



Pine pruning.

## Sharefarming Softwood

A softwood sharefarming scheme, launched by the State Government at Manjimup in November, will take W.A. another step along the road to self-sufficiency in timber production, as well as providing employment in the south-west.

At present nearly 86 per cent of W.A.'s timber comes from hardwood forests. The remainder is coming from 40-year-old *radiata* and *pinaster* pine plantations in the Blackwood Valley, and on the Swan Coastal Plain.

The yield from hardwood forests is expected to drop significantly by 1995 to achieve

a sustained yield. To ensure a constant supply of timber for the domestic market, softwoods — which can be grown in W.A. on a 30-year-cycle — are being established now. By 2000 AD 60 per cent of the timber milled in this State will be pine.

The softwood sharefarming scheme is aimed at encouraging farmers in the south-west to plant pine on land currently being used for livestock.

The scheme offers a number of incentives which make softwood farming a competitive alternative to more traditional forms of agriculture.

To overcome the disincentive of a 30-year wait for returns from the final crop, landowners who qualify for the scheme will be paid an annuity indexed for inflation and based on the productivity of the land under pine. In addition they will also receive a percentage of the returns from the final crop. The land will be restored to a workable condition after clearfelling, either for replanting with pine, or a return to grazing or cropping.

A landowner who offers 100 ha of good quality land for planting with pine could expect to receive between \$6 000 and \$7 000 per year, with a final payment of

\$30 000 at clearfelling. In addition, the farmer could expect to be paid for maintenance work carried out on the crop, and could also generate extra income at certain stages in the 30-year-cycle by grazing sheep or cattle on the land planted with pines; this is aptly termed agroforestry.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management will manage the scheme for the government, and all operations during the crop rotation will be carried out under contract to the department.

An annual planting rate of around 2 500 ha is initially planned, and so far over 3 000 ha of rural land has been submitted for assessment to

CALM's regional office in Manjimup.

Other benefits of the scheme are that by using land already cleared the cost of planting pine can be lowered, and farms will benefit from the environmental advantages of tree planting. These include soil conservation by reducing wind and water erosion, improved pasture in areas sheltered by the trees, and in some areas lower water tables and consequently lower salinity levels.

Both local communities and the State as a whole will gain from the seasonal employment provided during the scheme, but perhaps as importantly, the move to seeking agricultural land for pine planting will significantly reduce the pressure to clear areas of native forest for softwood crops.

Right: A maturing stand of pines.

Below: The farmer could graze cattle amongst these pines after a couple of years establishment.



## THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), publishers of *Landscape*, was formed in 1985 by amalgamating the Forests Department, the National Parks Authority, and the Wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

CALM directly manages national parks and marine parks; State forests and timber reserves; nature reserves and marine nature reserves; and any associated fauna, flora and forest produce. It is also responsible for conserving flora and fauna throughout the State.

The Department manages the State's public lands on behalf of the public, and is committed to the principle of public participation. *Landscape* is one of the ways the Department hopes to achieve greater public understanding of conservation and land management issues.

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# Landscape

Volume 1, No. 4  
March 1986

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Published by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, 50 Hayman Road, Como, WA, 6152.

*Landscape* replaces *SWANS* and *Forest Focus*.

Editor: Liana Christensen

Designer: Trish Ryder

Photographers: C. Bryce, B. Lane, G. M. Morgan, K. Morris, B. & B. Wells, B. Wilson, C. Winfield.

All Maps by Department of Conservation and Land Management Mapping Section.

Page preparation Typographix — Perth

Offset plates by Photolitho-PM.

Printed in Western Australia by the Government Printing Office ISSN 0815-4465.

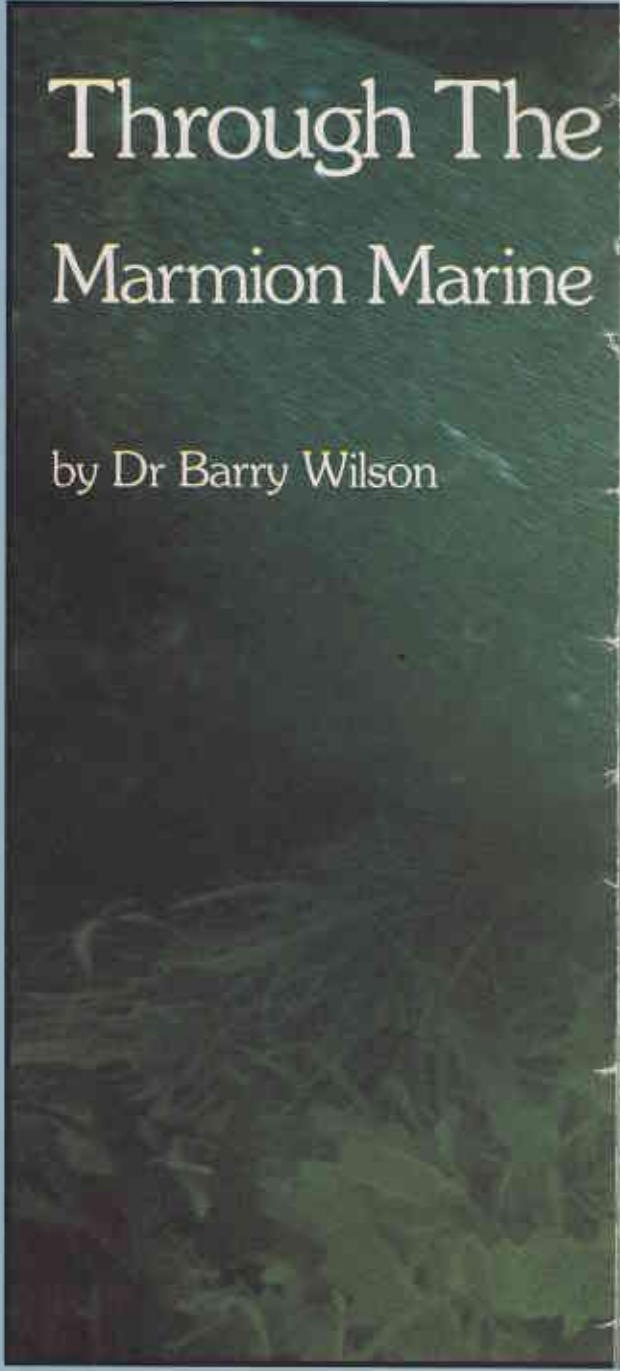
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### Cover

The Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) is a good advertisement for the value of islands (see article p. 25). It breeds on islands all along W.A.s coast from Recherche Archipelago in the south to Lacedpede Island near Broome.  
Cover photo by Cliff Winfield.

# Through The Marmion Marine

by Dr Barry Wilson



To the land-bound observer standing on the dunes of the Whitford Nodes, on Perth's north coastline, the surface of the sea beyond may be still or turbulent, but it is always two-dimensional. It is hard to realise that below the surface, on the other side of the mirror, is a three-dimensional counter-world, with varied relief and diverse habitats. This world is populated by an alien array of the most impossibly grotesque and stunningly beautiful creatures, in such abundance and variety as to leave a snorkel-diver breathless in more ways than one.