

Up to that time only one short-necked tortoise had been found this year. It was discovered by Misses Nicholls and Rook on the edge of a cleared paddock adjacent to the tortoise reserve. It was under the bole of a dead zamia palm which was one of many that had been bulldozed off the paddock now under cultivation. To cap a most interesting morning, however, Miss Nicholls found a second tortoise. This one was a male. It was discovered on the reserve proper, lying at the base of a clump of sedge and appeared to be in very good condition although its carapace was damaged, apparently by a kangaroo's hind claw.

The searches are being continued, not only to try to widen the area of the distribution of the tortoise, but also to record the movements and occurrences of the little fellows on the reserved areas.

NO AERIAL SURVEY IN SPERM WHALE RESEARCH

In an effort to bolster the whaling industry, which has taken a severe blow in this State as a result of the low humpback quotas necessarily imposed, research has been undertaken towards the development and extension of sperm whaling in the Albany and Carnarvon regions. This Department, and the whaling companies concerned, are co-operating with Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., in the work which is being co-ordinated and directed by the Western Fisheries Research Committee. The programme is designed to secure a better understanding of the magnitude and vulnerability of sperm whale stocks. Aerial surveys were considered to be an essential part of the programme, and finance to cover their cost was sought from the Fisheries Development Trust Account which is administered by the Minister for Primary Industry in the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Fisheries (Mr Hutchinson), who made the approach to the Commonwealth, has now received advice that the Minister for Primary Industry has refused to authorise expenditure from the Account for this purpose. In passing this advice on to the companies concerned, the Minister expressed his disappointment that the Commonwealth Government had not seen fit to co-operate in this important developmental project.