

# Foxes out, writ out, gums in

## CALM-ALCOA to collaborate in fox control

ONE of Australia's biggest native wildlife recovery programs begins next year with a concerted attack on the major predator of many native animals - the European fox.

CALM, with assistance from Alcoa of Australia, is extending CALM's predator control initiative, Operation Foxglove, to cover almost 500 000 hectares in the northern jarrah forest.

### Ensuring survival

Environment Minister Kevin Minson, who launched the project recently at Dwellingup, said this would help ensure the survival of native fauna and enable other species that had become locally extinct to be reintroduced.

The project is regarded as a conservation coup of international significance.

Mr Minson said preservation of wildlife was not only crucial in terms of preserving the State's biodiversity, it was imperative for our social and economic development.

"Western Australia's wildlife is diverse and many species are unique to

by Nigel Higgs

this State which gives us a tremendous natural advantage - soon visitors will be able to see wildlife here that occurs nowhere else."

Starting in April, CALM, in association with the Agriculture Protection Board, will begin laying baits at the rate of one bait every 20 ha over 440 000 hectares of the northern and central jarrah forest from Mundaring to Collie.

Fox control programs also will be encouraged on neighbouring farmlands with the APB and local land conservation district committees.

### 1080 for safety

The baits will be treated with 1080 poison which occurs naturally in native plants belonging to the group *Gastrolobium*, the 'poison-peas'.

Fox control will mean the 1080-tolerant native animals can be reintroduced so that new, secure populations can be established and the survival of the species ensured.

Alcoa of Australia's involvement is particu-



Native animals will be monitored for any increase in numbers to indicate progress of the fox-baiting program. Here, Environment Minister Kevin Minson (right) looks on while forester Mike Tagliaferri (left) holds a 'bagged' possum and senior technical officer Mike Dillon prepares to record its measurements and weight. Photo by Nigel Higgs

larly welcome in this project.

Alcoa has implemented extensive rehabilitation programs in areas of the northern jarrah forest mined for bauxite.

Fox control and the re-introduction of native marsupials will add a further dimension to rehabilitation measures Alcoa

is carrying out as part of its bauxite mining operations.

### Native forest

It also is part of the integrated approach that is essential to managing our native forests.

The fox control project will be part of an extensive research program on

integrated wildlife management initiated by CALM with further funding from the Australian Nature Conservation Authority and the Co-operative Research Centre.

This will allow fauna management to be integrated further into other uses and management strategies for the forest.

## Multi-million dollar contract up and running

by Caris Bailey

A NEW West Australian tree species, the western bluegum, was announced in November in a ceremony to mark the signing of a multi-million dollar contract for the Albany region.

The Oji Paper Company and Itochu Corporation have appointed CALM as its manager in a project to plant 25 million trees in the region.

Oji, Japan's largest pulp and paper manufacturer, and Itochu, Japan's biggest trading house, have formed a joint venture company for the Albany project.

CALM Executive Director Syd Shea said the Albany Plantation Forest Company of Australia Pty Ltd would invest \$60 million to establish 20 000 hectares of trees over 10 years.

A further \$200 million will be spent when harvesting begins in the year 2003.

"This is a major investment for the Albany region that will generate \$50 million export income per annum when the trees are harvested," Dr Shea said.

The project has been welcomed by Primary Industry Minister, Monty House, as both an eco-

Albany MLA Kevin Prince has also praised the project, which he said would be of great benefit to the town's port facilities.

"Landowners joining the project can now look forward to even greater productivity as the result of a new, super tree bred by scientists for local conditions," Dr Shea said.

"Starting with the Tasmanian bluegum, CALM scientists have worked with private sector help to produce the western bluegum.

"This tree breeding program means that one of the most productive tree species in the world will be grown 40 per cent faster."

The selection of the new elite trees began in 1980 when CALM's tree breeder, Trevor Butcher, established trial plots of seed collected from native bluegums growing in Tasmania and Victoria.

The process of collecting native seeds and planting them in Western Australia to test their growth in local conditions continued until this year.



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