numerous nests and eggs were observed and the group proposed to visit the island again in about three weeks time. Sixtysix silver gulls, two caspian terns and one bridled tern were banded.

PRAWNS SHOW UP.

Inspectors report that prawns are already showing up in the waters of the Swan and Canning Rivers, and another excellent season is forecast.

CLEARING HOUSE.

A New Tool for Fishing with Light.

Attraction of fish by means of light goes back to the beginning of art of taking fish, and perhaps represents Man's first conscious employment of an attractant for fish beyond the use of bait.

Whether it was a torch in the spearman's hand as he waded in the shallows; or bonfire on the beach to draw the fish and hold them while the seine was set about them; or the cresset fixed in the bow of the early fishing vessel, light has served fishermen from beyond the daybreak of history upon the sea.

Today industrial fishing around the world finds lights valuable to lure some species of fish into Man's means of capture. While the Mediterranean and Iberian fisheries largely make use of lights, the Japanese probably employ light for attracting fish to a larger degree, and in the making of larger catches, than any other fishermen of the world.

Japan uses attractant lights in many fields of fishing; but none more importantly than in the lift or blanket nets with which saury and jack mackerel are fished. Here batteries of strong lights gather the fish to the night sea on one side of the vessel, while the net is prepared on the opposite side. Then the lights are switched off above the great school of fish, and switched on above the net on the opposite side. The fish rush under the vessel to the new light, and into the net.

With certain species this is a highly productive method, whose capacity of course depends upon the efficiency of the light as an attractant. The more fish, and the more frequently that they can be gathered, the better the yield of the nets.

So the Japanese have set about determining scientifically, first, what kind of light best attracts fish; second, how to provide such light under actual, practical fishing conditions.

Findings on the first point are reported by Dr. N. Y. Kawamoto of the Faculty of Fisheries, Mie Prefectural University, who has conducted much of the research on the quality of light for fish attraction.

He determined that many species were specially attracted by blue and green lights, and that "Spectral luminosity" played an important part in deciding which type of light in these colours is the more efficient. He found also that lights could be used on moonlight nights, provided the intensity of the light is of sufficiently high level in comparison to the moonlight. He reported also that wave lengths of more than 750 mu. are beyond the limit of susceptibility of fish.

With these scientific facts in hand, indicating the special effectiveness of mercury vapor lamps in attracting fish, the Sanden Company of Tokyo undertook the manufacture of mercury vapor lights for fishing. This required, as a practical thing, the overcoming of the problem of current.

Prior to the development of the new Sanden mercury fishing lamp in 1958, mercury lamps available for fishing required alternating current, which obviously is not often available aboard fishing vessels of the size and kind used for fishing with lights.

In 1958 the company perfected and brought onto the market not only an entirely successful direct current mercury lamp for fishing purposes, but also a lamp performing to full efficiency with either d.c. or a.c.

Efficiency of these lamps was tested in practical operation by the Tokai Regional Fisheries Research Laboratory of the Japanese Fisheries Agency, which found they were particularly effective in attracting sardines, mackerel of several species, salmon, trout (a term often used by the Japanese to designate Pink salmon), and squid.

Character of light emitted by the direct current mercury lamps made by the Sanden Company is said to be particularly effective in attracting fish, as the moderate ultra-violet rays from the lamp appear superior as attractants to the stronger rays of ordinary mercury lamps.

The Sanden lamps are available in 24 and 100 v., d.c., and in 100 v., a.c. Wattage of most models is 500, but two are available in 250 w. They are made of a special glass which resists cracking under stress of thermal shock from rain or seawater while hot. Brightness for current consumed is three times that of incandescent lamps, and useful life is six to 10 times longer, being rated at 5,000 to 6,000 hours of service.

Spectrum studies of the Sanden lamp shows its light falls in the short wave-length band between 320 and 360 mu., which is most effective in attracting fish. Moreover, this blue light, largely ultra-violet, has the ability to penetrate seawater deeply.

At time of writing it appears that the Sanden lamp, reported to be the only d.c. mercury lamp available in any country, may make significant contributions to the productivity of fishing based on the attractive power of light - and particularly that in the short wave length u.v. band.
("Pacific Fisherman" San Francisco. September, 1959.)

Motors and Propellers do not Frighten Fish.

Does the underwater noise of an outboard motor put fish down? Or do the fish ignore the noise and carry on in their normal way? Is there a possibility that the noise and the propeller wash of the motor actually attract fish toward the boat?

For decades now, this matter of the effect of outboard noise, if any, on fishing, has been starting arguments. Of course, they settled nothing. But in the last ten years or so, scientists and fishing authorities have been doing some investigating. One of the first research efforts consisted of a series of test runs on a number of small lakes, all similar in size, variety of fish and productivity.

The net result? No evidence whatsoever that outboards have any effect on fishing.

Another research project involved experiments in which lines were trolled, first close to the boat, then far astern. Close-trolled lures proved more effective than those dragged far back, indicating that propeller turbulence may attract fish as does a ripple in a stream.

Skin-divers have done much underwater spying on fish and motors, and none of their observations support the contention that motors scare fish. In fact, divers say that more fish appear to be attracted to the propeller streams than are frightened by them, and the rest just don't seem to care.

However, many fishermen have demanded a great deal more proof. They wanted to see the evidence themselves before they made up their minds.

The tests were made in Marine Studios, Marineland, Florida. Two huge tanks make up Marine Studios. More than 300 windows line the sides of the tanks which contain just about everything you might find at sea, including a carefully planned and decorated ocean floor, complete with coral, sea fans and even a sunken ship. The tanks contain more than seven tons of aquatic furnishings.

All was ready, and all that was needed was the co-operation of the fish. "They've never been up against noise or turbulence of any kind here, let alone out-boards," said one of the staff. "Believe me, if fish are frightened by motors at all, you're going to find it out."

"Do you think a 10 h.p. motor will be loud enough?" he asked.

"Loud! It'll sound more like a 100-horse engine in that tank. The walls are going to bounce that engine-exhaust noise back and forth like a ping-pong ball. You're going to make plenty of noise. It won't be anything like the ocean or an open lake, where the sound of a motor can run itself out through a great expanse of water." Suddenly the boat lurched and the water exploded into a jet stream of white bubbles. Every last fish disappeared.....and then returned!

Fish were everywhere. They swam in and out of the bubbles as though they didn't exist. A barracuda and a cobia moved toward the propeller which was turning at troll speed. The blades flashed the reflected light from above. The barracuda stopped inches away from the bright prop., eyed it with an evil, unblinking stare, then darted off.

But the cobia seemed transfixed by the glitter. He drifted closer and closer. Then, with a slight upturn of his body, he did it - he actually made a strike at the propeller.

Tests were then run with each of five 10 h.p. out-boards, since all had different exhaust setups that might affect the fish differently. None did. Each unit was photographed at troll speed and high speed. Neither the speed, the noise nor the turbulence disturbed the fish. They darted away from the engine momentarily when it first kicked over or changed speeds. Then consistently they returned to the area immed-iately.

The barracuda and the cobia were actually entranced by the whirling blades - especially at troll speeds, when they reflected the sunlight best. Even the nervous little reef fish gave no sign of irritation or fright. The tarpon were cautious as usual, but no more than usual.

A dolphin all but cut his back on the blades as he swam interminably about the tank. The sharks moved back and forth through the water with their usual disdain and unconcern for things about them. And twice a large sea turtle nearly upset the boat.

The test was successful beyond expectations.
(The Fishing News London September 1959)

Interesting Lobster Experiments.

Experiments made by Dr. A. Gibson, an Irish Fisheries Department inspector, may prove many beliefs about lobsters to be wrong, says Irish Fishing. He finds that Irish lobsters do not move about for any considerable distance along the sea bed - meaning that when there is a shortage of lobsters in an area it is not due to a "shifting" of the fish, but to a poor breeding season, or to overfishing.

Dr. Gibson believes that the tests may make a change necessary in the laws relating to the sale of lobsters. The regulation size for a lobster before it can be sold is nine inches, but experiments have shown that lobsters, hitherto believed to grow by shedding their shell once a year, actually moult twice a year.

"If this proves true then fishermen have been losing thousands of pounds by catching lobsters before they reached anything like full weight. Fishermen might have lobsters heavier by up to 25 % by waiting for a few months," comments Irish Fishing.

(The Fishing News London September, 1959.)

Fishing Round the World.

A Soviet submarine, converted for fisheries research, returned from a 24-day scientific cruise, made some interesting observations. One was that herring are in a passive state at night, and did not react to the vessel's lights, but were extremely active at greater depths during the day. It was concluded that the herring can only be caught in quantity during the vertical migration in morning and evening.

(World Fishing London September, 1959.)

American Oyster 'War' Intensifies.

The 100-year-old 'war' over oysters between the States of Maryland and Virginia has been intensified lately by a dispute about who should have access to the world's richest beds in Chesapeake Bay. The two States border on Chesapeake Bay, where, in 1885, in the Maryland half of the Bay alone, 15 million bushels of oysters were harvested - more than the rest of the world's total that year.

The catch has since dropped to about 2,500,000 bushels each year. Maryland has dredged the Chesapeake beds without seeding them with young oysters, and without throwing back the shells for the new oysters to grow on, so the catch has dropped. Both Governments have long tried to prevent further depletion.

Virginia leases large stretches of Chesapeake Bay to oyster farmers, who prepare their "field" suitably by spreading it with shells so that baby oysters will not sink in the silt.

Maryland contends that all men have equal rights to oyster beds which should be free for everyone who cares to go out and bring up some oysters.

(The Fishing News London September, 1959.)

Japan Sets Whalers' Catch Limits.

The Japanese whaling industry has decided to keep all six of its whaling fleets in operation in the 1960 Antarctic whaling season, and will suspend operations when they have caught 5,023 blue-whale units, the same amount as this year. The industry is reported to have informed whaling associations in Britain and Norway of its decision.

The reports added that Norway has already set its quota at 5,900 blue-whale units, Holland at 1,200, Britain at 2,274, and Russia at 3,603. On this basis, the total catch would come to 18,000 blue-whale units - 3,000 more than the 15,000 limit set under the International Whaling Convention. Norway and Holland withdrew from the Convention this year after a dispute over the allocation of catches.

(The Fishing News London September, 1959).