

Laboratories in relation to the stability and permanence of inks used in ball-point pens and the investigations revealed that there is a serious fading which contradicates their use for recording anything which should be kept for a lengthy period.

The Registrar-General's Department and the Lands Department have instructed that ball-point pens will not be used in the preparation of documents for those departments. All Inspectors are instructed to use normal black or blue-black ink when preparing any documents that may have to be kept for two years or more.

LABORATORY AND FIELD STATION AT ROTTNESST ISLAND

The Minister for Fisheries has announced the establishment of a biological and fisheries research laboratory and field station in the old Naval buildings at Rottnest Island. The station will be used jointly by this Department, the Fisheries Division of C.S.I.R.O. and the University of Western Australia. Accommodation in the buildings will be available to inspectors when on duty at Rottnest and this Department will maintain the buildings and provide some technical assistance. The Zoology Department of the University will use the buildings for biological research into the Rottnest Wallaby. Officers of the C.S.I.R.O. will use the station to centralise its research work in the area on crayfish, ruff and other species. A committee consisting of the Superintendent (Mr. Fraser), Professor Waring of the University's Zoology Department, Mr. K. Sheard of C.S.I.R.O., and a member of the Rottnest Board of Control, will direct the activities of the station.

FAUNA PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Country Tour and Meetings

At 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning, ^{October 28,} a party of 7 comprising Committee members A. J. Fraser (Chairman), A. R. Tomlinson, G. E. Brockway, D. L. Serventy, Athol Douglas (of the Perth Museum, who deputised for Mr. L. Glauert), H. B. Shugg (Acting Secretary) and J. Traynor (Fauna Warden), left Perth by road for Kukerin.

Down along the Williams Road the party stopped to inspect some flora and the Chief Vermin Control Officer, on alighting, almost disappeared down a rabbit hole. A few feet away a Varanus gouldii was discovered stolidly surveying the party with unwinking gaze. Many miles farther on another race-horse goanna was seen, but a check of the speedo readings seemed to indicate that it must be a different specimen!

Lunch was taken at Williams and the tour continued through Wagin and Dumbleyung to Kukerin, where accommodation was arranged. The party proceeded on a foot survey on an adjacent reserve and spent an informative couple of hours in field observation. In the evening a meeting of the Committee was held from 7.30 until 9.50 p.m. in the sitting room of the local hotel.

An early breakfast next morning caught one member rather unprepared but nonetheless the party was on the road for Nyabing at 8.30 a.m. Several stops were made to inspect occurrences of mallee, blue mallet, morrell and moort, and Nyabing was reached at 10 a.m.

The Secretary of the Kent Road Board, Mr. Reg. Smith, made the Board's meeting room available to the visitors and after some most appreciated light refreshment representatives of the Board held an informal meeting with the Committee. In addition to the visiting party those present were Messrs. D. R. Moore, L. F. Haddleton and E. Hobley (Road Board members), R. H. Smith (Road Board secretary), V. F. McDougall and R. Aitken. Mr. Moore took the chair and apologised for the unavoidable absence of Mr. Paterson, Chairman of the Board. He welcomed the Committee and gave a brief survey of the local interest in flora and fauna. Mr. Fraser thanked the Board for its hospitality and explained the composition of the Committee and the purpose of the tour. He then suggested that a round-table discussion should take place and this was agreed to. The fauna mentioned included kangaroos, brush, tamar, emus, wedge-tailed eagles, foxes and rabbits. The meeting closed shortly after 12.30 and lunch was taken at the inn, the party being guests of the Road Board. A short visit was paid to the school where Mr. Aitken showed skins of fauna prepared mostly by the children themselves. The most outstanding were a

frog-mouth and a chuditch, or native cat. The latter had had six young in her pouch when taken and these had been preserved in spirit. The children obtain the specimens by salvaging any protected fauna found dead, or vermin shot by farmers.

An interesting field excursion followed when the Committee visited the property of Mr. V. F. McDougall, a local apiarist and an Honorary Warden. Most of the property is maintained as a private fauna sanctuary and left in its native state. Mr. McDougall's three sons, Malcolm, Owen and Lindsay, guided the party and showed the visitors some 15 nests they had previously discovered. Outstanding was a comparatively new Gnow's mound (but occupied last season as broken egg-shells were found near it). The mound was a perfect cone at the time, without the central hollow so commonly seen. It had been constructed in a morrell thicket and the slender trunks of this tree were growing through the mound. Later an adult Gnow was seen near the McDougall homestead. Other nests seen were as follows: Western Yellow Robin, a nest in a "gimlet", 3 ft. 6 in. from the ground, with 2 young; a second nest in a moort with 4 eggs - this is possibly a combination clutch (Serventy & Whittell, Handbook, p. 267, give 2 eggs as the normal clutch). The party was shown fragments of eggshells illustrating a colour phase not referred to in Serventy & Whittell's book, the ground colour being olive (instead of buff); Golden Whistler, in a ti-tree, with 2 eggs; Willy Wagtail, in Moort, 3 young; Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, nest in morrell (not examined); Southern Scrub-Robin, on the ground at the base of a moort trunk, one young; Restless flycatcher, in moort, 2 eggs, incubating parent remaining unmoved despite the closeness of our scrutiny; Grey Fantail, in moort, 2 eggs; Common Bronzewing, at least two nests were seen in morrells; Whistling Eagle, a nest in morrell; White-browed Babbler, several old nests. An old nest of the White-eared Honeyeater shown to us was lined with kangaroo fur. Many birds were noted. The most interesting, perhaps, was a Black-breasted Buzzard, which was the first ever seen by most of the party; its diagnostic characters were clearly observed as it flew overhead.

The party returned to Nyabing and proceeded to and arrived at Gnowangerup at 6 p.m. After dinner, the Chairman and Secretary of the Road Board were met and as the Board's office was not available arrangements were

made to hold the meeting at the Bowling Club. The meeting opened at 7.50 p.m., the Road Board representatives being the Chairman (Mr. J. E. P. Wellard), member (Mr. G. S. Hendry) and Secretary (Mr. W. J. Cuneo). A number of the Board's problems with fauna were discussed. The Committee was particularly pleased to hear the Board members state that in their opinion the wedge-tailed eagle should be protected. The members also discussed with Mr. Tomlinson the local spread of myxomatosis and detailed their successful methods of preserving the effectiveness of the virus. Some discussions also took place in respect to the mortality of fish in the estuaries under the Board's control and suggestions were made to avoid a recurrence. The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

The next morning the party left Gnowangerup at 9 o'clock and proceeded to Katanning via Tambellup and Broome hill. The Secretary of the Katanning Gun Club (Mr. T. Young) was not able to be present but the Club was represented by Messrs. B. J. Bennecke (President), N. A. Beeck, E. A. Clegg, R. Aitken and J. Robinson. Mr. Job Haddleton was also present. The meeting opened shortly after 11 and the opportunity was taken by the Committee and the Gun Club to have a most informative interchange of ideas, principally on the coming open season for duck shooting. The Gun Club members sponsored (not completely unanimously) a suggestion that night shooting should not be permitted, and that duck shooters should be licensed and the revenue from the fees should be placed in a trust fund for fauna research and conservation. The meeting closed at 1 p.m. Lunch was partaken in Katanning and the party proceeded to return to Perth.

Past Narrogin Mr. Brockway in the leading Land Rover guided the party through a Forests Department morrell plantation at Dryand and the party was impressed with the fine natural and planted morrell stands which constituted an ideal fauna reserve. Five miles from the Dryanda forestry settlement a numbat or banded ant-eater was seen as it scuttled into a hollow wandoo log on the ground. Most of the party caught only a fleeting glimpse of the little animal, and an unsatisfying one, as they peered into the log with a torch. However a mile farther along the road they were privileged to witness something which few naturalists have ever seen, a closeup view of three numbats in the wild. The animals

were frolicking alongside the road and darted with much grace and agility to a hollow wandoo log. However they paused at its entrance and one remained outside for so long that Mr. Douglas was able to approach so near as almost to touch it. The vivid colour pattern, the lithe graceful stance of the little creature, added to by the erect carriage of the tail, with hairs outstanding to form a flattened brush, made an unforgettable picture. The numbat surely must be the most attractive of all Australian marsupials.

The party had tea at North Bannister and reached Perth at approximately 9 p.m.

HONORARY WARDENS OF FAUNA

Hereunder are listed the names and addresses of persons who have been appointed honorary Wardens of Fauna under the Fauna Protection Act, 1950.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
<u>Albany</u>	
Ayres, G.P.	Bornholm, Via Albany.
Lange, B.E.	King River, Albany.
Thorne, O.	Lower Kalgan, Albany.
<u>Balingup</u>	
Blythe, G.A.	Balingup.
Scarr, H.	Box 33, Balingup.
<u>Beverley</u>	
Barrett-Lennard, G.	Annandale, Beverley.
Norris, H.W.	"Mile Pool", Beverley.
Oliver, A.L.	"Beverley Times" Office, Beverley.
Rogers, C.F.O.	Vincent Street, Beverley.
Spaven, H.G.	Box 26, Beverley.
Strange, A.R.	West Beverley
Wood, A.A.	County Peak, Beverley.
Wood, F.R.	Beverley.