

by
Jim Lane

to the trunk of a dead tree in the middle of Lake Eganu, with Don floundering (fully clothed for once!) in the water nearby and a punt at full throttle, circling crazily between them.

Wetlands network

In the late 1970s, a network of gauged wetlands was established to provide an objective basis for determining duck shooting season specifications. Don provided much sound advice to me during this time and personally installed all the depth gauges on more than 120 wetlands from Dongara to Esperance. Water depth, salinity, pH and nutrient data obtained from this program is constantly in demand for many purposes.

Goats and pot

In 1985, Keith Morris and I began eradicating feral goats from Bernier Island. This involved half a dozen people, plus helicopter and rifles, camping on the island for two weeks. Don took care of the logistics and the cooking in his inimitable style and the project was a total success.

It also provided one of our more unusual experiences together - spending the night lounging on two tonnes of packaged marijuana found on the Island, and debating its fate before we notified the authorities.

From 1986 to 1988, Don provided all the logistic support for the very successful series of remote wetlands expeditions to places like Lakes Gregory and Argyle, the lower Ord floodplain, Lake McLeod, Shark Bay and the Fitzroy River. These expeditions also

involved small teams of volunteers with varied field experience. Don soon became famous for his comfortably provisioned field camps and skilled diplomacy. In 1991, several of these sites were listed as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, primarily as a result of the information gathered by the expeditions.

Don had a major role in many other activities, from aerial surveys of duck populations to the care of sick and injured fauna and practical involvement in wetland creation and rehabilitation.

Good humoured

The success of the many projects in which he was involved was due not only to his many skills (which included metalwork, carpentry, plumbing, surveying, motor mechanics, animal husbandry, bushcraft, fishing, boat handling and even flying whenever he could wrestle the controls from the pilot) but also the admirable way in which he applied himself to any given task. He was always conscientious, thoughtful and ready to put in whatever effort the job at hand might have required, always with good humour. It is no wonder we are often reminded of him as we go about our work.

Don had many friends and was a much loved husband and father. He leaves two close families, his wife Kaye and children Gemma and Gavin, and his former wife Janice and daughters Rochelle, Lisa, Karen and Nicky. Particularly during the final months of his illness, Don's concern was for the welfare of his family and not himself. His courage grew as his body weakened. Don set a very fine example to all and is sadly missed.

AFTER more than a year and a half battling cancer, senior technical officer Donald Richard Munro died peacefully on December 10, 1991 at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. He was 52 years of age.

Don's association with CALM began when he joined the Department of Fisheries and Fauna in 1967.

As technical assistant in wildlife research Don worked under the direction of Tom Riggert, the Department's first waterfowl biologist.

From 1969, when he was appointed technical officer, until his retirement due to ill health in May 1991, Don was involved in numerous projects.

He assisted Tom Riggert with his detailed studies of the biology of the Australian Shelduck at Rottnest Island. This involved many months of continuous field observations and the trapping and banding of several thousand birds.

Duckbanding

From 1968 to 1976, Don was heavily involved in the Department's duck banding program. Some 22 000 ducks were banded at Moora, Woodanilling and on Perth lakes. This involved many months of often tedious field work. With Don's help, Stuart Halse recently completed the analysis of this work, results of which are soon to be published in the internationally renowned *Journal of Wildlife Management*.

Tom Riggert's program of artificial nest box erection was largely undertaken by Don, with Grant Pearson's assistance. Some 2 400 duck nest boxes were erected on trees of more than forty wetlands of the south-west.

There were exciting moments, one involving Grant clinging desperately

by
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flow. All students identified an environmental bad habit and 86% of them attempted to fix it.

A significant aspect of the evaluation is the opportunity for insight into the student's home environmental behaviour and a majority of parents said their child was aware of specific ecological concepts after the program.

One half of the parents said their child talked about the excursion at home.

Importantly, parents also stated that they would be willing to pay about \$5.00 to have their child attend such a program (actual cost is about \$6.00 per student.)

As expected, the evaluation raised more questions - many of which cannot be answered with-

AN EVALUATION of Earth Caretakers, a CALM community education initiative, recently gave high marks to the program designed to encourage ecologically sound practices in the lifestyles of upper primary students.

Supervised and supported by CALM, recreation studies student Zoe Jack from Edith Cowan University evaluated the Earth Caretakers program involving grade five students from the Maida Vale Primary School.

Earth Caretakers is a program developed by the International Institute for Earth Education.

Aside from in-class preparatory work, Earth Caretakers' main motivator is its one-day excursion where children learn about energy flow through becoming 'chlorospies' (chlorophyll



Don Munro
Photo by Jim Lane

Top marks for Earth Caretakers

