and white. The baleen plates are dark grey. When it dives it presents its short back fin in such a way as to give an impression of a hump; hence the name.

Humpbacks are found in their largest numbers in the Antarctic during January, feeding on krill, a small shrimp about 2½ in. long. Swarms of these creatures are the only food of all the whalebone whales. The krill are "filtered" from the sea and swallowed whole without taste.

Breeds Every 2 Years

The humpback breeds every 2 years and gives birth in the tropics after a pregnancy of 11 months. The calf is weaned after 5 months, when it is about 25 ft long. The animal is fully grown in 10 years, though it may breed at 5 years of age.

The future of the large whalebone whales is not bright, as their feeding habits are so specialised. A small ecological change could affect the krill on which they feed, and then they must starve. The smaller, toothed whales and dolphins will eat a greater variety of foods, including fish.

Protection for whales is extremely important when it is known that the Greenland right whale has not yet recovered since it was protected at the beginning of this century and that it is expected to take the sperm whale 50 years to regain numbers.

It would be a great pity if any species of Cetacea was extinguished because of man's greed or his pollution of the oceans.

Successful Year for North Shore Conservationists

IN reporting on the past year's activities to the North Shore Branch at its annual meeting in July the chairman, Mr C. W. Sievwright, commented on the remarkable increase in the public's concern for the environment since the branch was constituted 3 years ago.

"Pollution, litter, threats to natural features, and over-population are now regular items of daily news," said Mr Sievwright. "Disasters such as the *Torrey Canyon*, smog deaths, and seepage of nuclear wastes have brought home to the people at large that man can be his own destroyer."

Mr Sievwright said that the massive opposition to despoliation of unique natural features, so apparent when the Society took up its petition opposing the raising of the level of Lake Manapouri, is likely to be no less apparent when other major conservation causes arise in New Zealand. He quoted the swift public reaction to the proposal to explore for oil off the Poor Knights Islands as an indication of that.

"Even the Government has now reacted to this developing public concern by the appointment of a Minister of the Environment," said Mr Sievwright. "Some who advocated such an appointment had seemed to see it as the solution to the problems which concern conservationists," he continued, "but for myself I see it of little practical value. There is, to my way of thinking, only one way of ensuring that all the worthwhile features of our natural heritage are preserved—that is by a majority of the public being of such persuasion. The power of the ballot box still reigns supreme. No political party will remain in power if it offends the wishes of the majority."

The branch, in Mr Sievwright's opinion, had been quite successful in doing its part over the previous year in making the public more aware of their natural surroundings and conscious of the need for caring for what was left of the original New Zealand. Meetings had attracted an average of 77 members and visitors, the greatest attendance being 120. Field trips, which provided members with an on-the-spot opportunity to learn about the native flora and fauna often took the group into areas remote to the average person. They were consistently well attended, with a record crowd of about 250 visiting Ngataringa Bay with Professor J. Morton.

Membership stood at 509 at 30 September 1971, which, Mr Sievwright explained, made the branch the sixth largest in the country. Financially the year had been successful, a profit of $203 having been made.

Mr Sievwright thanked the committee and members who had actively served the branch.
