

August 10, 1954.

"SHAGS

As to Habits and Habitat

Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Would it be correct to state that shags are increasing greatly on the Swan River?

(2) What means of ascertaining this data is adopted?

(3) Is it a fact that shags are responsible for the destruction of large quantities of edible fish?

(4) Has the department carried out any investigation which would indicate the quantity and specie of fish mostly consumed by shags?

(5) Are shags common to any other parts of the world?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Observations by departmental officers.

(3) No.

(4) Investigations lasting almost 12 months were carried out in 1936 by Dr. D.L. Serventy, then on the staff of the Biology Department of the University, and departmental officers. During the course of the investigation, hundreds of shags ~~on~~ as they are more correctly termed, "cormorants" were shot and the stomach contents examined. With the exception of cobblers, the number of sporting or commercial species in the stomachs was negligible. "Rubbish" fish like gobies, gobbleguts and hardyheads, were found almost exclusively. Twelve months ago, in my

office, several cormorants were dissected and the stomachs examined. On that occasion, it was found that there were no commercial fishes, but merely gobies and hardyheads. A few shrimps (not prawns) were also present.

(5) Yes. Their distribution is practically world-wide."

August 11, 1954.

"CRABS

As to Swan River Population

Hon. C.F.J. NORTH asked the Minister for Fisheries:

Will he have the following questions, which have been submitted by an interested elector, examined and advise the House whether they throw any further light upon the problem of the absent crabs last summer.

(1) Was the 1953 rainfall from May to August high?.

(2) Was water present of a salinity of 200 grains to the gallon for any time and to what depth.

(3) Were hauling seine sunk nets used in the Swan estuary from May to August, 1953?

(4) What weight of flounder, flathead and crabs was caught by licensed fishermen during those months?

(5) How long will a blue manna live in fresh water?

(6) Is it not likely that many undersized crabs were destroyed by being dragged from deep water, 20 feet or over, into shallows of 5 feet or less?