

# Project Eden base camp established at Peron

CALM wildlife officer Ray Smith has begun setting up the base station for Project Eden, the Department's new initiative to help reclaim Peron Peninsula for native animal species.

Ray is the Operations Officer for the project and will spend the next two to five years based at Peron Homestead in the Francois Peron National Park.

The homestead will be base camp and control centre for Project Eden operations, and the centre will be a temporary home for anything up to a dozen or so scientists, as each stage of the project gets under way.

In early April, the first

by David Gough

phase of the eradication stage was begun, and baits were laid to determine the density of the fox population on Peron Peninsula. The results of the first night's baiting showed a fox-density higher than is known anywhere else in the State.

Once the density was established, aerial baiting began; about 10 000 baits containing 1080 poison were dropped at a density of one per 100 metres in one kilometre grids covering the entire peninsula, except for the Denham and Monkey Mia townsites and main camping areas.

There will be another feral animal density test conducted to establish the drop in fox and cat numbers.

Before the baiting began, brochures were mailed to all residences and businesses in the area and are still available at all tourist resorts, caravan parks, information offices and the CALM office.

These brochures inform residents and visitors about the project, the reasons for choosing 1080 poison in preference to others and details of the baiting program.

A display centre will be set up at the Peron homestead to inform visitors about Project Eden, its

progress and its aims.

Eventually, the homestead will be used as a centre for viewing reintroduced native animals in the wild, adding another valuable attraction to Peron National Park.

Project Eden is being conducted in three stages: the eradication of feral animals from Peron Peninsula; the reintroduction of native animals and the promotion of nature-based tourism opportunities resulting from the reintroduction of the animals.

Stage one is under way, and in time we may once again see the same native animals that Francois Peron saw in 1801.



Ray Smith levels the caravan before constructing the annexe that will be the Project Eden Control Centre.

Photo by David Gough

