

4.2 Barrow Island - Inspection (4/26)

Dr Burbidge reported that in January this year Mr Bowen, Dr Davies and Professor Sharman from the McQuarie University, New South Wales, accompanied himself and a technical assistant in a survey of fauna and flora management being carried out by WAPET on Barrow Island. He stated that animals were counted during spot light runs and it was noted that there was no difference in the number of animals inside and outside the oil fields and there appeared to be no apparent difference in the density of animals counted this time and two years ago.

Dr Burbidge explained that the group was able to assist Professor Sharman in capturing a quantity of bandicoots and some Rock wallabies for his research studies. Professor Sharman has since advised Dr Burbidge that from the specimens obtained he was able to grow cultures from all samples and obtain good chromosome counts and chromosome pictures to enable comparisons to be made between the various species.

Dr Burbidge also reported that the rubbish disposal system operating on Barrow Island was working efficiently. He said the rubbish was now disposed of in gas fired incinerators and then buried. This action had substantially reduced the number of animals located around the camp bins and the rubbish tip itself.

Dr Davies stated that in general he was very impressed with WAPET's approach to the problem of mining on a fauna reserve but two points should be considered. Firstly, the great proliferation of roads on the reserve. This, he stated, would compact the soil and cause a change in the nature of sub-surface drainage and must inevitably alter the vegetation of the slopes below the roads. In order to determine the exact change in vegetation Mr Harry Butler has agreed to monitor one of the disused tracks. Secondly, the decline in the numbers of the Barrow Island Wren and the problems of rats from nearby islands becoming established on Barrow Island.

Dr Burbidge explained that rats had been found on Double Island, Pascoe Island, Boodie Island and Middle Island. He explained it would be possible to attack the rat problem on three of these islands by means of poison baits as the only other important inhabitants were seabirds. However, this would not be feasible on Boodie Island where there was a small population of Boodies which would be probably affected as it was possible they would take the baits.

Mr Beeck considered experiments concerning the eradication of rats should be carried out on these islands and if successful employed on the Monte Bellos.

Mr Oliver could see no real technical reason why an eradication programme would not be successful, but considered that some thought should be given to forming a sub branch of the Fisheries and Wildlife Department to carry out the programme.

AUTHORITY RECOMMENDATION

That the possibility of arranging an eradication programme on Pascoe Island, Middle Island and Double Island be examined by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

DR BURBIDGE
WANNEROO

At the Western Australian Wildlife Authority meeting March 21, the Authority recommended that this Department examine the possibility of arranging an eradication programme of pests on Pascoe Island, Middle Island and Double Island.

It was understood from the tenor of the meeting that the Wildlife Research Centre would discuss the possibility of an eradication programme with Agriculture Protection Board officers. At the last Vermin Control and Fauna Conservation Co-ordinating Committee at which Mr A.J. Oliver attended, it was suggested that their research officer, Mr Simon Whitehouse, who is on Special Projects, may be a suitable liaison officer for this activity.

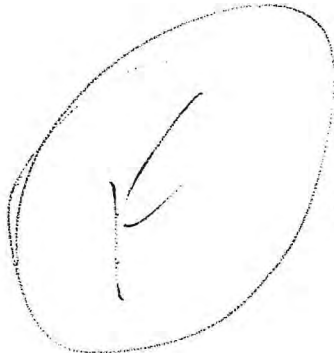
Should you wish this matter to be raised at the next VCFC meeting which will be held on June 10, you may wish Mr Prince to raise this item.

BK Bowen

DIRECTOR

April 18, 1977

W.A. AAB 6/4/77





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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

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