

Mr. Lebedev reports that an analysis of fossil fishes from archaeological discoveries has permitted a determination of the character of fish fauna before commercial fishing was so intense as it is today. It seems that the maximum size and age of fishes from the earliest human settlements were approximately the same as, or deviated insignificantly from, comparable values for present-day fishes.

However, the average sizes of some of today's commercial fishes were then larger than they are now. On the other hand, the average size of non-commercial fishes shows little change.

This is observable also, so Mr. Lebedev says, in bodies of water where intense commercial fishing activity is absent. The rate of growth of commercial fishes in waters subject to intensive commercial fishing is greater (and the percentage of the older age groups is smaller) at the present time than in the past.

The commercial value of various species was changed as well. Some species have lost all economic value while the ranges of numerous migratory species has contracted. The number of carnivorous fishes has decreased with fishing and this has led to an increase in fishes of little or no commercial value.

#### UNDERSIZE SPERM WHALES

The Department of Primary Industry, Canberra, has advised that approval has been given to vary the permit granted on June 12, 1964, for the capture of undersize sperm whales by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company for scientific purposes.

The permit now provides for the capture of a maximum of 30 undersize sperm whales each month from September to November, 1964, inclusive, and 10 in December, 1964. The company has been instructed that as many as possible of each month's quota should be taken from the same school, and that no carryover of the uncaught portion of any month's quota will be permitted.