

BUSH TELEGRAPH

Red kangaroo rescue

Not quite the drama of a whale stranding, but for the four red kangaroos involved it was quite horrifying.

On Saturday 14 February 1987, I was on patrol in the Shire of Dalwallinu just west of Lake Moore at Boogoordar Rocks about one kilometre north of the State Vermin Fence looking for alleged hunters using roo dogs.

I had almost finished a spot check around Boogoordar Rocks when I noticed a piece of bird netting on the western edge of the rock outcrop, so I walked about 100 m to investigate. As it was, it turned out to be nothing to worry about.

It was 6.15 pm and still very hot so I stood there in the eerie dead silence overlooking the dry salt bed of Lake Moore. I could feel the presence of something watching me. I turned and looked over my shoulder and noticed the heads of two red kangaroos glaring at me from what appeared to be solid rock face about 40 m away from me.

As I walked over to investigate, I could hear the sloshing of water. What I was to see in the next few minutes wasn't a very pleasant sight. In my ten years as a wildlife officer I have come across all sorts of predicaments where birds and animals have come to grief, but none as horrifying as the fate that awaited these kangaroos. Not just one or two, but four kangaroos had slipped into a small gnamma hole. It was only just over 3 feet across and 9 in of water to the overflow, but they were standing in nearly 5 ft of water and had probably been there for days.

Initially, I could only see three heads, neck deep, peering out at me. Unbeknown to me a fourth kangaroo was being trodden down by the others. As I began pulling them out by the wrists, one by one, the stench of the water was terrible. They must have been there for days. They all complained bitterly, hissing and growling at me. The largest one promptly fell back into the gnamma hole and I had to pull him out again. But it was too late for him, his pitiful face looked at me as if to say 'Help me!' Again I pulled him out and laid him near the gnamma hole on some dry grass, but he quickly died — the shock and time in the water was too much, his skin was coming off his wrists as I pulled him out.

The other three kangaroos, however, had temporary paralysis and just lay there for a while. I checked them for damage, the water had badly softened the skin on their paws, but within 15 minutes they had begun to recover and pulled themselves, one by one, to their feet and hopped away under their own steam looking like three drowned rats.

It was about 6.30 by this time and still very hot, and that night also was very hot. I believe that the three roos that hopped away would have been warm enough to recover from their shock. I made the gnamma hole safe by putting pieces of wood down the hole, leaving room for water to be taken safely. If roos' prayers could be answered, the survivors would certainly say theirs were.

Robert Coughran, Wongan Hills

Leaves from the Forest



Stories from the lives of West Australian foresters

Roger Underwood
(Editor)

*If you enjoy Barney White's stories (see page 9) from the South-West you might be interested in a new book entitled **Leaves from the Forest**.*

Barney's story is among many to be found in this collection of foresters' tales. It is a fascinating piece of social history, full of local characters.

There are those remarkable individuals, like Conservator Stoate, who was equally capable at 'swamping' for a bulldozer driver building a fire-line as he was in carrying out the research for which he was well known. Not to mention George Wally Marshall Nunn, who had a profound impact on forestry in the South-West.

Nunn, it seems, was a refined man who could savour the delights of freshly sprung mushrooms cooked in the bush one at a time in his cigarette tin in the butter scraped from his mate's sandwiches; and wallow in self-pity well into his second bottle of scotch.

The history is there in the various places where the writers worked, the jobs they did, the huts and tents they lived in and shared, as well as their ingenuity, toughness and independence.

Leaves from the Forest is available from the Institute of Foresters of Australia, P.O. Box 123, Nedlands. Phone: 386 1333.

LANDSCOPE

Volume 3 No. 1
Spring Edition/September 1987

Contents	Page
Lest We Forget <i>by Helen Fordham</i>	3
Bush Telegraph	7
All My Life's A Circle <i>by Colleen Henry-Hall</i>	9
Staying Alive <i>by Liana Christensen</i>	13
Thar' She Blows <i>by John Bannister</i>	24
Nostalgic Naturalist	27
Spring Collection — photo-essay <i>text by Judith Brown</i>	28
A Thorny Problem — Crown of Thorns Starfish in W.A. <i>by Barry Wilson and James Stoddart</i>	35
The Fringing Forests of Lake Argyle <i>by Chris Done</i>	40
Urban Antics: Snakes <i>by Andrew Cribb</i>	43
Eating Up the Past <i>by Andrew Cribb</i>	44
Signs of the Times <i>by Wayne Schmidt</i>	49
Portfolio — Richard Woldendorp <i>by Sweton Stewart</i>	51
Letters	54

Executive Editor: Sweton Stewart
Editor: Liana Christensen
Designer: Trish Ryder/Robyn Mundy

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

Offset plates by Photolitho-PM.

Typesetting by Printworks.

Printed in Western Australia by the Department of Services, State Printing
Division. ISSN 0815-4465.

© All material copyright. No part of the contents of the publication may
be reproduced without the consent of the publishers.

COVER PHOTO:

Stark silhouettes evoke the spirit of our remote
regions. This photograph was taken near
Quairading by Hans Versluis.

EDITORIAL

Public participation in land management sounds like a great idea: the community has a chance to study and comment upon the government's proposals. The scientists and managers can keep their fingers on the pulse of public demand. But sometimes good ideas are hard to put into practice.

Last April the Department of Conservation and Land Management released draft management plans for the south-west forest regions, and a draft timber strategy for W.A. The release of the plans was accompanied by a series of workshops and public meetings, and extensive media releases. Four hundred and thirty-five letters offering briefings and speakers were sent out. Ninety groups responded. Public comment on any aspect of the plans and the strategy was invited.

4070 responses were received. This included 3505 proformas (from 30 organisations) and 565 substantial submissions, some up to 200 pages in length. Many submissions endorsed the plans in their entirety; some rejected them out of hand; others suggested hundreds of minor changes.

How can so many, and such varied, views possibly be integrated simply and sensibly into a final plan? What weighting should be given to the views of different groups or individuals? Who decides what is 'right' when pure value judgements are to be made and values are in conflict? How should one resolve an issue when the views of a large section of the public are quite different from those of a small group of scientists working closely on the problem? These questions represent the sharp end of public participation. It's a relatively new game for W.A.'s land managers, and one in which the rules are still unwritten and ill-defined.

What is certain is that the Department's policy and planning staff have a big job ahead of them, and a job which must be done to the highest possible professional standard. It is important that the final plans for our south-west forests reflect the tremendous thought, effort and interest shown by the community; and it is essential that there are efficient mechanisms for public involvement in conservation and land management, because these processes will be the norm, not the exception in years ahead.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

One year's subscription (4 issues) — \$10
Special Offer: Landscape Gold Star — one year's
subscription plus, one year's free entry to national parks
(excludes camping fees), plus free maps and brochures
with each issue — \$30
Back issues — \$2.50

For details please phone: 367 0437, 367 0439.



Published by Dr S. Shea, Executive Director, Department of
Conservation and Land Management, 50 Hayman Road, Como,
W.A. 6152.