

he indicated that he was not prepared at this stage to consider the appointment of a representative of the Avicultural Society on the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee, which Mr Jamieson had sought. To do this would necessitate an amendment of the Act.

ABROLHOS CRAYFISHERY

At folios 134, 135 & 136 are published tables of crayfish production and fishing effort at Houtman Abrolhos during the 1961 and the ten immediately preceding seasons. For record purposes, the catch for the month of July, 1961, with the comparative 1960 figures, are also shown. It will be seen that the total production this year, as expected, set a new record. It is interesting to note that although the number of men has almost trebled since 1951, the total catch has increased only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, with the result that the average catch-per-man has been reduced by approximately 18%. The increase in total production, together with the steady increase in the price paid for the catch, has kept the economy of the fishery in a healthy state.

1961 WHALING SEASON

Assistant Inspector E.H. Barker, who acted as whaling inspector at the Nor'-West Whaling Company's station at Carnarvon this year, returned to Perth on September 1 to resume normal duties. Mr Barker reported that the season which opened at Carnarvon with the taking of the first whale on June 26, closed on August 26. By that time 477 whales had been taken. Originally the company's quota for this season was fixed at 450 humpbacks, but an increase of 25 was approved by the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Adermann) on August 24. The additional two whales were both brydes whales, which are not subject to quota restrictions. This was the first year since 1957 that this company has filled its quota. It was also the smallest quota allotted in that period.

Mr Barker also reported that there had been an improvement in the catching organization and this, together with the assistance of two spotting planes and the introduction of incentive bonuses, was responsible for the better catch rate. The majority of whales, he said, were taken in waters outside Shark Bay and operations extended over a wide area. Weather conditions were generally very good, somewhat better than in previous years. At the end of the season, Mr Barker continued, some aerial spotting for sperm whales was made and some were sighted, but not sufficient could have been taken to allow the station to function economically.

(132)

He added that several reports were made during the season by the catchers and aircraft of the presence of whales other than humpbacks, but it was not possible to identify them, to find out actual numbers, or to determine with sufficient accuracy localities of occurrence. It seemed probable, however, that several blue whales and possibly fin whales were in the area early in the season. Schools of whales similar to the sei, and up to 30 in a school, were frequently sighted: they could have been either minke or brydes whales, or both.

It will be remembered that the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company Ltd. fulfilled its quota of 105 humpbacks on July 15.

The 1961 whale production figures will be published as soon as final statistics are available from the Nor'-West Whaling Company which had not completely cleaned out its oil tanks at the time of Mr Barker's departure.