

Fauna numbers now look encouraging

A preliminary visit to Collie state forests before starting a research project there in November proved fruitful for CALM research scientist Keith Morris.

Keith participated in a routine fauna trapping survey in July by Collie district staff to see how many chuditch were being captured along with other native animals. In November he will return to study the effect of fox-baiting on the chuditch.

The survey - encompassing 59 traps on Batalling block northeast of Collie - produced several chuditch, woylies and brush-tailed possums. Bandicoots have also been seen in the area.

Collie forest ranger Brad Barton and reserves officer Rob Brazell have been fauna trapping in two State forests near Collie since last December and have produced encouraging statistics. They have trapped eight individual woylies, 17 brush-tailed possums and 12 chuditch. Although it is too early to form definite conclusions, the results show that the woylie numbers have in-

creased since the advent of fox-baiting, in February.

As part of the Chuditch Management Plan recently published (written by Melody Serena, Todd Soderquist and Keith Morris), Keith is also looking at the effect of fire on the animals, and the effect of log pushing - creating habi-

tat in logged areas.

This month, he will carry out further survey work at Jaurdi Station near Kalgoorlie, to see if chuditch still occur there.

Other projects outlined in the management plan include translocation of chuditch and population monitoring.



Left to right: Brad Barton, Rob Brazell and Shaun Morris watch the release of a brush-tailed possum

