



Woylies at Port Kennedy; Summary of interference with survey.

This report should be read in conjunction with my report "Woylies at Port Kennedy: Conclusions from a survey" dated 20 April 1995.

The investigation of a reported woylie population at Port Kennedy has been frustrated by numerous incidents. All relevant detail has been passed to CALM's Wildlife Branch to assist in investigations of possible contravention of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

The following summarises them.

Reporting

- My information is that the first woylie was found dead in a trap on Sunday 12 March by Mr. Fullard of the LCDC, delivered to Ms. Cooper at the WA Museum on Monday 13 March by Joan Payne of the Conservation Council for identification (with a request that CALM not be informed) and reported to CALM on Tuesday pm by fax from Jeff Anderton of the LCDC. I understand ANCA, in Canberra was informed before CALM.
- Mr Anderton told me by phone at about 10.30am on 24 March of the second woylie. He reported its sex (male) and weight (1.2kg) and told me it was photographed before release. He did not tell me that Channel 10, the West Australian newspaper and a local newspaper had been invited to, and had reporters on site for, the release.
- Ms. Lambert has been told by LCDC members that a fourth woylie, a young animal, was trapped and released by LCDC members. This event has not been reported to CALM by the LCDC. Ms Lambert told me that it was not reported because CALM had done nothing to help the LCDC.

Facilitating the survey.

- I contracted Ms Lambert to investigate the reported presence of a woylie population at Port Kennedy on Thursday 23 March 1995. On Friday 24 she reported having contacted Mr. Bob Holze, member of the LCDC in charge of trapping surveys at Port Kennedy, who as helpful and offered to show her the area the next day, Saturday, providing the chairman, Mr Anderton was agreeable. However Anderton refused to allow Holze to do that and insisted he, Anderton, do so himself without Holze on Monday.
- WO Brad Daw and I accompanied Anderton as he showed Ms. Lambert about. I have summarised that event elsewhere as having been given the run around. It was two hours before we were shown the approximate site of the first woylie capture and Anderton claimed not to know exactly where either was caught anyway.
Anderton required a written program and sighting of CALM permit to trap woylies from Lambert before allowing her to trap and arranged to meet her on Wednesday 29 March. He failed to turn up. Lambert placed traps but left the doors closed pending permit from Anderton. He wrote to me alleging she had breached agreement.
- LCDC required that the permit show authority to take any woylie off site for obtaining blood sample at a vet surgery so CALM had to re-issue an amended

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permit. Conservation Council required a vet to attend on site; that was arranged.

- Traps were finally opened Friday 31 March for night of 31/3-1/4/1995.
- When the long dead carcass was found the LCDC seized it and refused release until Lambert's permit was again revised and reissued allowing removal of carcasses from site.

Trap interference

- Very early in the survey 16 traps were removed from one trap line and others were damaged in an adjacent line. The 16 were found some days later piled up and well hidden under vegetation in an adjacent swale. They were not stolen in so far as they were still on the reserve. This suggests the perpetrator was not an outsider but was someone interested in the outcome.
- Trap disturbances (movement from set position etc) were commonplace.
- On one occasion 13 traps were retrieved from a trap line to be relocated elsewhere. (Lambert and Holze counted them beside the vehicle before loading) but only 11 were present when the new site was established. Both areas were re-searched. Names of all people present have been passed to CALM's Wildlife Branch.
- I presume it was one of these traps that was found to contain a dead woylie on 13 April.

Conservation Council

The Conservation Council through Ms. Joan Payne has been involved in this episode from its inception.

- Ms. Payne delivered the first corpse to the Museum.
- She was determined that no woylie be taken off site, even to a vet surgery before being released again at the point of capture. She told me on the phone that she did not trust CALM to return it although in correspondence she referred to the welfare of the animals.
- In a subsequent letter she objected to the trapping techniques being employed although they were acceptable to the LCDC and neither the woylie that was caught nor any of the 121 bandicoots that were trapped showed signs of distress beyond those that would be associated with being caught in any case.
- Most recently she has written to Keiran McNamara seeking a meeting because it seems, my failure to heed her earlier advice has resulted in the death of a woylie in a stolen trap.

Dr. A.N. Start.
20 April 1995