

of various sea-birds.

The setting aside of these four new reserved areas brings the total number of reserves for the conservation of fauna to 96. Ranging in size from four to almost one million acres, the reserves protect over four thousand square miles of wildlife habitat.

CRAYFISH RECEIVED INTO COLD STORAGE.

The table overpage sets out the weight of crayfish tails, in their graded categories, received into metropolitan cold storage establishments. It does not show the total weight of crayfish processed in Western Australia. Despite that, however, it probably represents, fairly accurately, the trend in the fishery as a whole. While the figures invite an analysis of the effect of crayfishing on the stocks during the last 5 years, it would be dangerous to extrapolate apparent trends from them to actual events in the fishery. However, it would seem reasonable to assume that the increasing importance of the "midget" catch, which is demonstrated in the table, does apply to the fishery as a whole.

It will be seen that in 1955, the tail gradings, "medium", "large" and "jumbo", represented almost 50% of the total weight. In 1959, however, these gradings represented only 42% of the total weight. It is also of interest to note that the percentage of "smalls" has fallen only from 34% to 29%. It would be interesting to compare the catches in the different categories of "white" crayfish over the same period. As the "white" crayfish are substantially immature fish, they must constitute a large proportion of the lighter gradings.

When reviewing the figures in the table, it should also be kept in mind that the percentages represent the ratio between the weights of tails in the appropriate categories. If the actual numbers of crayfish caught to make up those weights were recorded, the percentages in the lower grades, particularly of "midgets", would naturally be much higher.

WHALING.

At the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company Station, the humpback season got under way with the taking of two humpbacks on May 29. In the following week only one humpback was taken, but in the next week

week seven humpbacks and two blue whales were captured. Both the latter were females, measuring 67 feet 9 inches and 68 feet 8 inches, respectively. Nineteen humpbacks were taken during the week ended June 25, bringing the total for the season, including the two blue whales, to thirty-one. In the previous year, forty-two whales had been taken by June 25, including six blue whales.

The Company continued sperm-whaling until June 11. The taking of 25 in the first two weeks of June brought the total for the season to 92.

At Carnarvon, the Nor'-West Whaling Company commenced operations on June 20 with the taking of the season's first humpback, a female measuring 43 feet 3 inches. Writing on June 28, Assistant Inspector D. H. Smith, who is acting as Whaling Inspector, said that no alterations had been made to the structure of the Company's plant. He added that it had only received minor damage during the recent cyclone, when parts of Carnarvon were devastated. The plant was completely overhauled for the 1960 season, however, and Mr. Smith reported that all pipes and machines were running freely although only two cookers were being used at that time. Sixty-seven men were then employed at the plant.

With only three of the Company's five catchers working, twelve whales had been taken within a week of commencing operations. They were in very good condition with thick blubber, averaging $7\frac{1}{2}$ " on the back and $5\frac{1}{2}$ " on the belly. Except for one, all were females and three of them were immature. Mr. Smith said that a twin-engined Miles Gemini aircraft was being used for spotting. Due to its low-wing construction and the inexperience of the pilot and spotter, some difficulties were being experienced. Mr. Smith concluded with a comment that the weather had been fine with occasional clouds. The prevailing wind was a southerly with a morning easterly. The seas were running a short chop, occasionally flattening out to a long swell. Captains of the chasers reported that the atmosphere was rather hazy.