

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**  
Amateur Whaling, or a Tale of the Pacific

**Date**  
1847

**Primary Maker**  
Oswald Walter Brierly

**Medium**  
Watercolour on paper

**Dimensions**  
Display dimensions (Framed): 613 x 1100 x 40 mm Sight: 452 x 940 mm

**Name**  
Painting

**History**

During the 1800s whales were a valuable resource with their oil used in lamp fuel, lubricants and candles, their baleen in corsets and buggy whips and their ambergris in perfumes and soaps. The Right whale was given its name by whalers who saw it as the ideal whale to hunt. This slow moving animal usually swims within sight of the shore and floats to the surface when dead, making it an easier target. Today, the Right whale is listed as endangered with extensive hunting greatly impacting its numbers. American whaling centred on the north-east coastal town of New Bedford, a booming industry in the 19th century with hundreds of ships regularly heading out to the Pacific Ocean. Australian whaling stations included the settlement at Twofold Bay, New South Wales which was established by entrepreneur Benjamin Boyd in 1844. In this region and in parts of North America whalers noted that pods of Killer whales regularly helped them in their hunts by herding migrating whales into bays and keeping the animals on the surface, making it easier for the hunters to kill the trapped whales. The Killer whales were often awarded the prize of the killed whales tongue and lips. Whaling was a dangerous activity and many boats were known to have been destroyed during hunts. In 1820, the ship ESSEX was lost after it was rammed by a whale in the Pacific Ocean. Only eight of its' twenty crew survived. Large whaling ships and small boats were vulnerable to defensive whales lashing their tails or pushing their bodies into the vessels.