

The bodies have been readily demonstrable only in a few cases, in other cases they were found after a short search; but in the majority of specimens, considerable and patient searching was necessary.

A full report of these findings will be published later.

We should point out that *D* bodies, considered alone, would probably not impress one as anything more definite than 'inclusion bodies'. On the other hand, *C* bodies might fairly be claimed on their own morphological merits as parasites. However, our opinion of the parasitic nature of the *C* and *D* bodies in human tumours is based chiefly on our ability in avian lesions to relate these bodies as phases of a life-cycle which includes the still more impressive schizont-like *A* body.

By analogy with avian pathology, we expect that a phase corresponding to the *A* body will prove to be demonstrable in man; but not necessarily in tumours, since in the fowl this body is more characteristic of the non-neoplastic lesions. Pending demonstration of the 'missing' phases in man, no opinion will be expressed regarding the identity of the human with the avian parasite.

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¹ Jackson, C., *Nature* [161, 441 (1948)].

The Stock of Whales

IN an article on the "Effect of Present-day Whaling on the Stock of Whales"¹, Dr. Hamilton points out that in spite of a 'rest' during the War, the Antarctic catch of blue whales in 1945-46 showed a scarcity of the largest animals, a reduced proportion of this species (30.7 per cent) in the total catch, and a reduced percentage of mature females which were pregnant; and he infers that the stock of blue whales is showing clear signs of reduction. Among other matters he points out that the limit of 16,000 'blue whale units' allows the killing of many more than 16,000 whales. Although in agreement with much of what Dr. Hamilton says, I think it should be noted that the figures for the subsequent season of 1946-47 show that blue whales were taken in relatively larger numbers, and formed about 38.5 per cent of the catch. Although this is still not very high, and gives no grounds for complacency, it is a distinct improvement on 1945-46.

It is doubtful whether the results of a single season are sufficient to indicate the condition of the stock, and since the better catches of blue whales in 1946-47 can scarcely be attributed to a sudden recovery in the stock, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that 1945-46 was in some way an abnormal season in which the blue whales in the population were not adequately represented in the catch. The explanation may be in exceptional oceanographical conditions; but on this we have no adequate evidence. It appears that the weather at least was less favourable in 1945-46 than in 1946-47. Full details of the catches in 1947-48, and of sizes and percentage pregnant in 1946-47, have not yet, I believe, been published. It is not very clear, however, that the percentage

of mature females pregnant is a wholly reliable indication of the condition of the stock.

Before the War, signs of depletion of the blue whale stock persisted over a succession of whaling seasons. If now a comparison of several seasons indicated that this stock is still declining, its position would be serious indeed. If, on the other hand, it is found to have recovered to some extent (and there is evidence, as yet unpublished, which suggests good recruitment of young blue whales), then it is important that it should not again be subjected to excessive, and in the long run uneconomic, hunting.

The international regulation of whaling is a complex subject; but briefly it can be said that the limit of 16,000 blue whale units (in preference to a specified number of whales) was adopted as the best practicable means of putting a 'ceiling' to the total Antarctic 'pelagic' catch. It represents approximately two thirds of the average annual catch before the War, and it can be reconsidered from time to time. Since 1 unit = 1 blue, 2 fin, 2½ humpback, or 6 sei whales, the larger the number of whales taken, the smaller will be the number of blue whales among them. This may not be a perfect method of limiting the catch, but it is probably the most effective of the international regulations.

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¹ *Nature*, 161, 913 (1948).

An Aquatic Predaceous Fungus, *Acaulopage dichotoma*, in Britain

IN the course of a general investigation into aquatic fungi, a predaceous Phycomycete, *Acaulopage dichotoma* Drechsler (1945)¹, has been identified for the first time in Great Britain.

