

## FISH DYING IN PALLINUP ESTUARY

Reports reaching the Department from Fauna Warden J. Traynor and others indicate that following a long spell of exceptionally dry conditions the waters of Beaufort Inlet (or, as it is more commonly known, Pallinup Estuary) have become so low and de-oxygenated that vast quantities of fish, bream, mullet, ruff and whiting, have died there.

Beaufort Inlet, which is about 70 miles N.E. by E. from Albany, and Wellstead Inlet, which is about 30 miles E. of Beaufort Inlet, are recreation reserves vested in the Gnowangerup Road Board. By an amendment to the Fisheries Act passed in 1938, and never repealed, any road board in whom any waters are vested may make by-laws regulating fishing therein, and on the coming into operation of the by-laws any proclamations, regulations, etc., relating to the waters already in existence are null and void. Furthermore no proclamation or regulation issued by the Governor while the by-laws remain in force shall have any effect.

The Gnowangerup Road Board subsequently made by-laws and assumed control of the fisheries of the inlets concerned, and although by agreement between the Board and the Department the by-laws were at one time revoked and control handed back to the Department, fresh by-laws were later promulgated, and control of the fisheries once more reposed in the Board. That is the situation today.

When the Department first heard of the mortality, Inspector G. C. Jeffery, of Albany, in whose district the waters lie, made contact with the Road Board and suggested that all restrictions on fishing be lifted for a time so that the fish would not be wasted. The approach was successful and the waters were opened for a month, and fishermen Swarbrick and Heberle made one or two good hauls.

Mr. Heberle has now produced for the inspection of the Minister and head office personnel a number of photographs taken at Beaufort Inlet, as well as a sample of fish he caught there. The photographs, one or two of which will be reproduced in the next issue, bear out his statement that "hundreds of tons" of good fish had perished. The fish themselves were in shockingly poor condition, and were covered in sores.

The view of the Professional Fishermen's League, which to a large extent is shared by departmental officers, is that the control of these two fisheries should revert permanently to the Department. It is believed that as all our marine and estuarine fisheries are interdependent, any damage which may accrue to any one of them through faulty management, due either to a lack of appreciation of overall fishery problems or else to a purely parochial outlook, must be felt, to a greater or lesser degree, by all other fisheries.

#### DUCK BANDING

Warden J. Traynor has almost reached the thousand mark with his duck-banding operations. As soon as this figure is reached he will pack up his traps until next spring. His work during April has been confined to Queen's Gardens, Perth, and Lake Karrinyup, Balcatta.