

SPERM WHALE RESEARCH

In view of the present level of whale stocks and the extent of exploitation, the Minister for Primary Industry has decided not to provide further financial assistance to continue with sperm whale research.

A sperm whale marking programme has been in progress, which has made a contribution towards clarifying the paths and speed of movement of sperm whales to the Albany area, the general limits of distribution of the stock, and the size of sustainable yield of the stock. Valuable information is also gained, by way of distribution, density, and dissection of movement, of sperm whales in the areas where marking takes place.

Such cessation of investigation into sperm whaling could be a result of the U.S.S.R. failing to ratify an international agreement. Consequently, the U.S.S.R. was not bound to observe the sperm whale conservation measures agreed to at the last meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

LICENSING OF FAUNA

On July 26 two offenders under the Fauna Protection Act Regulations were convicted and fined.

Under Section 12A, a person shall not keep fauna in captivity or confinement unless he is the holder of a current license issued in accordance with these regulations. Considerable publicity by the press was given to this prosecution action. As a result the departments licensing branch was deluged with enquiries in the vicinity of 300 within the first two days of the case. Approximately one in every ten required a license.