

REPORT OF VISIT TO BARROW ISLAND AND
TO THEVENARD ISLAND, JUNE 1991

Visiting party:-

N Halse	NPNCA
R Underwood	NPNCA
A Burbidge	CALM
H Chevis	CALM

Guided by:-

R Lagdon	WAPET
H Butler	Consultant



Introduction

The arrangements made by, and hospitality extended by, WAPET were excellent. The time from Monday to Friday was entirely adequate to meet all the objectives of the visit.

The principal objective is to see that operations at Barrow Island are not imperilling the future of the island as an extraordinarily valuable nature reserve. The party was able to meet this objective but also to discuss a number of specific issues of interest to CALM and to WAPET concerning their respective responsibilities.

A number of particular issues relating to present or future activities at Barrow Island or Thevenard Island were identified and these are listed below.

Barrow Island

1. Long-term future.

At some stage it will be necessary for Government agencies (CALM, NPNCA) to determine what the future status and management of Barrow Island will be after oil and gas extraction is completed (ie. National Park or Nature Reserve with provision for special nature visits or remain a protected nature reserve). Agreement should then be reached between the company and the government on decommissioning arrangements which will accord with the future use of Barrow Island.

2. Quarantine.

Quarantine arrangements by WAPET up to the present have protected the island from introduced plants and animals. However in view of the recent discovery of black rats and the need to monitor the eradication campaign we believe it is an appropriate time to have some overall review of quarantine monitoring. It is suggested that the company may like to do this in co-operation with CALM (Keith Morris could assist). This would enable monitoring activities and future monitoring commitments to be recorded for everyone's information. This will reassure the NPNCA and other interested parties.

3. Rat Eradication - Middle Island.

Arrangements were made between CALM and WAPET staff to sample the bandicoot population to see if there is any detectable genetic difference between the population of Barrow and Middle Islands. This will assist in the formulation of a strategy for dealing with the rats on Middle Island.

4. Translocation of boodies from Barrow Island.

It was agreed that every effort should be made to obtain the understanding and support of staff at Barrow Island as well as management for any translocation.

To this end it was agreed that before any public announcement is made about the translocation of the boodie (Bettongia leseuer) to the Gibson Desert, CALM officers will visit Barrow Island and talk to staff about the project. Suitable information - including follow-up progress reports - will be supplied for WAPET internal publications.

It was agreed that if possible it would be an advantage for Keith Morris to be involved in this information activity as well as Per Christensen, the main researcher.

5. Overall assessment.

Congratulations were extended to WAPET for their continuing successful efforts to maintain the important qualities of the nature reserve. Some small problems were discussed with Russell Lagdon and Harry Butler but it was realized that over a long period with as many staff it was not always easy to maintain desirable care in all aspects. The inspection suggested that the mammal populations were being maintained and this is the paramount objective.

An important issue in maintaining the mammal populations is the condition of the vegetation and the visiting party was pleased to see that regeneration prescriptions have been successfully developed, and are being consistently applied and are working well.



Thevenard Island

1. Maintenance arrangements for flare.

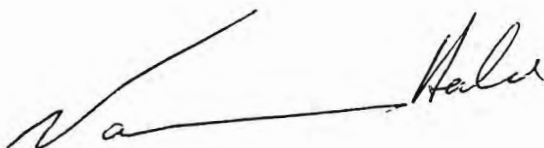
WAPET have made substantial expenditure to shield the gas flare and it is pleasing to know that currently the system appears to be working satisfactorily. The NPNCA and CALM would like to be kept informed as the company develops its ideas further about any need for other flaring arrangements for maintenance purposes or to meet additional operating requirements.

2. Monitoring of Turtle nesting.

Because Thevenard Island is important for turtle nesting, provisions have been made to protect this activity. It would be useful to CALM if the success of present arrangements in preventing disturbance to turtle nesting could be estimated. It would be appreciated if the company could make some arrangements to record turtle nesting adjacent to and remote from areas of activity such as the flare.

3. Overall assessment.

Although some small matters of detail will be addressed in response to the environmental report the general assessment of the visiting party was that site management had improved greatly compared to earlier visits.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Na' followed by a long horizontal line and then 'Halter'.