

- (c) Western Australia expressed concern at the possible spread of exotic aviary birds and instanced the case of the Java sparrow and the potential risk to the rice industry. Conference therefore recommends that each State and Territory and the C.S.I.R.O Wild-life Survey Section examine the exotic aviary bird position with a view to submitting to the conference secretariat lists of those species considered to present a potential threat to primary industry or native fauna, together with a statement as to the specific potential problem, and that this item be included in the next Conference agenda.

The Minister also accepted, in principle, the invitation extended by Tasmania that the next Conference, which incidentally will be known in future as the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference, be held in Hobart. The next meeting of the Australian Waterfowl Committee, on which the Research Officer, Mr. Bowen, is this State's representative, will be held in Sydney.

SEASON CLOSED

All inspectors are reminded that the open seasons for wild duck and marron each closed at midnight on April 30. The season for wild ducks will not re-open until the weekend preceding Christmas, while the marron season will not open until January 1, 1962. The Minister drew the attention of the general public to these closures in a statement recently released to the press and radio. He specifically requested all inspectors, wardens and honorary wardens to join together in policing the close seasons which, he pointed out, were the corner-stones of our conservation programmes.

WHALING

In the 1960 whaling season, for the third year in succession, Australia's catch of humpback whales did not reach the quota fixed by the Minister for Primary Industry in conjunction with the International Whaling Commission, says Monthly Summary of Australian Conditions (April 14, 1961) issued by the National Bank of Australia Ltd. Between May 29 and September 30, 1,525 humpback whales were taken by stations at Moreton Island (Q'ld), Byron Bay (N.S.W.), Norfolk Island, Albany (W.A.), and Carnarvon (W.A.), against a quota of 1,850 humpbacks or their equivalent, which in itself was much reduced from the 2080 allotted in 1959. However, the shortfall was caused entirely by operations on the west coast, where stations were able to catch less than

two-thirds of the quota of 870 whales allotted to them. The catch of sperm (toothed) whales, which is not subject to quota restrictions, increased by 144 to 282 last year, all being taken from Albany.

Whale oil, which is used in the manufacture of margarine, waxes and candles, accounts for the major portion of the value of output of the industry, and whale-meal for cattle and meat for pet food are among the important by-products. The value of whale oil and by-products has shown a downward trend in recent years, falling from over £2.2m. in 1956 to about £1.4m. last year. Over the period, production of oil decreased from 102,400 barrels (6 barrels = 1 ton) to 73,300 barrels, and prices have declined considerably.

Whale oil exports have been fairly well maintained in recent years in terms of volume, fluctuating between 3m. and 4m. gallons a year, but their value has declined. Yearly earnings from 1954/55 to 1956/57 amounted to £1.5m. and rose to £1.7m. in 1957/58, but there was a sharp fall in the following year. In 1959/60, export receipts were only £893,000, and the United Kingdom, which had in previous years been our best customer for this commodity, purchased but 9% of our total export. Germany, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands have been important buyers in recent years and last financial year exports to Germany were worth £508,000.

Sperm whaling operations were resumed by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. at Albany, on March 23, with the taking of two whales by the company's new chaser "Minilya", skippered by Captain Christensen. A two-seater aircraft fitted with a radio will be used by the Company for whale spotting this season. It is a Cessna 105A high-wing, single-engine monoplane of steel construction. The plane will be flown by Mr. John Bell, an experienced commercial pilot.

Although it will be some time before final figures are available, the directors of Nor'West Whaling Co.Ltd. expect that it will be revealed that the Company suffered a small loss on last year's operations. This Station (at Carnarvon) secured only 442 of its quota of 750 hump-backs last year.

This year's quotas have not yet been fixed.