W H A L E S

P. Beamish

THE WHALES — BLUE, HUMPBACK, RIGHT, GREY — are all protected by the International Whaling Commission. The British, the Norwegians and the Dutch stopped commercial whaling first; the United States followed in 1971, and Canada in 1972. Today Japan and the USSR take over 85 per cent of the annual catch.

THE BLUE WHALE is the largest animal on earth (up to one hundred feet and weighing up to 145 tons). Its heart weighs as much as a thousand pounds, and its brain can weigh as much as twenty. Its arteries are as broad as fire hoses and are protected from the cold by blubber two feet thick. Once abundant around the world, it now numbers between three thousand and six thousand.

THE HUMPBACK, short (fifty feet), has never recovered from the hunting excesses of the late nineteenth century and now numbers between seven thousand and eight thousand.

THE RIGHT WHALE, about sixty feet long with a large wartlike lump on its snout, was the first whale hunted — its name derives from the hunter's joyful shout, "that's the right one." It was almost wiped out during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It now has full protection, but its recovery rate is very slow and its numbers few.

THE GREY WHALE, about fifty feet long, was almost exterminated by whalers in the nineteenth century. It is now fully protected; and, it is pleasant to report, it has made an impressive comeback and now numbers about seventeen thousand.

In addition to the whales which are protected fully, quotas have been set to protect other species. The International Whaling Commission agreed last June to set the permissible total for 1977 at 28,050, a reduction of 4,528 from the quota last year. The quotas for sperm, fin, sei and brydes whales were reduced, and first quotas were set on sei and sperm in the North Atlantic.

---

pollution remains a continuing problem. It takes decades to eliminate the chemical from a river system by natural processes.

RADON **Last year radon gas, which can cause lung cancer, was found in land-fill and building materials in Port Hope, Ontario. It probably came from radium disposed of by Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. twenty to twenty-five years ago. The Atomic Energy Control Board reported about seventy locations with above-normal levels of the gas.**

PCBs **Polychlorinated biphenyls, which are carcinogenic, have been used for over forty years in hydraulic fluids, printing inks, copying paper, paints and plasticizers and as insulating oils and dielectric fluid in electrical transformers and capacitors. PCB control regulations, the first issued under Canada's new Environmental Contaminants Act, will take effect on January 1, 1978. They will prohibit their nonelectrical use and their release through effluents, air emissions or solid waste disposal.**

Salty Solution

Great Lakes Power Company's Number 2 kraft mill in Thunder Bay, Ontario, has installed the Rapson-Reeve closed-cycle system to eliminate chlorine discharges. The system replaces much of the chlorine in the bleaching process with chlorine dioxide and removes the remainder by combining it with sodium to form ordinary table salt. The salt is then used to manufacture more bleaching chemical.

Environment Canada gave Great Lakes a $1,158,000 Development and Demonstration of Pollution Abatement Technology (DPAT) grant. Great Lakes will make the results of its testing experiences available to other Canadian companies.