

MIXED FORTUNES AT YANCHEP

By ALLAN BURBIDGE

A MIXTURE of good news and bad news has been the order of the day during recent biological survey work at Yanchep National Park.

Major sampling sessions for the survey, which is being carried out by officers from Research Division with assistance from local Park Ranger staff, began in October and is being concluded currently.

National Park rangers at Yanchep have assisted with digging holes for the 138 pit traps used in the survey, and have also assisted in the trapping sessions.

The good news is that the reptiles and frogs seem to be doing well and we have been able to add several species to the list of species known for Yanchep.

Interesting finds included turtle frogs which were caught in pit traps after rain and the endangered Carpet Python which Park Rangers occasionally record in the Park.

A number of interesting plants have come to light, including the second known population of a declared rare eucalypt which is so "new" that it hasn't been named yet — and it is only about 50km from the GPO!

The bad news is that some of the native mammals seem not to be faring very well.

The diminutive Honey Possum is still abundant but we have not yet caught any of several other species of mammals which have

been recorded in the Park in the past.

The only rodents we have found so far are the introduced Black Rat and the House Mouse.

One of the objects of the current (autumn) trapping session is to determine whether the native Bush Rat, which was once common in the Park, is still present.

The Brush-tailed Possum has also declined in numbers and is now possibly extinct in the Park.

We have not seen it in the Park and it has not been recorded by Ranger staff in recent years.

Three other mammals known to have occurred in Yanchep and not recorded in recent years are the Chuditch, Ash-grey Mouse and Western Pygmy-possum.



Jim Rolfe (Research Division) and Terry Goodlich (Yanchep National Park) drilling a hole for a pit trap for the Yanchep biological survey.



PROBLEM LOOMS AT MILLSTREAM

THE main features of Millstream are the four large riverine pools surrounded by Cajeput forest.

Each pool rests in a depression dammed up by alluvial debris at the downstream end.

On this alluvium are reeds, Cajeput trees and in some cases, Millstream Palms.

From time to time this alluvium is eroded away by river floods, the trees swept away and the pools set up at a new level.

This dynamic process is happening at the bottom end of Crossing Pool but was halted by sand bagging in winter 1987 by the Water Authority.

A strong river flow in January 1988 has swept away the sand bags (see picture) and most of the reeds (foreground).

Another flow could see erosion of the reeds and the pool will drop two metres.

If this happens, the Cajeput forest and camping ground near Crossing Pool could be starved of water and the tr collapse.

At the instigation of the Policy Directorate, Water Authority Engineers from Karratha are investigating the possibility of damming the Crossing Pool outflow channels to maintain the current status of Crossing Pool.

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the purchase of a "Jaws of Life" rescue machine.

A great community