# REPORT ON THE 1987 AERIAL SURVEY OF KANGAROOS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Prepared by Mark Fletcher and Colin Southwell of the National Kangaroo Monitoring Unit, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

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# Summary

- 1. An aerial survey was conducted over 47% of Western Australia in May-August 1987, with the aim of estimating the distribution and abundance of Red and Western Grey Kangaroos and comparing the results with similar surveys undertaken in 1981 and 1984.
- 2. The use of stratification was examined to determine whether increases in the precision of estimates and/or savings in total costs could be made.
- 3. Euros, Emus, Bustards and feral animals were also recorded.
- 4. There were estimated to be approximately 2 336 000 Red Kangaroos and 689 000 Western Grey Kangaroos in the area surveyed. Population change was estimated to be +16% and -1% for Reds and Western Greys respectively from 1984, and +123% and +55% respectively from 1981. The yearly finite rate of increase over the period 1981-87 was +0.134 for Reds and +0.071 for Western Greys.
- 5. Euro data are patchy and only presence/absence and observed density was reported here. No trends can be determined as data were not collected in 1984 or 1981.
- 6. Stratification resulted in an improvement of approximately 4% in the precision of the Red Kangaroo population estimate while reducing costs by approximately 10%. An equivalent or better improvement in the precision of the Western Grey Kangaroo estimate is possible, though this would effectively negate the 10% cost savings.
- 7. We recommend examination of ranger reports and/or harvest statistics from the areas experiencing significant increases and decreases in local Red Kangaroo populations, most notably the Gascoyne River catchment (increases) and the Nullarbor (decreases).
- 8. The Emu population in the survey area was estimated to be approximately 92 000 at an average density of 0.067 km<sup>-2</sup>. Changes in distribution and abundance since 1981 are identified and discussed.
- 9. The Goat population in the survey area was estimated to be at least 368 000. This estimate is not corrected for visibility bias and so is a minimum value. Goats were the most widespread and frequently observed of the feral animals recorded on the survey.
- 10. Sightings of other feral animals were insufficient for population estimation, but gave a broad indication of distribution within the survey area.

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#### Introduction

In 1981 Short et al. (1983) aerially surveyed 61% of Western Australia to assess the distribution and abundance of the Red Kangaroo (Macropus rufus) and Western Grey Kangaroo (M. fuliginosus). The data also contributed to a national census of kangaroo populations (Caughley et al. 1983). Short et al.'s (1983) survey followed a drought of 2-4 years duration in Western Australia that broke in 1980. In 1984, after three seasons of moderate to good conditions in Western Australia, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS) conducted a similar survey of 47% of the state to determine the extent of change in the distribution and abundance of the two species. The results from this survey were again combined with those from aerial surveys conducted in other states in 1984 to derive an updated national estimate (Grigg et al. 1985).

A third survey was carried out over much the same area in the winter of 1987, maintaining a three year interval between surveys. In addition to resampling distribution and abundance it was decided that the possibility of reducing operating costs by stratifying the sampling would be investigated, and additional data on the Euro (*M. robustus erubescens*), Emu (*Dromaeus novaehollandiae*), Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*), Dingo (*Canis familiaris dingo*) and feral animals (Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Cat (*Felis catus*), Donkey (*Equus asinus*), Pig (*Sus scrofa*), Camel (*Camelus dromedarius*) and Goat (*Capra hircus*)) would be recorded.

This report presents the results of the 1987 survey and compares them with those from 1981 and 1984. Part I deals with the large kangaroos: the Red Kangaroo, the Western Grey Kangaroo and the Euro. It also examines the costs and benefits of stratification. The Emu, Bustard and feral animals are covered in Part II.

#### Methods

#### Survey areas

The 1987 survey covered 131  $1^{O}$ x $1^{O}$  blocks ('degree blocks'). This represents an area of 1 370 239 km², or 47% of the state. A similar proportion of the state was surveyed in 1984. The 1984 and 1987 surveys were largely but not entirely coincident in area (Fig.1); all but three of the blocks surveyed in 1984 were resurveyed in 1987, and two additional blocks which were surveyed in 1981 but not in 1984 were included in the 1987 survey. The 1981 survey was larger in extent than the two latter surveys, covering 61% of the state (Fig. 1). The two most recent surveys were less extensive because some areas surveyed in 1981 (particularly the Great Sandy Desert in the north of the state) had negligible kangaroo densities.

# Survey details

The 1987 survey was conducted in two sessions from 28 May to 11 June 1987 and 23 July to 11 August 1987. Technical details of the survey (speed, height, transect width, vegetation correction factors, observer standardisation and strip delineation) were as for the 1981 and 1984 surveys of Western Australia (Short et al. 1983, Fletcher and Southwell 1984) and surveys of other states (Caughley and Grigg 1981, Caughley and Grigg 1982, Short and Grigg 1982, Grigg et al. 1985).

The survey crew comprised five observers (B. Brown, M. Fletcher, T. Scotney, C. Southwell and G. Wyre) and two pilots (D. Bland and M. Dando). B. Brown was kindly provided by CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology for part of the survey.

#### Stratification

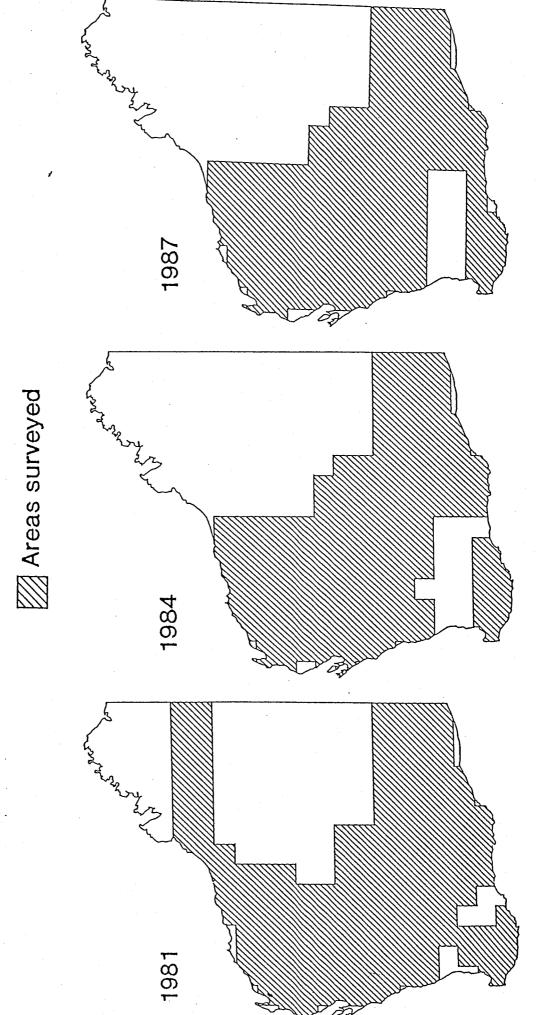
Following discussions with the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (WA CALM) an attempt was made to stratify sampling effort on the basis of previously recorded densities of Red Kangaroos. Thirty-four degree blocks which recorded relatively high densities of Red Kangaroos (> 2 km<sup>-2</sup> vegetation corrected) in either the 1981 or 1984 surveys were sampled at an intensity of approximately 0.6%. Rainfall records for Western Australia (Bureau of Meteorology) since 1983 were examined and 12 blocks with recorded densities of < 2 km<sup>-2</sup> that had experienced above average rainfall were also sampled at 0.6% All other blocks were sampled at half this intensity. The two strata are identified in Fig. 2a.

Two Western Grey Kangaroo strata were also selected; a low density stratum consisting of the 62 degree blocks north of 28°S and a high density stratum of the 69 degree blocks to the south of 28°S (Fig. 2b). Sampling intensities in these strata were not manipulated in response to expected Western Grey Kangaroo densities; instead the indicated Red Kangaroo sampling intensities were followed.

<sup>\*</sup>Intensity depends upon the length of transect and area of degree block. Blocks with irregular boundaries and small areas (e.g. coastal blocks) may be sampled at non-standard intensities.

3

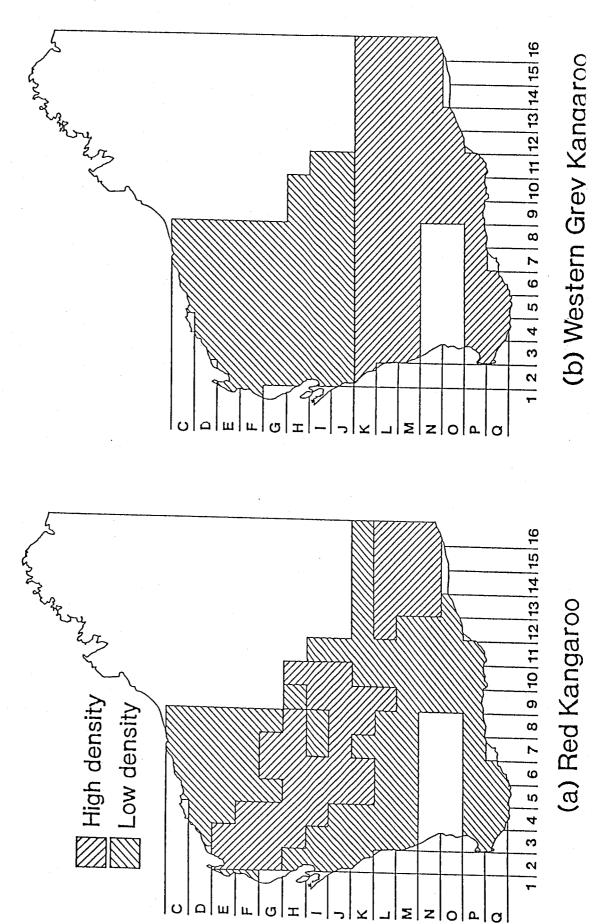
Fig. 1. Aerial survey zones in 1981\*, 1984 and 1987



\*Source Short et al. 1983

Fig. 2. Density strata for Red and Western Grey Kangaroos in 1987.

Block codes follow Short et al. (1983).



# Correction for vegetation

Vegetation was recorded for each segment (200 m by 5 km, or 1 km<sup>-2</sup>). The vegetation bias correction factors used in this report are those derived for Red Kangaroos by Caughley et al. (1976). There is now considerable evidence that these correction factors underestimate Western Grey Kangaroo populations by a factor somewhere in the range of 2.5 to 7 times (Short and Bayliss 1985, Short and Hone 1989). Further work is currently being conducted on Red Kangaroo correction factors, but the most recently available works of Short and Bayliss (1985) and Short and Hone (1989) do not contradict the original results of Caughley et al. (1976). Two studies have been conducted on correction factors for Euros. One, an aerial survey/drive count comparison at Kinchega National Park in western N.S.W., returned a correction factor of 11.1 in what was considered by the authors to be atypical Euro habitat (Short and Hone 1989). The second study in central southern Queensland, using an aerial survey/ground survey comparison, gave an average correction factor of 15 over a range of vegetation from open cover to high density shrubland, though the sample sizes were small (Southwell et al. 1986). Although no firm conclusions can be drawn from these studies, it would appear that correction factors for Euros are higher than those for Red or Grey Kangaroos. Only observed densities are used in this report.

Observed densities of Emus have been multiplied by 1.47 to correct for visibility bias. This correction factor was originally calculated for groups of Emus (Caughley and Grice 1982) but can be applied to individuals if it is assumed that all individuals within a sighted group are tallied. Caughley and Grice (1982) estimated this correction factor during the 1981 aerial survey of Western Australia, so the correction factor should be applicable to conditions encountered during the 1984 and 1987 surveys.

# Analysis

Kangaroo density data corrected for visibility bias were grouped by transect before being analysed separately for Red and Western Grey Kangaroos. The ratio method (Cochran 1953) was used to calculate standard errors as sampling units were of unequal size (Norton-Griffiths 1978).

 $\widehat{R}$  = ratio of animals counted to area searched

N =total number of sampling units in population

 $\underline{n}$  = number of sample units in the sample

Z = area of the survey zone

 $z_i$  = area of the *i*th sample unit  $y_i$  = number of animals counted in the *i*th sample unit

$$S_y^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum \left( y_i^2 - (\sum_{i=1}^n y_i)^2 \right)$$

$$S_Z^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \cdot \sum \left( z_i^2 - (\sum_{i=1}^{n} z_i)^2 \right)$$

$$S_{ZY} = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum \left( (z_i \cdot y_i) - \underbrace{(\sum z_i) - (\sum y_i)}_{n} \right)$$

Population total = 
$$\hat{Y} = Z.\hat{R}$$

Population variance = 
$$Var(\hat{Y}) = \frac{N(N-n)}{n} \cdot (S_y^2 - 2 \cdot \hat{R} \cdot S_{zy} + \hat{R}^2 \cdot S_z^2)$$

Population standard error = 
$$SE(\hat{Y}) = \sqrt{Var(\hat{Y})}$$

Average transect area was used to calculate N, the total number of transects.

Corrected density data for the three surveys were heteroscedastic with the standard deviations proportional to the means so the data were transformed to  $X' = \log_{10}(X+1)$ . This transformation also reduced skew. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the transformed densities. A Student-Newman-Keuls (SNK) test was used for multiple comparisons between years when ANOVA rejected the null hypothesis (Zar 1974). Average density (kangaroos km<sup>-2</sup>) for the 119 degree blocks common to all three surveys were included in the analyses. Data for Red and Western Grey Kangaroos were analysed separately.

A population estimate and population variance were calculated separately for each stratum and combined to give a total estimate and variance (Norton-Griffiths 1978). In the text estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand, but unrounded figures are presented in the Appendices.

Trends between surveys were deduced from summed block totals for each year. Only blocks common to the years being compared were used in each case. Standard errors could not be calculated for these comparisons as many blocks contained only one sample. Standard errors are calculated for strata and combined total estimates only.

Density maps were prepared from data averaged over transects with reference to variation along transects. Contours were fitted by eye. Red Kangaroo, Western Grey Kangaroo and Emu densities were corrected for vegetation and observer bias, but not for temperature. Goat densities were corrected for observer bias only. Euro, Bustard and feral animal sightings are presented as presence/absence maps (numbers for these species were not recorded during the 1984 survey). Observed densities for each degree block for 1987 are given in the Appendices.

PART I. KANGAROOS

#### Results

Comparison of 1987 survey with 1981 and 1984 surveys

# (i) Red Kangaroo

The estimated corrected numbers and densities of Red Kangaroos in each degree block surveyed in 1981, 1984 and 1987 are presented in Appendix 1. The Red Kangaroo population in the survey zone in 1987 is estimated to be approximately 2 336 000. A comparison of results for the degree blocks common to various combinations of the 1981, 1984 and 1987 surveys is given in Table 1.

Between 1984 and 1987 there was a 16 % increase in Red Kangaroo numbers, from 2 015 000 to 2 336 000 in the areas common to both surveys. This represents an average finite yearly rate of increase (r) of +0.049. From 1981 to 1987 the population has experienced an average r of +0.134.

ANOVA detected a significant difference between years (F = 4.2579, P = 0.0149). A SNK test revealed that densities in 1981 were significantly lower than in 1984 or 1987, while 1987 was not significantly different from 1984.

Maps of the corrected densities for 1981, 1984 and 1987 are displayed in Fig. 3. Densities have increased in the Carnarvon, Ashburton East, Ashburton West, Gascoyne, Murchison, North East Pastoral, Sandstone and Leonora-Eastern Goldfields management areas over the period 1981-87, while the Pilbara and Nullarbor management areas and the Great Victoria Desert have recorded density declines.

The broad pattern of density distribution in 1987 is similar to 1981 and 1984 with the exception of the Rawlinna/Nullarbor area where a prominent high density zone has shrunk over time.

The southern limit of distribution continues to approximate the line between Geraldton and Eyre, while the highest densities were recorded between North West Cape, Mount Newman and Leonora.

# (ii) Western Grey Kangaroo

Appendix 2 presents the estimated corrected number and density of Western Grey Kangaroos for each degree block surveyed in 1981, 1984 and 1987. The total population in the survey zone in 1987 is estimated to be 689 000. Table 1 compares results for the degree blocks common to various combinations of the three surveys.

Western Grey Kangaroo populations remain essentially unchanged, having decreased by 1% from 683 000 to 675 000 in common areas between 1984 and 1987, an average annual r of -0.004. From 1981 to 1987 the average r has been +0.071.

ANOVA detected no significant differences between surveys (F = 0.9953, P = 0.3706).

Fig. 4 displays density distributions for the years 1981, 1984 and 1987. The pattern of distribution is very similar to that recorded in 1984. The highest densities were recorded along the southern coast near Albany, Balladonia and

Madura. Western Grey Kangaroos were sighted well up into the Nullarbor Plain/Great Victoria Desert region especially just east of Laverton.

# (iii) Euro

Appendix 3 presents observed densities of Euros for those degree blocks in which they were recorded during the 1987 survey. Presence/absence of Euros in each degree block is given for the 1984 and 1987 surveys in Fig. 5 (Euros were not recorded in the 1981 survey).

The number of sightings in each survey is low and the distribution patchy though generally similar in appearance to that of the Red Kangaroo and Emu.

The highest observed densities were around Mount Magnet, between the Gascoyne and Lyons Rivers, and north of Laverton on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert.

#### Stratification

# (i) Red Kangaroo

The results of the stratified sample for Red Kangaroos are presented in Table 2.

The high density stratum (Fig. 2a) comprised 37% of the total survey area and contained 75% of the total estimated Red Kangaroo population.

The estimated Red Kangaroo population in the low density stratum was 576 000 with a standard error (S.E.) of 125 128 and a C.V. of 21.7%. In the high density stratum the estimated population was 1 759 000 (S.E. 181 276 and C.V. 10.3%). The total population was estimated to be 2 335 000 (S.E. 220 268 and C.V. 9.4%). This differs slightly from the unstratified estimate of 2 336 000 (0.004% lower) due to densities not being weighted by block area in the ANOVA.

# (ii) Western Grey Kangaroo

Table 3 presents the results of the stratified analysis for Western Grey Kangaroos.

The high density stratum (Fig. 2b) comprised 51% of the total survey area and contained 99.6% of the total estimated Western Grey Kangaroo population.

The estimated Western Grey Kangaroo population in the low density stratum was 2000 with a S.E. of 1 745 and a C.V. of 71.3%. In the high density area the estimated population was 640 000 (S.E. 181 375 and C.V. 28.4%). The total population was estimated to be 642 000 (S.E. 181 383 and C.V. 28.2%). This estimate is 4.8% lower than the unstratified estimate of 675 000, reflecting the non-random distribution of animals and varying transect lengths, as was the case with Red Kangaroos.

Table 1. Population estimates, percentage change and annual *r* for Red and Western Grey Kangaroos from the 1981, 1984 and 1987 surveys for areas common to all three surveys.

SURVEY RESULTS*	3 YEAR TRENDS**	6 YEAR TREND**
<u>1981</u> (148) Reds 981 000 Greys 436 000	<u>1981-1984</u> (119) Reds 1981 962 000 1984 1 849 000	
Greys 400 000	Percent change = +92% r = +0.218	
	Greys 1981 424 000 1984 665 000 Percent change = +57% r = +0.150	<u>1981-1987</u> (121)
<u>1984</u> (133)	7 - 1 0.100	Reds 1981 962 000 1987 2 146 000 Percent change = + 123%
Reds 2 019 000 Greys 683 000		r = +0.134 Greys 1981 428 000
	<u>1984-1987</u> (130)	1987 657 000 1987 657 000 Percent change = +55% r = +0.071
	Reds 1984 2 015 000 1987 2 336 000 Percent change = + 16% r = + 0.049	7 1 0.07 1
1987 (132) Reds 2 336 000 Greys 689 000	Greys 1984 683 000 1987 675 000 Percent change = -1% r = -0.004	

<sup>\*</sup> The number of partial or complete degree blocks surveyed is given in brackets.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The number of partial or complete degree blocks common to both surveys which were used in analysis is given in brackets.

Table 2. Population estimates (Y), standard errors (S.E.) and coefficients of variation (C.V.) for 1987 stratified sample of Red Kangaroos. Number of blocks is given in brackets.

STRATA	n	Υ	S.E.	C.V.(%)
Low density (85)	86	576 000	125 128	21.7
High density (46)	92	1 759 000	181 276	10.3
Total combined (131)	178	2 335 000	220 268	9.4

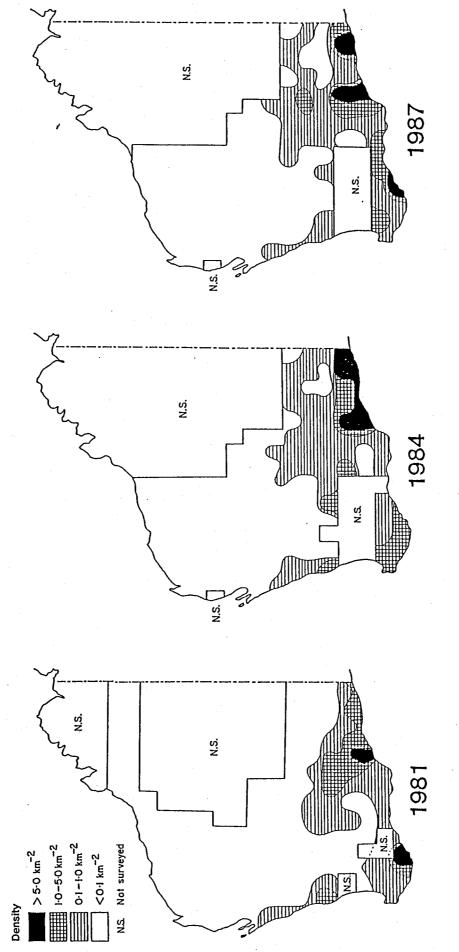
Table 3. Population estimates (Y), standard errors (S.E.) and coefficients of variation (C.V.) for 1987 stratified sample of Western Grey Kangaroos. Number of blocks is given in brackets.

STRATA	n	Y	S.E.	C.V.(%)
Low density (62)	90	2 000	1 745	71.3
High density (69)	88	640 000	181 375	28.4
Total combined (131)	178	642 000	181 383	28.2

N.S. 1987 Fig. 3. Red Kangaroo densities in 1981\*, 1984 and 1987. N.S. N.S. N.S. 1984 N.S. N.S. Ŋ.S. 1981 S. S. IIII 0·1−1·0 km<sup>-2</sup> I-0 - 5.0 km<sup>-2</sup> ] < 0.1 km<sup>-2</sup> N.S. Not surveyed > 5.0 km<sup>-2</sup> N.S.

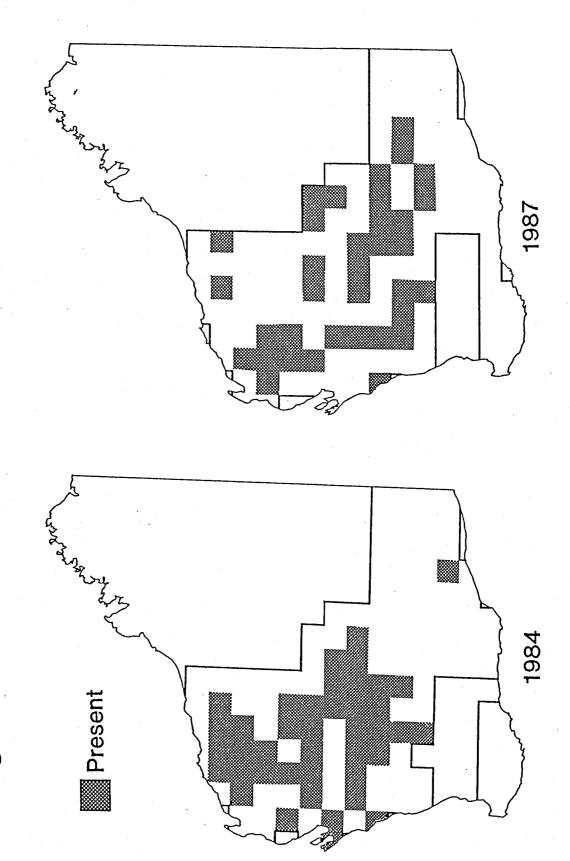
Source Short et al. (1983)

Fig. 4. Western Grey Kangaroo densities in 1981\*, 1984 and 1987.



\* Source Short et al. (1983)

Fig. 5. Presence/absence of Euros in 1984 and 1987.



#### Discussion

# Red and Western Grey Kangaroo

The 1987 survey recorded an increase of 16% in Red Kangaroo numbers and a decrease of 1% in Western Grey Kangaroo numbers since 1984. Neither was a statistically significant change from the 1984 results.

Fig. 3 highlights the continued increase in Red Kangaroo densities in the central west of the state around the Gascoyne River catchment and the continuing decrease in the Nullarbor region. We suggest that particular attention be paid to ranger reports and harvest statistics from the latter area.

Western Grey Kangaroo populations appear to be static with only minor variations in local density patterns being detected (Fig. 4). The rate of increase may well have been adversely affected by drought episodes in the south west of the state.

Rainfall has been good to average over most of the state in the 1984-87 period with the only significant rainfall deficiencies being seen in the south west tip and coast (17 months, 1 June 1984 to 31 October 1985, Geraldton-Southern Cross-Manjimup; 9 months, 1 March to 30 November 1986, Perth-Newdegate-Albany; 4 months, 1 December 1986 to 31 March 1987, Perth-Bencubbin-Lake Varley, Bureau of Meteorology 1984-1987).

#### Euro

Research into correction factors for this species is in a preliminary state and we felt it wise to report only observed densities. Although data are scarce it is certain that the species is difficult to observe from the air. From Fig. 5 we would venture to suggest that the distribution of the Euro is generally similar to that of the Red Kangaroo (Fig. 3) and Emu (see Fig. 6, Part II), i.e. distributed throughout the pastoral regions of the state.

We have not reported observed densities for the 1984 survey because Euros were not a primary target species in that survey and only presence/absence was recorded. For this reason we cannot comment on any apparent trends in the population up to 1987.

#### Stratification

Stratification on the basis of Red Kangaroo densities recorded in 1981 and 1984 appears to have succeeded with a C.V. of 9% being attained. The C.V. for the corresponding analysis of Western Grey Kangaroos was 28%, reflecting both the relatively inefficient allocation of sampling intensity for this species (due to its different distribution) and its lower numbers. Calculations suggest that identical effort expended in a non-stratified survey would have returned C.V.'s of around 13% and 27% for Red and Western Grey Kangaroos respectively. This emphasises the efficiency of this design with respect to Red Kangaroos and its relative inefficiency with respect to Western Greys.

Flight records indicate that through stratification in 1987 we reduced the number of hours surveying by 28%, increased the number of hours spent in transport flying by 17%, and reduced total flying hours by 7% when compared to 1984. This is consistent with expectation as a less systematic location of transects usually results in a lower coverage of sampled area per unit time (Caughley

1977). Total savings on plane and pilot hire, fuel, salaries and allowances is in the order of 10% when compared to an unstratified design of identical total effort.

Stratification has thus resulted in both a drop in expenditure and a gain in the precision of the Red Kangaroo estimate. It should be noted that not much more can be done to improve the precision for Red Kangaroos without dramatically increasing the intensity and hence cost of the survey. Costs could be held stable by reducing the effort put into sampling the Western Grey Kangaroo population. Conversely, the precision of the Western Grey Kangaroo estimate can be improved to some extent by surveying the areas of highest density at increased intensity, effectively negating the 10% savings on total expenditure.

# Survey design

Aerial surveys have several possible objectives in biological work, each with their own requirements. Estimates of relative or absolute abundance require consideration of the area for which the estimate is required, the precision with which it is required and whether stratification is feasible. These three factors will determine the sampling intensity and ultimately the cost. If distributional information is required, transects may have to be flown systematically over the entire survey area to allow production of a density contour map. If both outcomes are expected then some combination of the above may be necessary, with the efficiency of the former compromised by the need for the latter.

In the case of Western Australia the two species of primary interest (the Red and Western Grey Kangaroo) have opposing distributions and impose conflicting requirements on survey design. No single design is optimal for both species. One must instead choose between a design that is directed toward both species and optimal for neither (as in the 1981 and 1984 surveys) or toward one species only (as for the Red Kangaroo in the 1987 survey). A comparison of the two options is presented in the results.

A related option may be to apply an unstratified systematic design with sampling intensity half that of the 1981 survey. This would involve flying a single transect across each block rather than two transects. The sampling intensity of two lines per block derives originally from developmental work in New South Wales (Caughley *et al.* 1977). This state is only half the size of Western Australia, and sampling at the same intensity in the latter state may be a case of sampling 'overkill' (halving the sampling intensity in Western Australia would result in a similar effort to that for New South Wales).

We hope to carry out further investigations of these and other options prior to the next survey in 1990. PART II. OTHER ANIMALS

#### Results

#### Emu

The estimated corrected numbers and densities of Emus for each degree block in which they were sighted in 1984 and 1987 are presented in Appendix 4. Fig. 6 shows corrected densities of Emus for 1981, 1984 and 1987.

In 1981 population size was estimated to be 110 000 and average density 0.074 km<sup>-2</sup> (Caughley and Grice 1982). Relatively high densities (>0.3 km<sup>-2</sup>) were recorded in the middle reaches of the Ashburton River, a narrow band extending north from Jurien to Geraldton then up the Murchison River and three small pockets located east of Wiluna, south of Laverton and west of Albany (Caughley and Grice 1982).

Estimated population size in the 1984 survey area was 73 000 and average density was 0.053 km<sup>-2</sup>. Fig. 6 shows the high density region on the west coast, up the Murchison and in the middle reaches of the Ashburton Rivers to have disappeared. There was one large area of high density extending through the lower reaches of the Minilya River, the middle reaches of the Gascoyne and the upper tributaries of the Murchison River, and a smaller high density region immediately west of Leonora.

Average density in 1987 was estimated to be 0.067 km<sup>-2</sup>, giving an estimated population of 92 000. High densities were recorded along the south coast and near Leonora. In the central west of the state there has been a general expansion of the moderate density area while high densities were once again recorded near the Minilya and Gascoyne Rivers.

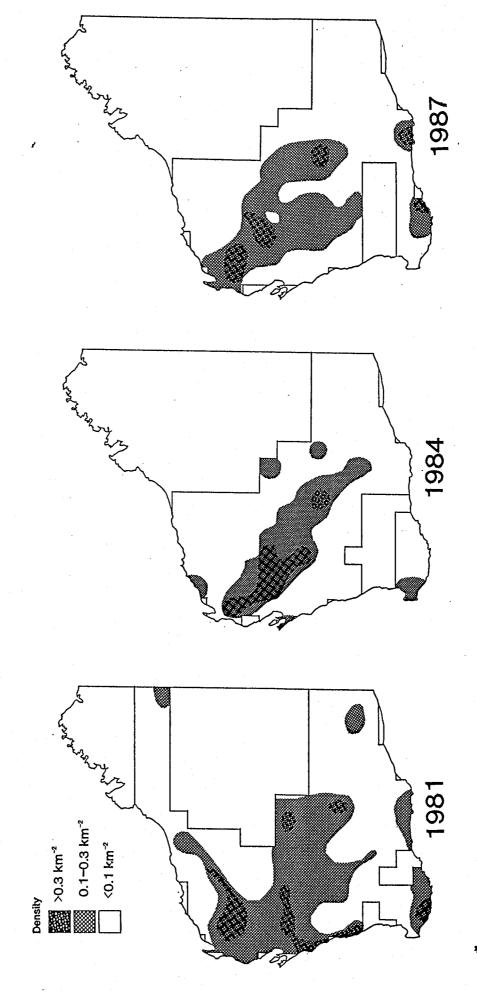
Distributions in all three years are generally consistent with that given in Blakers et al. (1984).

#### Bustard

Bustard sightings were not recorded during the 1981 or 1984 surveys so no comparison with the 1987 results is available. The patchy distribution of sightings in 1987 (Fig. 7) probably reflects the difficulty of surveying low density populations rather than the true distribution of the bird in Western Australia. Appendix 5 presents observed densities of Bustards for those degree blocks in which they were sighted.

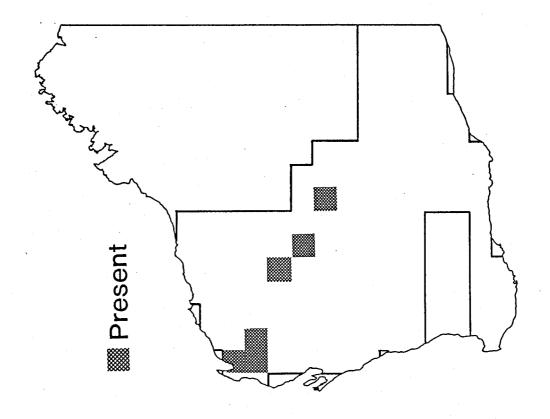
The sightings lie along the south-western edge of the 11-40% and 40% reporting rate areas identified by Blakers *et al.* (1984), or roughly the area bordered by Exmouth Gulf-Collier Range-Lake Disappiontment-Oakover River. Curiously, no Bustards were sighted inside this area, though Blakers *et al.* (1984) do note that this species is 'probably nomadic in response to increases in food supply after rain'. Average observed density was low at 0.03 km<sup>-2</sup> in blocks where the Bustard was sighted.

Fig. 6 Emu densities in 1981\*, 1984 and 1987.



\*Source Caughley and Grice (1982)

Fig. 7. Presence/absence of Bustards in 1987.



# Dingo

Fig. 8 displays degree blocks in which the Dingo was sighted in 1984 and 1987, while the raw data for 1987 are presented in Appendix 6. Sightings in 1987 were less extensive than in 1984, but this is more likely an artefact of low densities than a real decline in range. Sightings in 1984 were primarily in the Nullarbor region north of the rail link between Rawlinna and Deakin; in 1987 a single animal was sighted in the extreme south-east of the state between Mundrabilla and Eucla. Strahan (1983) considers the Dingo to be found all over mainland Australia.

#### Fox

As for the Dingo, Fox sightings were concentrated in the Nullarbor region, with scattered records elsewhere. All sightings were of individual animals (Fig. 9 and Appendix 7). Strahan (1983) considers the Fox to be distributed south of the line Oakover River- Lake Carnegie-Surveyor Generals Corner, except in years with favorable rainfall when they may range further north. All sightings fall within this distribution.

#### Cat

The Cat is certainly the smallest and hardest to spot of all animals recorded on the surveys. Fig. 10 displays the distribution of sightings on a degree block basis. Observed densities are listed in Appendix 8.

As with the other two predators (the Dingo and Fox), sightings of Cats were concentrated in the Nullarbor region. Strahan (1983) considers the Cat to be present across all of Australia.

# Donkey

Donkey sightings were concentrated in the northern section of the survey areas, restricted to the isolated populations that Strahan (1983) identified in Western Australia (Fig. 11 and Appendix 9).

#### Pig

Only three Pigs have been recorded during the two surveys; all were in block K2 near Geraldton in 1987 (Fig 12 and Appendix 10). This is some 1 000 km from the closest population (near Port Headland) identified in Strahan (1983) and may represent a population introduced by humans for recreational hunting purposes.

#### Camel

The extent of Camel sightings in 1987 has contracted from that of 1984 (Fig. 13). Most sightings in 1987 were made on the central western edge of the survey zone around Lake Carnegie, while none were recorded north of 25° south. A small population was once again sighted between Kambalda and Balladonia. All

Fig. 8. Presence/absence of Dingoes in 1984 and 1987.

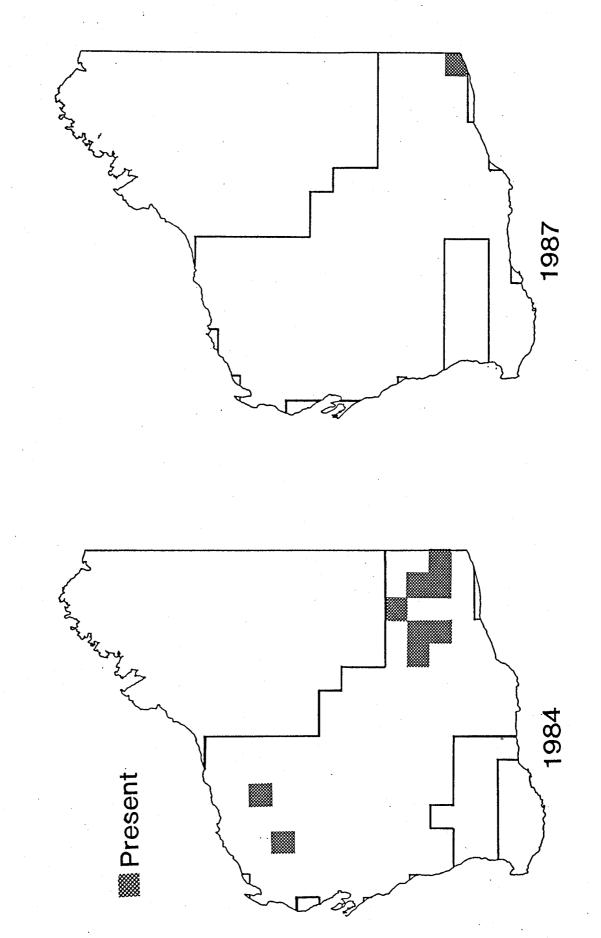


Fig. 9. Presence/absence of Foxes in 1984 and 1987.

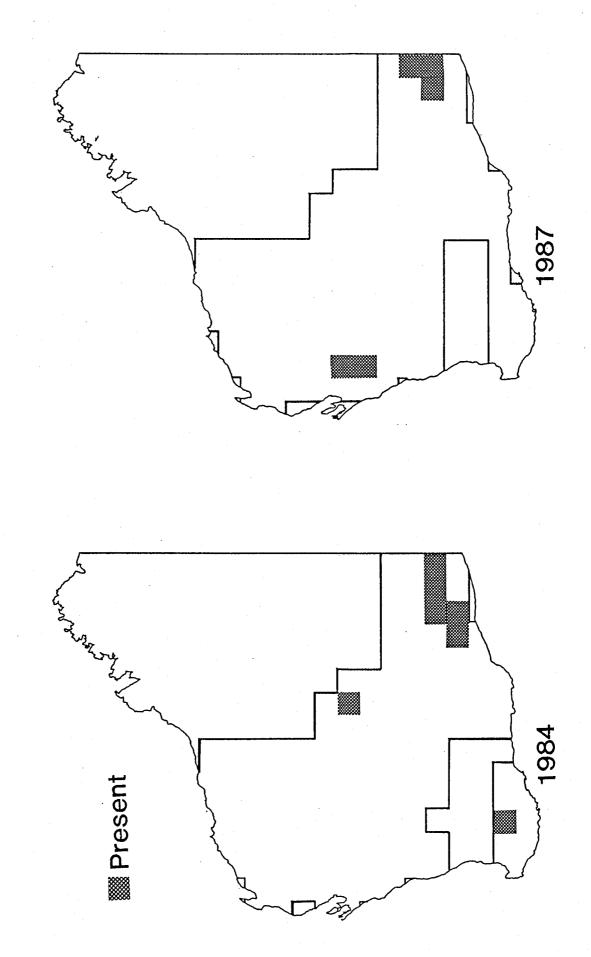


Fig. 10. Presence/absence of Cats in 1984 and 1987.

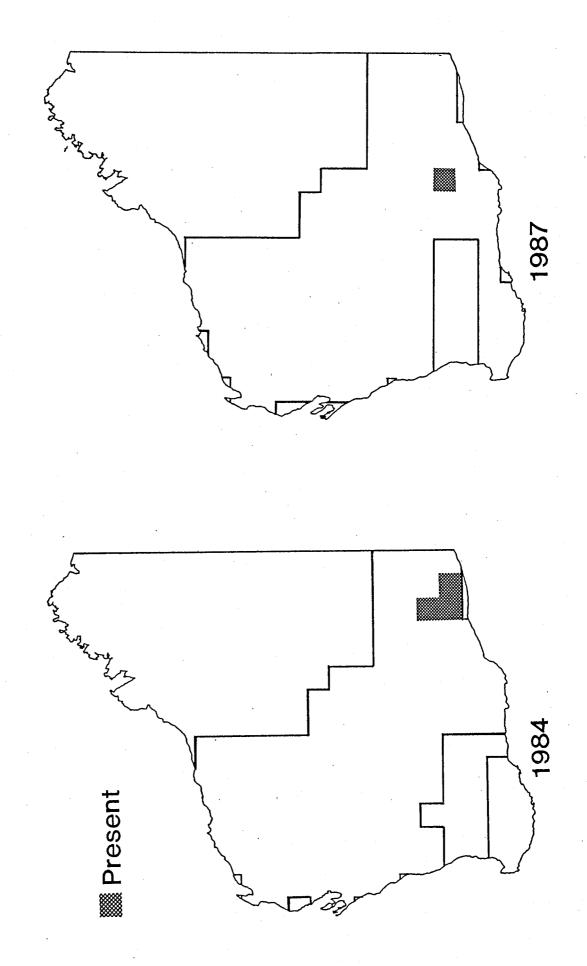


Fig. 11. Presence/absence of Donkeys in 1984 and 1987.

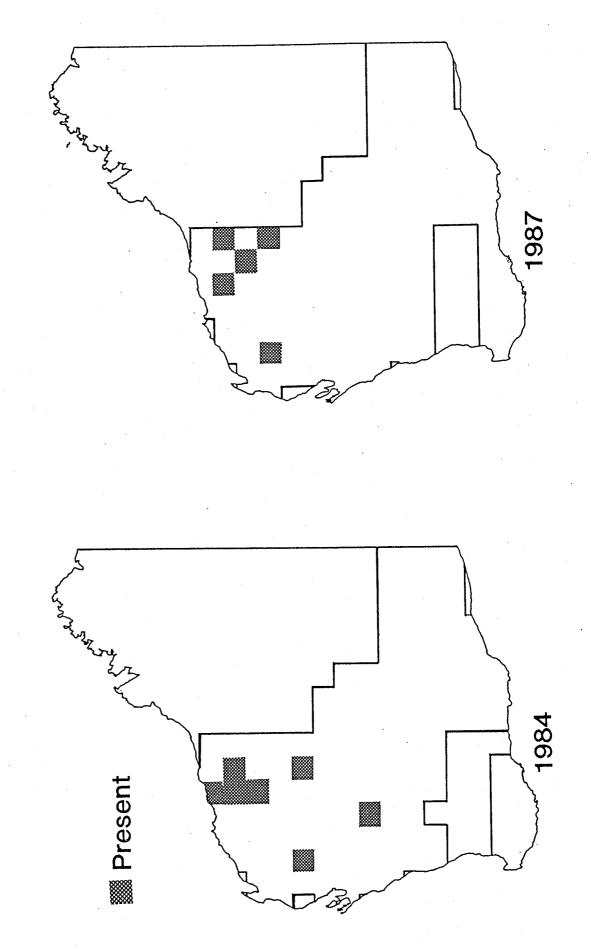


Fig. 12. Presence/absence of Pigs in 1984 and 1987.

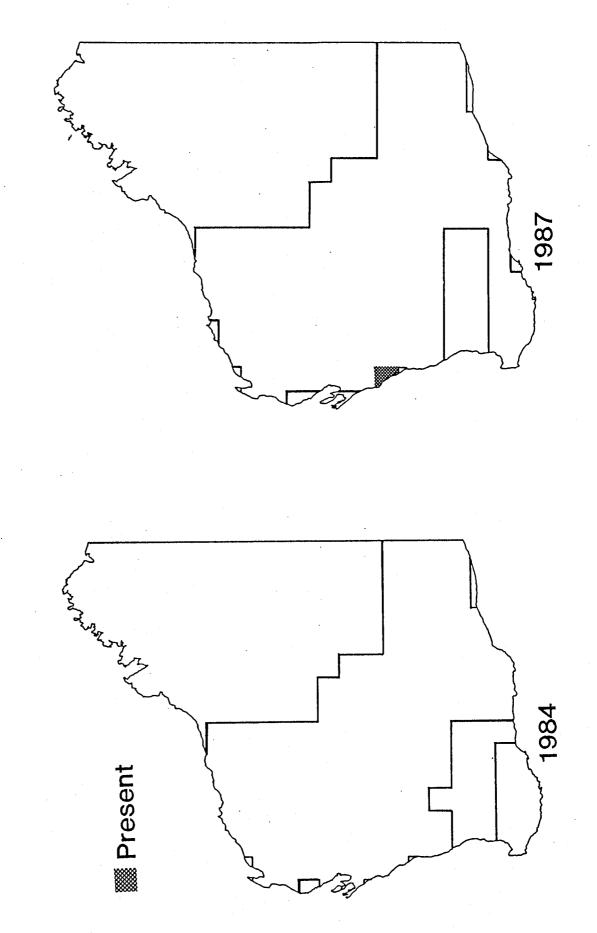
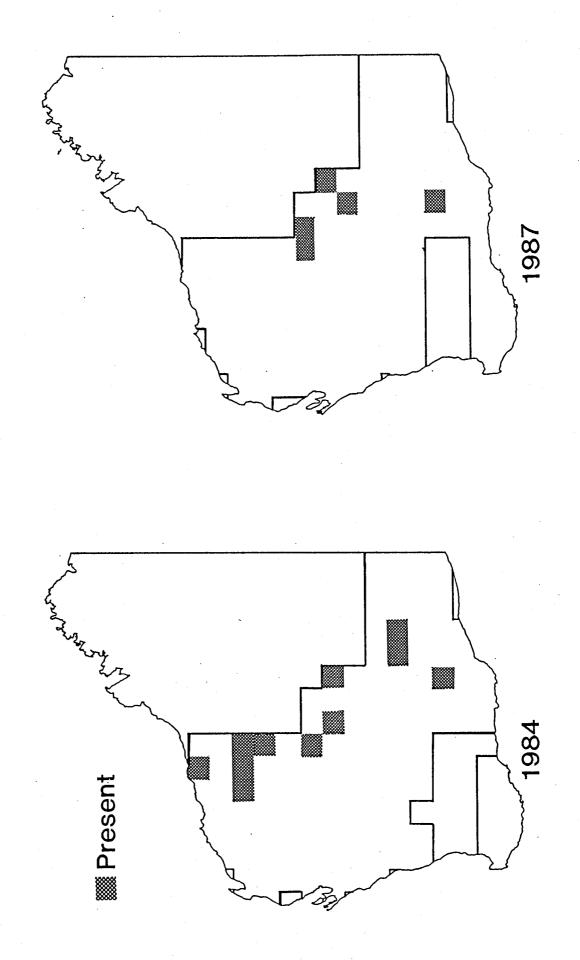


Fig. 13. Presence/absence of Camels in 1984 and 1987.

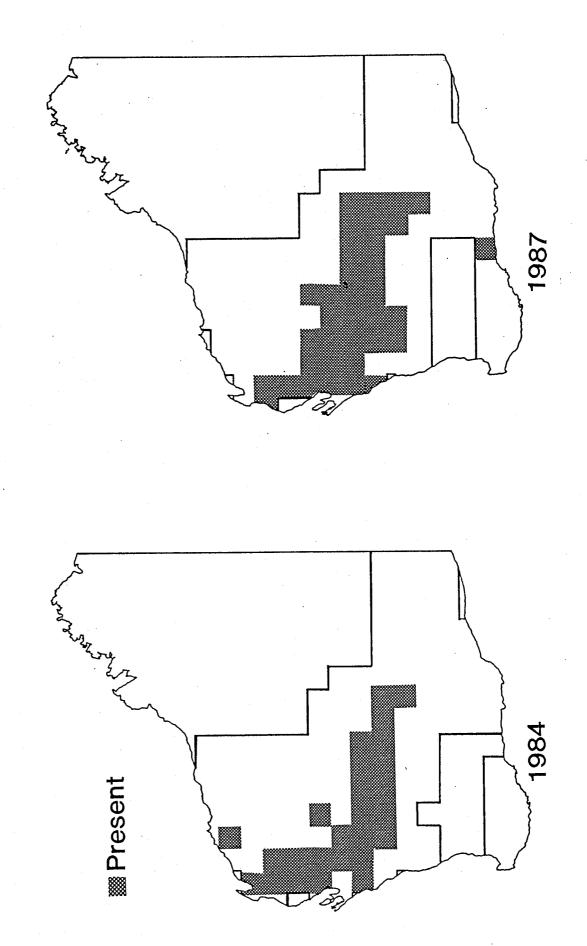


sightings conformed with Strahan (1983). Observed densities are given in Appendix 11.

#### Goat

Goats remain the most widespread and numerous of the large feral animals recorded during surveys. Observed densities are given in Appendix 12. Average observed density across the entire survey area in 1987 was 0.268 km<sup>-2</sup>, giving an uncorrected (and hence minimum) population size of 368 000. The distribution is very heterogeneous, with the highest densities around the Gascoyne basin (approximately 1.8 km<sup>-2</sup>) and between Sandstone, Lake Barlee and Laverton (approximately 3.2 km<sup>-2</sup>), and no sightings over much of the survey area (Fig. 14). Distribution appears to have changed little between 1984 and 1987 (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14. Presence/absence of Goats in 1984 and 1987.



#### Discussion

#### Emu

Emus appear to be fairly conspicuous from the air; an observation supported by the low correction factor of 1.47 derived by Caughley and Grice (1982) for this species. We consider this correction factor to be applicable to our survey as it was derived from a survey operating under identical conditions in a nearly colinear survey area.

Counts since 1981 suggest a decline and contraction of Emu populations from 1981-84, and subsequent increase in populations from 1984-87. It is possible that this pattern may be an artefact of observer experience (two of the 1984 observers were experienced in sighting kangaroos but not Emus, and so may have been undercounting Emus relative to other surveys), hence we stress that the pattern should be considered with circumspection. The 1981 and 1987 surveys were more comparable in observer experience and returned similar population estimates.

The 1987 average density of 0.067 km<sup>-2</sup> compares well with the Caughley and Grice (1982) estimate of 0.074 km<sup>-2</sup> and with the medium-term average of 0.067 km<sup>-2</sup> suggested for Western Australia by Davies (1976).

We concur with Caughley and Grice (1982) and Davies (1976) that Emus appear to be rare outside the pastoral zone either for reasons of insufficient water (the Emu must drink each day, Blakers *et al.* (1984)) or difficulty in breeding in disturbed areas of little or no cover.

#### Feral animals

A wide range of feral animals was sighted on the survey, although sighting frequencies were generally low. Because of these low frequencies, and a lack of information on correction factors, estimates of population size could not be calculated with confidence. Rather the data can be used only to give a broad indication of distribution.

An exception to the above is the Goat, which was seen in large numbers in some parts of the survey area. The uncorrected population estimate of 368 000 is a minimum estimate because no correction factors have been applied to the data. Our subjective opinion is that sightability of the Goat from the air is good, due to its strong herding tendency and striking pelage. We therefore consider that a corrected population estimate would not be dramatically different from the uncorrected one given here.

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**Appendix 1**. Corrected density ( $D_{\rm C}$ ) and estimated number (Y) of Red Kangaroos for each degree block surveyed in 1981, 1984 and 1987. Block codes and data for 1981 from Short *et al.*(1983). Data for 1984 from Fletcher and Southwell(1984). Values are corrected for vegetation bias but not for temperature. Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>. Areas not surveyed are indicated by -. Blocks in high density stratum are indicated by \*.

Block code	D <sub>C</sub> ,19	981 Y	19 <i>D<sub>C</sub></i>	84 Y	D <sub>C</sub>	987 Y	
A9 A10 A112 A13 A156 B9 B112 B14 B156 C67 C9	0.66 0 0.05 0.25 0.16 0 0.46 0.27 0 0 0 0 1.17 0.95 0.24 0	1 329 0 587 2 934 1 878 0 1 048 0 3 152 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0.54 2.35 1.11 0.18	1 886 10 349 14 586 12 922 2 096	1.28 0.06 0.12 0.12	- - - - - - - - 5 642 661 1 421 1 421	
D3 D4 D5 D6 D7 B1 E2 E3 E5 E6 E7 E7 F7 F6 F7 F6 F7 F6 F7 F6 F7 F7 F6 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7 F7	0.12 0.25 0.06 0.12 0.39 0.80 0.74 0.24 0.12 0.55 0.24 5.01 4.36 3.95 0.36 1.44 0.35 0.20 1.35 0.52	0 1 374 0 2 877 690 1 381 3 709 9 141 8 455 0 2 714 1 314 6 284 892 56 828 49 449 44 857 4 083 16 349 3 989 2 269 7 517 5 877	0.80 0.30 2.38 0.54 0.24 0 3.44 1.81 3.19 0.74 0.06 1.34 0.97 0.31 1.07 2.55 2.27 1.32 0.80 0.35 0.31	7 072 3 499 27 394 6 242 2 774 0 7 066 18 774 36 485 8 401 731 15 264 11 112 3 506 2 912 28 947 25 713 14 916 9 128 3 989 8 806 3 460	0.72 0.06 0 0 0.24 0.23 0.84 0.99 0.92 0 0.70 1.29 0.06 1.18 6.05 5.57 5.04 1.68 0.06 1.13 0.38	6 341 694 0 0 2 774 471 8 742 11 340 10 491 0 7 965 14 725 701 3 206 68 610 63 231 57 153 19 000 716 12 806 4 266 18 034	

**	* *	* * * * * *	* * *
1789111234567890112345678901123456 189012345678901123456 1890123456 1890123456 1890123456	11 12 13 14 15 16 17	H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H6 H7 H8 H9	G3 G4 G5 G6 G7 G8
0.30 0.30 0.82 1.03 0.38 0.42 1.33 1.34 0.32 0.31 0.32 0.32 1.33 1.34 0.32 0.32 1.32 0.32 1.33 0.34 0.37 0.34 0.37 0.34 0.37 0.34 0.37 0.34 0.37 0.37 0.38 0.42 0.42 0.43 0.43 0.43 0.43 0.43 0.43 0.43 0.43	0.06 0.08 0.33 1.86 1.62 0.51	0.18, 0.98 1.48 3.04 1.20 2.10	1.91 1.64 0.93 2.04 1.03
3 342 9 108 20 583 310 4 132 4 565 17 678 14 579 12 624 4 073 22 187 5 579 2 609 4 239 17 596 13 435 8 929 4 402 12 105 3 301 3 695 761 4 674 0 0 0 11 627 4 970 2 016	617 908 3 682 20 636 17 895 5 607	2 003 10 954 16 508 33 936 13 461 23 526	21 461 18 515 10 445 22 926 11 649
0.95 1.22 0.46 0.54 1.54 1.24 3.72 1.18 0.25 1.24 1.24 1.24 1.25 1.25 1.37 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05	0.45 0.11 0.79 3.18 4.98 4.43 0.95	0 1.03 1.92 4.42 5.56 4.69 3.59 2.17 1.25 8.26	5.50 3.26 1.19 1.34 0.74
10 675 30 138 24 534 5 082 4 934 6 113 11 507 16 903 47 663 47 663 47 663 47 663 47 663 40 832 12 946 2 7719 40 832 12 8658 13 543 4 060 5 754 6 110 6 5253 6 186	1 357 1 201 8 712 35 255 55 178 49 007 10 506	0 11 080 21 495 49 428 62 125 52 380 40 103 24 247 13 923 92 330	61 885 36 670 13 437 15 119 8 303 0
2.81 5.82 2.80 2.16 0.33 0.25 4.49 4.23 1.87 3.88 3.65 2.02 1.03 0.27 1.08 2.35 8.73 2.86 2.62 0.40 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.21 0.21 0.23 0.24 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20	0.47 0.81 8.00 4.85 6.48 2.81	2.26 4.02 6.30 10.02 6.84 6.97 6.11 0.06 4.34	7.48 9.38 1.87 3.71 1.31 5.34
31 084 64 435 30 973 23 876 3 630 35 698 349 220 46 381 40 540 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 40 624 60 463 40 624 60 463 40 624 60 463 40 624 60 463 40 624 60 463 40 624 60 463 60	4 962 8 952 88 646 53 727 71 821 31 084	24 244 44 884 70 471 111 995 76 466 77 874 68 251 706 48 529	84 200 105 650 21 103 41 781 14 789 60 107

*	L9	1.16	12 536	2.71	29 144	1.18	12 658
	L10 L11	0.15 0	1 635 0	1.06 0.26	11 383 2 845	1.05 0.13	11 280 1 453
*	L12 L13	0.06 0.41	646 4 414	1.99 2.34	21 391 25 172	0.33 0.65	3 529 7 025
*	L14 L15	1.89 0	20 348 0	1.67 1.69	17 944 18 181	0.51 0.84	5 539 9 081
*	L16 M3	0.45 0.65	4 845 6 237	2.29	24 654 0	0.52 0.21	5 646 2 060
	M4 M5	0.11	1 173 0	0.26	2 796	0	0
	M6 M7	0	0	0.07 0.16	709 1 747	0	0
	M8 M9	0 0.37	0 3 959	0.23 0.69	2 447 7 357	0 0.13	0 1 431
	M10 M11	0.20	2 159 0	0.47 0	5 060	0.71 0.20	7 606 2 097
*	M12 M13	0.36 4.97	3 845 53 040	1.34 3.87	14 339 41 229	0.46 0.71	4 905 7 543
*	M14 M15	7.18 2.99	76 600 31 879	0.18 0.53	1 878 5 635	0.61 0.70	6 497 7 461
*	M16 N5	1.39	14 856	3.89	41 511	2.55	27 149
	N6 N7	0	0	-	-	- -	-
	N8 N9	0 0.03	0 356	0.16	1 684	0.13	1 384
	N10 N11	0.07 0.07	0 713	0.20 0.13	2 136 1 406	0.13	1 384
*	N12 N13	0.10 0.38	1 038 4 030	0.64 14.57	6 717 153 812	0.52 1.98	5 450 20 938
*	N14 N15	0.45 1.34	4 774 14 105	3.45 1.21	36 475 12 726	0.41 0.57	4 366 6 055
*	N16 O4	0.30	2 767 0	1.79	16 261	0.57	0 000
	05 07	0	0		-	-	-
		Ō	Ō	-	0	-	-
	O8 O9 O10 O11	0	0	0	0	0	0
	O12 O13	0 0 0	0000	0	0	0	0
	P3 P4	0	00	0 0 0 0 0 0	0	0	0
	P5	Ö	Ö	0	0	0	0
	P6 P7	-	-	0	0	0	0
	P8 P9 P10	0	0	0	0	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	0
	P11	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0.07	0 604	0	000000000000000000000000000000000000000
	Q4	0	0	0 0 0	0	0	0
	P11 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7	0	0	0	0	0 0	0
	Q/	-	-	U	0	-	-

**Appendix 2**. Corrected density ( $D_{\rm C}$ ) and estimated number (Y) of Western Grey Kangaroos for each degree block surveyed in 1981, 1984 and 1987. Block codes and data for 1981 from Short *et al.*(1983). Data for 1984 from Fletcher and Southwell(1984). Values are corrected for vegetation bias but not for temperature. Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>. Areas not surveyed are indicated by -. Blocks in high density stratum are indicated by \*.

Block code	1981 D <sub>C</sub>	Υ	1984 D <sub>C</sub>	Υ	1987 D <sub>C</sub>	Υ	
A91011234456 A9A11234456 A9A11234456 BBBBBBBCCCCCCDDDDDDEEEEEEEEFFFFFFFGG BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBB	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	000000000000000000000000000000000000000					

634566781123456789111233456789111233456788456788811123456789111233456789111233456788811123456788811123345678888111233456788811123345678881112334567888111233456788811123345678888111233456788811123345678881112334567888111233456788811123346788811123345678881112334567888811123345678888111233456788881112334567888811123345678888111233467888811123346788881112334678888881112334678888111233467888881112334678888881112334678888811123346788888888888888888888888888888888888
1567312315673910
00000 - 1000000 - 1000000000 - 100000000
00000 - 1000000 - 1263 263 00000 0000 130 0000 000 000 000 000 00
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
000000 000000 000000000000000000000000
00000000000000000000000000000000000000

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	0.43 0.20 0.00 0.10 0.10 0.24 0.20 0.24 0.24 0.24 0.25 0.24 0.24 0.24 0.24 0.24 0.25 0.24 0.25 0.24 0.25 0.24 0.25	4 614 2 153 646 0 0 1 077 10 076 2 559 0 0 1 076 2 559 7 46 0 0 2 12 236 12 237 2 7 0 0 0 0 0 2 495 1 223 1 223 1 223 1 223 1 223 1 223 1 235 1 244 1 244 1 244 1 245 1	0.42 0.37 0.22 0.30 0.75 0.09 2.59 0.03 0.56 0.52 0.53 0.50 0.50 0.51 0.06 1.50 0.17 9.96 4.33 3.31 3.44 5.05 0.95	4 483 4 024 2 370 3 263 8 395 0 8 104 25 051 0 355 5 941 6 390 5 496 5 650 9 701 1 204 6 10 	0.13 1.57 1.68 0.26 0.06 0.13 0.39 0.30 0.30 0.46 0.07 0.03 0.40 0.07 0.03 0.40 0.125 0.144 0.25 1.57 0.40	1 407 16 927 18 091 2 829 697 1 422 7 108 4 141 0 0 3 554 4 861 3 391 4 711 355 0 0 8 987 21 490 102 035 2 687 53 827 34 664 1 759 145 257 2 866 2 5 605 4 286 2 5 161
* O12 * O13 * P3 * P4 * P5 * P6	7.36 0.57 0.25 0.30	72 739 3 171 1 639 3 094	5.96 8.38 5.69 0.95 0.81 0.93	56 949 45 228 35 799 10 133 8 574 9 663	15.20 0.48 0.46 3.67 0.54 0.42	145 257 2 579 2 866 37 830 5 605 4 286

**Appendix 3.** Observed density  $(D_0)$  of Euros for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>
D6 D8 E3 F2 F3 F4 G3 G4 H3 H6 H7	0.03 0.02 0.02 0.03 0.02 0.06 0.07 0.03 0.04 0.02 0.05	H10 I4 I10 J4 J6 J7 J8 K3 K5 K8 K9	0.02 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.03 0.05 0.06 0.03 0.04 0.07 0.11	K11 L4 L5 L6 L8 L9 L12 L13 M4 M6 M10 M11	0.17 0.03 0.19 0.03 0.08 0.05 0.04 0.02 0.06 0.03 0.03 0.06

**Appendix 4.** Corrected density ( $D_c$ ) and estimated number (Y) of Emus for each degree block in which individuals were observed in 1984 and 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.*(1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>. Values have been corrected for visibility bias.

Dlook	1984		Disal.	1987		
 Block code	$D_{\mathcal{C}}$	Y	Block code	Ď <sub>c</sub>	Υ	
C5 C6 C5 C6 C5 C6 C5 C6 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7	0 0.07 0.08 0.15 0 0.04 0.06 0.37 0.08 0.02 0.26 0.16 0.10 0 0.41 0.41 0.31 0.16 0.08 0.12 0.08 0.12	0 720 897 1 371 0 442 167 4 169 878 219 2 908 1 790 1 118 0 0 4 564 4 564 3 423 1 826 913 1 369 676 368 2 939	C5 C6 C5 C6 C5 C6 C5 C6 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7 C7	0.16 0 0.16 0.15 0.16 0.39 0.31 0.02 0.29 0.19 0.31 0.04 0.19 0.15 0.04 0.19 0.15 0.08 0.08 0.08	705 0 0 1 664 1 714 436 4 424 3 516 0 225 3 266 2 140 3 491 1 577 3 018 3 465 447 2 124 1 677 2 795 894 0 842 0	

14	14 15 16 17 18 19 10 14 15 16 17 18 19 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	0.12 0.08 0.08 0.19 0.21 0.12 0.12 0.12 0.12 0.13 0.22 0.14 0.10 0.27 0.04 0.14 0.10 0.16 0.04 0.04	1 329 1 329 1 329 1 329 1 329 1 329 1 329 1 320 1 317 1 317
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**Appendix 5** Observed density  $(D_O)$  of Bustards for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	. D <sub>O</sub>
E2	0.02	F3	0.04	H7	0.03
F2	0.04	G6	0.02	19	0.03

**Appendix 6.** Observed density  $(D_0)$  of Dingoes for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	Do	
N16	0.02	

**Appendix 7.** Observed density  $(D_0)$  of Foxes for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	_
14 J4	0.02 0.03	L16 M15	0.02 0.02	M16	0.02	_

**Appendix 8.** Observed density  $(D_O)$  of Cats for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>o</sub>	
N11	0.03	

**Appendix 9.** Observed density  $(D_0)$  of Donkeys for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	Do	Block code	Do	Block code	Do
D6 D8	0.24 0.03	E7 F3	0.18 0.04	F8	0.39

**Appendix 10**. Observed density  $(D_O)$  of Pigs for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	
K2	0.19	

**Appendix 11**. Observed density  $(D_0)$  of Camels for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>.

Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>	Block code	D <sub>O</sub>
H8 H9	0.09 0.05	l11 J10	0.13 0.03	N10	0.14

**Appendix 12**. Observed density  $(D_O)$  of Goats for degree blocks in which individuals were observed in 1987. Block codes follow Short *et al.* (1983). Densities are in animals km<sup>-2</sup>. Block area (a) in km<sup>2</sup>.

Block code D <sub>o</sub>	a	Block code <i>D<sub>O</sub></i>	а	Block code <i>D<sub>o</sub></i>	а
F1 2.28 F2 1.08 G2 1.42 H2 1.82 H3 2.23 H4 0.20 H6 0.06 I2 0.28 I3 0.28 I4 0.60 I5 0.90 I6 0.42	11 434 11 261 10 731 11 178 11 178 11 178 10 521 11 075 11 075	J2 0.44 J3 0.75 J4 0.03 J5 0.32 J6 0.96 J7 0.09 J8 0.13 J9 1.56 J10 0.04 K2 0.19 K4 0.31 K5 0.76	10 751 10 971 10 971 10 971 10 971 10 971 10 971 10 971 7 826 10 869 10 869	K6 1.70 K7 3.92 K8 2.58 K9 3.74 K10 0.42 L4 1.19 L5 0.37 L9 2.35 L10 0.64 M10 1.11 P8 0.29	10 869 10 869 10 869 10 869 10 766 10 766 10 766 10 766 10 663 9 605