

SMALL but rapidly growing pine wildings beneath mature *P. radiata* trees in a Nannup District plantation.

Exciting de Futile Rufou

IN 1930-31 the W on the Canning Sto

Attached to this party was a WA Museum employee, Otto Lipfert, whose now antiquated title was "taxidermist".

In his report, which is published in full in Wildlife Research Bulletin No. 12 "The Wildlife of the Great Sandy Desert", Lipfert said that the Rufous Hare-wallaby was "the most common animal" along the stock route, and he collected nine specimens.

Over the past 10 years, staff from the WA Wildlife Research Centre have conducted a series of biological surveys in the State's desert areas.

In addition, Phil Fuller and I have interviewed almost 100 groups of Aborigines from desert communities to try and learn some of their wealth of knowledge about the wildlife of their traditional lands.

We have confirmed one of the world's greatest extinctions — almost all the medium-sized mammals (mean adult body weight 35g to 5kg) that once inhabited these areas are now totally or locally extinct or are in danger of becoming so.

CONTROLLING PINE WILDINGS

By NEIL BURROWS

DELIBERATELY setting fire to radiata pine plantations to kill pine trees sounds like the act of a vandal.

But it was CALM researchers and District staff who set fire in Folly Plantation near Nannup in March.

No, not a case of CALM officers run amuck; they set fire in the plantation to study the use of prescribed fire to control pine wildings.

Pine wildings are trees that have regenerated naturally beneath the planted pines.

The South West's warm,

dry summers cause pinecones on the original trees to spill thousands of winged seeds onto the ground.

These germinate, and if the conditions are right, develop into saplings and larger trees.

In the worst situation, up to 10,000 wildings could grow per hectare, some reaching 10m.

A task force, headed by Bruce Harvey (Bunbury

Regional Office) and made up of District staff from Nannup, Harvey, Collie and Kirup and Research Staff from Manjimup and Busselton, has been examining the extent of the pine wilding problem in southern plantations.

The pine wildings create a wildfire control problem if they develop into dense thickets.

A highly flammable fuel, they enable wildfires to burn more ferociously and increase the chance of the most dangerous type of wildfire — crown fire.

The wildings also hinder access to the plantation, whether for wildfire control or for stand improvement operations.

The wildings also compete strongly with crop trees for nutrients and moisture.

Many techniques for the control of wildings are being tried, including: mechanical slashing, crushing, poisoning, commercial harvesting and burning.

Results from experimental fires conducted in plantations in Nannup and Kirup districts are very promising.

Fires set under stable but dry conditions in March killed a high proportion (up to 85 per cent) of the wilding populations.

The level of mortality varied according to fire intensity and the size of the wildings.

If it can be shown that such fires do not cause unacceptable bole damage to the valuable crop trees, then prescribed fire is a cheap and effective method of controlling pine wildings.

SAM RETIRES

HARVEY forestry worker Keith "Sam" Taylor has retired after 20 years in forestry.

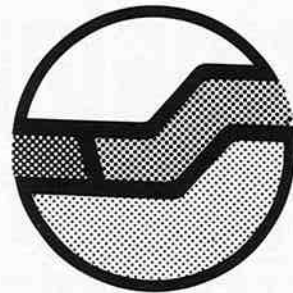
Sam joined the Department in 1966, but before that ran a carrier business with his father, Sid.

They worked closely with the Harvey forestry transporting pines and other heavy items for 19 years.

Sam began work for the Department at Myalup and was there eight years before the centre closed down.

He and his wife Rene then moved to Harvey.

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CALM News

Official newspaper of the Department of Conservation and Land Management

Vol 2 No 18 AUGUST 1986