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SUMMARY OF THE VERTEBRATE FAUNA RECORDS OF THE DRAGON ROCKS NATURE RESERVE; RESERVE No. 36128, NEAR NEWDEGATE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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December 1988

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the original survey of the Dragon Rocks area by staff of the then Department of Fisheries and Fauna and the Western Australian Herbarium during 1972 (McKenzie, *et al*, 1973) a considerable quantity of fauna records has accumulated on files at the Katanning District office of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). This latter information has been gathered during visits by organized volunteer groups, from a limited fauna survey by employees of CALM and opportunistically by Departmental employees while engaged on reserve management duties in the area.

The information contained in this summary of the fauna records will be used as a basic resource inventory to define management priorities, future survey priorities, and to assist in long term management and research planning.

1.1 The Reserve

The Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve, Reserve No "A" 36128 was set aside in 1979 with a purpose of "Conservation of Flora and Fauna". Vesting was originally with the Western Australian Wildlife Authority, but this was changed to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority upon the formation of that body in 1985.

The reserve's area of 32 218.7651 ha is divided between the Shires of Lake Grace and Kulin (approximately 14 000 ha and 18 000 ha respectively). The reserve is jointly managed from CALM district offices at Katanning and Narrogin (Figure 1).

Vegetation and landforms of the reserve are described in Department of Fisheries and Fauna Report No 12, "Results of a Biological Survey of a Proposed Wildlife Sanctuary at Dragon Rocks near Hyden, Western Australia" by NL McKenzie, *et al* (1973). A plant species list is held at the Katanning office of CALM. This list is compiled from opportunistic records in the reserve and is by no means comprehensive. The commissioning of a detailed vegetation survey of the reserve has been given a high priority within CALM's Wheatbelt Region.

1.2 Methods

1.2.1 Fisheries and Fauna Survey (1972):

The trapping and search methods are described in the Department of Fisheries and Fauna Report No 12 (McKenzie, *et al*, 1973)..

1.2.2 Opportunistic Records (1980-87):

Sight records only by Departmental employees. All persons who submitted sight records to the Katanning office (CALM) are listed at the appropriate summary.

1.2.3 Central South Naturalists Club Outing (1987):

Combined sighting records by approximately 20 volunteers over one and a half days. Includes trapping records as follows:-

- a) Pit traps (10cm diam x 40cm deep PVC pipe) - 10 trapnights;
- b) Elliott traps (32 x 10 x 8cm) - 20 trapnights.

Some records were the result of a short time spent searching under exfoliated granite on granite outcrops.

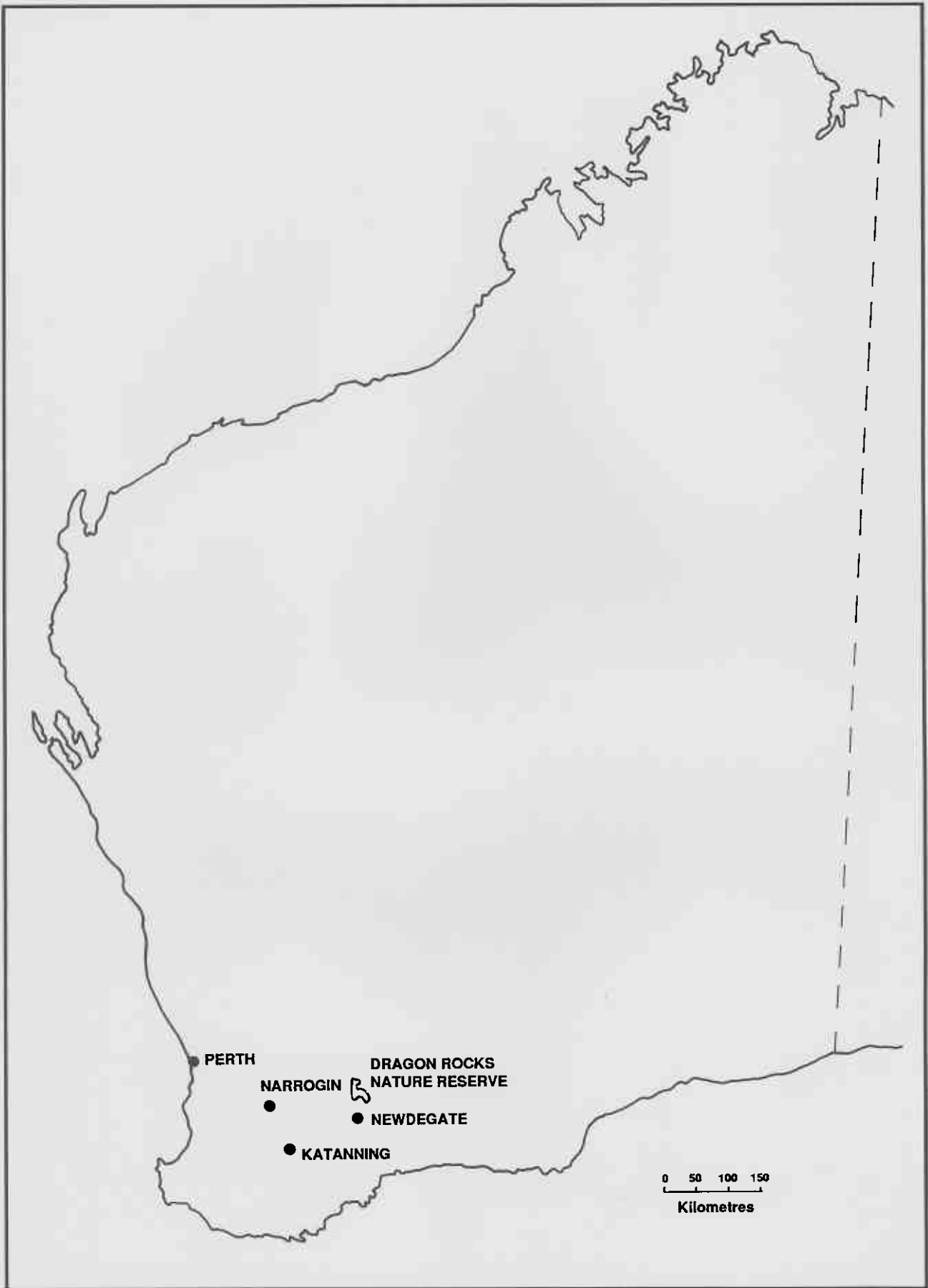


Figure 1: Western Australia, showing the approximate location of the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve and towns mentioned in this report.

1.2.4 RAOU Camp-out (1987):

Combined sighting records by approximately 20 volunteers from 4-10 October 1987.

1.2.5 CALM Fauna Survey; F S McCafferty and B J Bourke (1987):

- a) May 1987;
Elliott traps - 297 trapnights
Pit traps (10cm diam x 40cm deep PVC pipe) - 45 trapnights.
- b) June 1987;
Elliott traps - 45 trapnights plus approximately 20 man-hours searching under rocks, logs etc.

1.3 Nomenclature

1.3.1 Mammals:

- a) Common Names - from "Complete Book of Australian Mammals", R Strahan (Ed.), 1983.
- b) Scientific Names - from "Catalogue of Modern Mammals in the Western Australian Museum 1895 to 1981", D J Kitchener and E Vicker, 1981.

1.3.2 Birds:

Common and scientific nomenclature from "The Atlas of Australian Birds", M Blakers, et al, 1984.

1.3.3 Reptiles:

- a) Gekkonidae, Pygopodidae and Typhlopidae - common and scientific nomenclature from "Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia", Harold G Cogger, 1983 Edition.
- b) Agamidae and Varanidae - Scientific nomenclature from "Lizards of Western Australia II, Dragons and Monitors", G M Storr, et al (1983).

Common names from "Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia", Harold G Cogger, 1983 Edition.

- c) Scincidae - Scientific nomenclature from "Lizards of Western Australia I, Skinks", G M Storr, et al (1981). Common names from Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia", Harold G Cogger, 1983 Edition.
- d) Elapidae - Scientific and common nomenclature from "Snakes of Western Australia", G M Storr et al (1986).

1.3.4 Amphibians:

Scientific and common nomenclature from "Frogs of Western Australia", M J Tyler, et al (1984).

2.0 VERTEBRATE FAUNA SUMMARY

2.1 Mammals

Source Codes -

1. Department of Fisheries and Fauna, Report No 12. Figures in parenthesis, e.g. (M.009937) are WA Museum specimen references for collections mentioned in the report.
2. K J Wallace (1980)
3. D Coughran (1982)
4. M S Graham (1985)
5. F S McCafferty (1986)
6. M S Graham & R Brazell (1986)
7. M Frey (1987)
8. Central South Naturalists Club & M S Graham (1987)
9. F S McCafferty & B J Bourke (1987). WA Museum specimen references in parenthesis.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Source Code
<u>BURRAMYIDAE</u>		
Western Pygmy-possum;	<i>Cercartetus concinnus</i>	1(M009937)
<u>CANIDAE</u>		
Fox;	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	1,3
<u>DASYURIDAE</u>		
Kultarr;	<i>Antechinomys laniger spenceri</i>	1
Ningau;	<i>Ningau yvonnae</i>	9(M27035) (M27034)
Red-tailed Phascogale;	<i>Phascogale calura</i>	1(M009907)
Common Dunnart;	<i>Sminthopsis murina</i>	1(M009938)
Fat-tailed Dunnart;	<i>S. crassicaudata</i>	1,8
<u>FELIDAE</u>		
Feral Cat;	<i>Felis catus</i>	1,3
<u>LEPORIDAE</u>		
Rabbit;	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	1,2
<u>MACROPODIDAE</u>		
Western Grey Kangaroo;	<i>Macropus fuliginosus</i>	1,2,4,5, 6,7,8
Western Brush Wallaby;	<i>M. irma</i>	1,7
<u>MURIDAE</u>		
House Mouse;	<i>Mus musculus</i>	1(M008997) (M008998)

Spinifex Hopping-mouse;	<i>Notomys alexis</i>	9(M27032)
Mitchell's Hopping-mouse;	<i>N. mitchelli</i>	1(M010998) (M009909) (M009910) (M008999)
Western Mouse;	<i>Pseudomys occidentalis</i>	1(M009912) (M009913)
<u>PHALANGERIDAE</u>		
Common Brushtail Possum;	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	1(M009940)
<u>TACHYGLOSSIDAE</u>		
Short-beaked Echidna;	<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	1
<u>TARSIPEDIDAE</u>		
Honey-possum;	<i>Tarsipes rostratus</i>	1(M009908)
<u>VESPERTILIONIDAE</u>		
Gould's Wattleed Bat;	<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	1(M009917)
N1 King River Eptesicus;	<i>Eptesicus regulus</i>	1(M009915)
N2 Long-eared Bat;	<i>Nyctophilus sp cf timoriensis</i>	1

Notes:

N1 - *Eptesicus regulus* is listed in Department of Fisheries and Fauna Report No 12 as *E. pumilis*. This change is a result of a taxonomic review.

N2 - *Nyctophilus sp cf timoriensis* is listed in Department of Fisheries and Fauna Report No 12 as *N. geoffroyi*. The actual specimen (M009916) at the Western Australian Museum is labelled *N. major*. The nomenclature used in this summary was personally suggested by Dr D J Kitchener of the Western Australian Museum, pending a taxonomic review. His assistance is appreciated.

N3 - In addition to this summary there are several species which have been reported (McKenzie, et al, 1973) as probably or possibly occurring on the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve.

They are:-

Southern Brown Bandicoot; *Isoodon obesulus*
 Numbat; *Myrmecobius fasciatus*
 Western Quoll; *Dasyurus geoffroyi*
 Heath Rat; *Pseudomys shortridgei*
 Dingo; *Canis familiaris dingo*.

At the time of writing there have been no records confirming the presence of the above species on the reserve.

2.2 Birds

Source codes (CALM Katanning standard codes):-

1. K J Wallace (1980)
2. M S Graham (1985-88)
4. M Frey (1987)
5. F S McCafferty (1986)
8. D K Coughran (1982)
42. D S Hart (1983-84)
43. RAOU Camp-out (1987)
44. Central South Naturalists Club & M S Graham (1987)
45. M S Graham & R Brazell (1986)
46. Department of Fisheries & Fauna, Report No 12 (1972)

* denotes species confirmed breeding on the reserve.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Source Code
<u>DROMAIDAE</u>		
*Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	1,8,4,2,46
<u>ANATIDAE</u>		
Maned Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	46
Australian Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>	46
<u>ACCIPITRIDAE</u>		
Collared Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrhocephalus</i>	43
Brown Goshawk	<i>A. fasciatus</i>	43
Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>	1,2,45,4,44 43,46
Whistling Kite	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	46
Little Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	2
Square-tailed Kite	<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	2,43,46
<u>FALCONIDAE</u>		
Brown Falcon	<i>Falco berigora</i>	1,2,45,44 43,46
Australian Kestrel	<i>F. cenchroides</i>	42,43,46
Peregrine Falcon	<i>F. peregrinus</i>	2
<u>MEGAPODIIDAE</u>		
Malleefowl	<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	1,8,4,43,46
<u>PHASIANIDAE</u>		
Brown Quail	<i>Coturnix australis</i>	8
<u>OTIDIDAE</u>		
Australian Bustard	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	46
<u>BURHINIDAE</u>		
Bush Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus magnirostris</i>	43

<u>COLUMBIDAE</u>		
Crested Pigeon	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	2,5,45,43 46
Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	46,1,2,5,4 43,44,45
Brush Bronzewing	<i>P. elegans</i>	43
<u>CACATUIDAE</u>		
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	42,43,46
White-tailed Black Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus funerus latirostris</i>	1,45,43,46
<u>LORIIDAE</u>		
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	<i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i>	46
<u>PLATYCERCIDAE</u>		
* Port Lincoln Ringneck	<i>Barnardius zonarius</i>	4,5,44,45,1 43,2,8,46
Elegant Parrot	<i>Neophema elegans</i>	43,45,46
Western Rosella	<i>Platycercus icterotis</i>	43,46
Regent Parrot	<i>Polytelis anthopeplus</i>	46
<u>CUCULIDAE</u>		
Horsfield's Bronze- Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx basalis</i>	2,43
Shining Bronze- Cuckoo	<i>C. lucidus</i>	43
Black-eared Cuckoo	<i>C. osculans</i>	43
Pallid Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>	43,46
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>C. pyrrhophanus</i>	2,43,44,46
<u>STRIGIDAE</u>		
Southern Boobook	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	43,46
<u>PODARGIDAE</u>		
* Tawny Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	8,44,43,46
<u>CAPRIMULGIDAE</u>		
Spotted Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus guttatus</i>	1
<u>MEROPIDAE</u>		
Rainbow Bee-eater	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	42
<u>HIRUNDINIDAE</u>		
* Tree Martin	<i>Cecropis nigricans</i>	8,43,46
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	43
<u>MOTACILLIDAE</u>		
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	1,2,43,44 46

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Coracina novaehollandiae 8,43,44,46

MUSCICAPIDAE

Grey Shrike-thrush

Colluricincla harmonica 43,44,46

Southern Scrub-robin

Drymodes brunneopygia 1,43

* Western Yellow

Robin

Eopsaltria griseogularis 43,44,46

Hooded Robin

Melanodryas cucullata 43

* Jacky Winter

Microeca leucophaea 43

Restless Flycatcher

Myiagra inquieta 1,43,44,46

Crested Bellbird

Oreoica gutturalis 2,8,43,46

Golden Whistler

Pachycephala pectoralis 43

Rufous Whistler

P. rufiventris 43

Red-capped Robin

Petroica goodenovii 43

* Willie Wagtail

Rhipidura leucophrys 1,2,45,4

43,44,46

Grey Fantail

R. fuliginosa 1,43,44,46

TIMALIIDAE

White-browed Babbler

Pomatostomus superciliosus 2,43,44,46

SYLVIIDAE

Brown Songlark

Cinclorhamphus cruralis 1

MALURIDAE

Variiegated

Fairy-wren

Malurus lambertii 46

* Blue-breasted

Fairy-wren

M. pulcherrimus 43

Southern Emu-wren

Stipiturus malachurus 43

ACANTHIZIDAE

Inland Thornbill

Acanthiza apicalis 43

Yellow-rumped

Thornbill

A. chrysorrhoa 8,43,44

Brown Thornbill

A. pusilla 46

Chestnut-rumped

Thornbill

A. uropygialis 43

Western Gerygone

Gerygone fusca 43

Red-throat

S. brunneus 43,44

Shy Hylacola

S. cautus 43

White-browed

Scrubwren

S. frontalis 1,43

Calamanthus

S. fuliginosus 1,44

Weebill

Smicrornis brevirostris 42,1,43,46

NEOSITTIDAE

Varied Sittella

Daphoenositta chrysoptera 43

CLIMACTERIDAE

Rufous Treecreeper

Climacteris rufa 8,43,46MELIPHAGIDAE

Red Wattlebird

Anthochaera carunculata 2,8,43,46

Little Wattlebird

A. chrysoptera 46

Purple-gaped

Honeyeater

Lichenostomus cratitius 8,43,46

White-eared

Honeyeater

L. leucotis 1,8,43,44
46

Yellow-plumed

Honeyeater

L. ornatus 43,46

Singing Honeyeater

L. virescens 42,43,46

Brown Honeyeater

Lichmera indistincta 43,46

* Yellow-throated

Miner

Manorina flavigula 8,42,43,46

Brown-headed

Honeyeater

Melithreptus brevirostris 43,46

Tawny-crowned

Honeyeater

Phylidonyris melanops 44,46
1,2,8,43

White-cheeked

Honeyeater

P. nigra 8,43,46DICAEIDAE

Mistletoebird

Dicaeum hirundinaceum 46EPHTHIANURIDAE

* White-fronted Chat

Ephthianura albifrons 1,2,42,5
43,45,46

Crimson Chat

E. tricolor 4PARDALOTIDAE

Spotted Pardalote

Pardalotus punc 43

Striated Pardalote

P. striatus 2,8,43,45
46ZOSTEROPIDAE

Silvereye

Zosterops lateralis 43,46GRALLINIDAE

Australian Magpie-

lark

Grallina cyanoleuca 2,42,43,46ARTAMIDAE

Black-faced

Woodswallow

Artamus cinereus 1,2,5,45,
43,44,46

Dusky Woodswallow

A. cyanopterus 43,46

CRACTICIDAE

* Grey Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	1,2,43,45 46
* Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	43,1,2,42 5,8,45,4 46
Grey Currawong	<i>Strepera versicolor</i>	46,1,2,8,4 43,44,45

CORVIDAE

* Little Crow	<i>Corvus bennetti</i>	1(Ident by call)
Australian Raven	<i>C. coronoides</i>	46,1,5,43 8,44,45

2.3 ReptilesSource Codes:-

1. Dept of Fisheries & Fauna, Report No 12 (1972)
2. F S McCafferty & B J Bourke (1987) - figures in parenthesis are collection specimen references at the Western Australian Museum
3. Central South Naturalists Club & M S Graham (1987)
4. M S Graham (1987).

Common Name	Scientific Name	SourceCode
<u>GEKKONIDAE - (Geckoes)</u>		
Tree Dtella	<i>Gehyra</i> sp (cf <i>variegata</i>)	1
Thick-tailed Gecko	<i>Phyllurus milii</i>	1,2 (M96956-58 inc.)
Clawless Gecko	<i>Crenadactylus ocellatus</i> <i>ocellatus</i>	1,2,3 (M96968)
Western Spiny-tailed Gecko	<i>Diplodactylus spinigerus</i>	1
Wood Gecko (LA Smith <u>pers comm</u>)	<i>D. granariensis</i>	1
Reticulated Velvet Gecko	<i>Oedura reticulata</i>	1
Marbled Gecko	<i>Phyllodactylus marmoratus</i> <i>marmoratus</i>	1,2(M96960-63 inc.)
<u>PYGOPODIDAE - (Legless Lizards)</u>		
Burton's Snake- Lizard	<i>Lialis burtonis</i>	1
	<i>Delma fraseri</i>	1
	<i>D. australis</i>	1
<u>AGAMIDAE - (Dragon Lizards)</u>		
Ornate Dragon-Lizard	<i>Ctenophorus ornatus</i>	1,2,3 (M96959)
	<i>Tympanocryptis adelaidensis</i>	1

VARANIDAE - (Monitors)

Varanus sp 3

SCINCIDAE

*Cryptoblepharus
plagiocephalus* 1
Ctenotus impar 3
Egernia napoleonis 1,2
(M96969)
E. multiscutata bos 1
Lerista distinguenda 1
Morethia obscura 1,3

Western Blue-tongued

Lizard

Tiliqua occipitalis 4

Shingle-backed

Lizard

T. rugosa rugosa 1

ELAPIDAE

Gould's Snake

Rhinoplocephalus gouldii 1,2,3
(M96966)

TYPHLOPIDAE

Rhamphotyphlops australis 1,3

2.4 Amphibians

Source Codes:-

1. Department of Fisheries & Fauna, Report No 12 (1972)
2. K J Wallace (1980)
3. F S McCafferty (1987)

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Source Code</u>
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HYLIDAE

Litoria cyclorhynchus 1

LEPTODACTYLIDAE

Turtle Frog

Myobatrachus gouldii 1
Pseudophryne guentheri 1,2,3 (N1)
Ranidella pseudinsignifera 1

Notes:

(N1) - Specimen collected by F S McCafferty identified by WA Museum staff, however specimen not retained by the Museum due to its poor condition.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Mammals

A total of 21 species, representing 11 families, including 4 exotic species, have been recorded from the reserve.

Of the 17 native species, 12 have not been recorded since 1972 and of these two species (*Antechinomys laniger spenceri* and *Tachyglossus aculeatus*) have not been confirmed by a collection.

Two species have been declared rare or otherwise in need of special protection under the Wildlife Conservation Act; namely *Phascogale calura* and *Pseudomys occidentalis*.

The mammal records of the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve are particularly of interest in that they include species of south-western distribution and species generally considered to be restricted to the inland areas, in addition to those of widespread distribution within the southern half of the State. The breakdown of the normal area distribution is given at Figure 2.

It is noted that 38 of the species have been recorded on only a single occasion.

South Western Species	Inland Species	Widespread Species
<i>Macropus irma</i>	<i>Antechinomys laniger</i>	<i>Cercartetus concinnus</i>
<i>Phascogale calura</i>	<i>Ningauai yvonnae</i>	<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>
<i>Pseudomys occidentalis</i>	<i>Notomys alexis</i>	<i>Eptesicus regulus</i>
<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	<i>Notomys mitchellii</i>	<i>Macropus fuliginosus</i>
		<i>Nyctophilus sp</i>
		<i>Sminthopsis crassicaudata</i>
		<i>Sminthopsis murina</i>
		<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>
		<i>Tarsipes rostratus</i>

Figure 2: Mammal species of the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve by recognised usual area of distribution.

3.2 Birds

The current list of birds recorded at the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve contains 93 species from 36 families, including confirmed breeding records for 12 species.

This is a considerable expansion to the list of 59 species compiled during the 1972 survey.

The reserve contains no permanent water and consequently only two waterbird species have been recorded (Australian Shelduck and Maned Duck). In view of the lack of water the present list may be considered to be reasonably comprehensive and a reflection of the diverse dryland habitats represented in the reserve.

Some notes of specific interest are:-

- a) Species declared rare, or otherwise in need of special protection, under the Wildlife Conservation Act:-
Peregrine Falcon.
- b) Species reputed to be uncommon or under threat as a result of agricultural development, and other factors:-
Square-tailed Kite
Malleefowl
Australian Bustard.
- c) Species at, or close to, the eastern limit of their range:-
Little Wattlebird
White-tailed Black Cockatoo.
- d) Species at, or close to, the south-western limit of their range:-
Australian Bustard
White-eared Honeyeater
Crimson Chat
Black-eared Cuckoo
Bush Thick-knee
Variegated Wren
Redthroat
Chestnut-rumped Thornbill

3.3 Reptiles

The 23 reptile species recorded from the reserve are largely included in collections held in the Western Australian Museum (A A Burbidge, pers comm) and several have been confirmed by recent collections. Although this list is no doubt incomplete, the following species are at, or approaching, the limit of their range:-

Diplodactylus granariensis
Gehyra sp aff *variegata*
Lialis burtonis
Tiliqua occipitalis
Tympanocryptis adelaidensis.

3.4 Amphibians

The present list of four species is no doubt incomplete and probably reflects the seasonal timing of surveys to date. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that *Litoria cyclorhynchus* is a south coastal species and that this collection is from the northern limit of its range.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn by McKenzie, et al following the 1972 survey of the Dragon Rocks area are apparently as valid today, 16 years later, as they were at the time of writing. The lists of species recorded has not, with the exception of birds, been expanded significantly and no serious effort has been made to locate species reported as probably occurring in the area.

The present boundaries of Reserve No 36128 differ somewhat to those proposed in 1973, however the main core area remains the same. Since 1972 the surrounding land has been developed for agriculture and the Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve is now isolated from other areas of natural bushland by cleared farmland.

Consequently the priorities for the future fauna surveys of the reserve can now be broadly defined as a requirement to:

- 4.1 determine the current status of species declared as rare or otherwise in need of special protection;
- 4.2 determine the presence, or absence, of species reputed to occur, eg the Numbat and Chuditch;
- 4.3 confirm the presence of species not recorded since 1972;
- 4.4 confirm the accuracy of this summary by duplicating records for species which have only been recorded on a single occasion;
- 4.5 assess the impact of surrounding agricultural development; and
- 4.6 define management requirements, e.g. fox control.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assistance of the following individuals and groups in the collection of fauna records and the preparation of this report is gratefully acknowledged:-

Dr D J Kitchener and Mr L A Smith of the Western Australian Museum
The Central South Naturalists Club Inc.

The WA Group of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

Mrs J Vann

Dr K J Atkins

Dr A A Burbidge

Dr A H Burbidge

Mr J Rolfe

Specially appreciated is the generous hospitality of Geoff and Dianne McDonald in providing camping facilities on their property for the volunteer groups.

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