

salvaged and to prevent larger pieces of the wreck from becoming a menace to shipping. The salvage work was carried out by the Mangrove Island Syndicate.

FURTHER BOATS LOST OR DAMAGED

On August 2, the 60-ft. freezer boat "Eureka" was holed on a "lump" near the mouth of the Murchison River. Although she was able to return to Fremantle under her own power, it is understood that the cost of repairing the damage will be rather severe. On August 4, the 22-ft. fishing boat "Kimberley" owned by Mr E.A. Davies was damaged on a reef in Houtman Abrolhos. It was reported that she was later beached, but the extent of the damage she suffered is not known. The same night the 35-ft. fishing boat "Pam", skippered by Mr Lloyd Jones, was wrecked on a reef at Wedge Island, near Lancelin. The crew of the "Pam", who had been fishing for jew fish at the time, were taken on board the l.f.b. "Yvonne" and had only just been rescued when the "Pam" sank in deep water. It is understood that she was a total write-off.

SEALING IN THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

Seals are taken for their blubber and other products at some of the islands in the Southern Ocean. Similar exploitation once took place on Heard and Macquarie Islands and also in the islands of the Recherche Archipelago (off Esperance), but wasteful methods resulted in periodic devastation of the seal herds. Although the revival of sealing is prohibited on all these islands, which are now sanctuaries, interest in the future of the populations has stimulated a C.S.I.R.O. study of the seal communities on Heard and Macquarie Islands to provide a basis for the conservation of the various breeding stocks.

Since 1951, over 5,000 elephant seal pups have been branded in the Antarctic with combinations of letters which enable the future history of individual seals to be followed. Some female seals have their first pup when four years old - and others not until their fifth, sixth, or even later years. The male elephant seals, which grow to 20 feet in length and four tons in weight, do not possess harems until they are about 15 years old.

The heavy natural mortality among first-year seals reduces their numbers to about one-third of the pups weaned, and only one-quarter survive into their sixth year.

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The seal population at Macquarie Island is estimated at about 110,000 and there are about 85,000 at Heard Island.