

FAUNA PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above Committee was held in the Department's board room on Tuesday, June 7. The Chairman (Mr. A.J. Fraser) and all members of the Committee were present. The Secretary (Mr. H.B. Shugg) was also in attendance. The following were the main items discussed -

Sanctuaries :

Considerable discussion took place with regard to proposed sanctuaries and fauna reserves throughout the State. The Secretary, when reporting on progress made, referred to Bibra Lake near Jandakot which the Committee desired to be set aside for the preservation of its aquatic fauna. The Lands Department had advised that this lake was reserved for the purpose of public recreation and had recently been vested in the Cockburn Road Board. Negotiations by the Department with the Board were successful in that the latter had agreed to gazette by-laws restricting the carriage and discharge of firearms on the reserve.

Following advice from an honorary warden in the district, an endeavour was made to secure Thomson Lake, a few miles south of Bibra Lake, as a fauna sanctuary. It was revealed, however, that this lake and its adjoining reserve, which harbours a rich variety of fauna, is vested in the Public Works Department for drainage purposes. An application has been lodged with the Lands Department to have "fauna protection" included as a purpose of the reserve. If this is done it would automatically become a sanctuary for fauna and, to some extent, under the control of the Committee.

A decision is shortly to be made by the Lands Department on the question of reserving for fauna all the rocks and islands between Penguin Island and Cape Peron. Some of these islands are richly endowed with bird life and form the northernmost nesting ground of the fairy penguin.

The Committee reaffirmed its desire to see a large national park and fauna sanctuary declared in the area between Mandurah and Bunbury, embracing all

the waters of Peel Inlet and the Harvey Estuary and the whole of Lakes Clifton and Preston and the adjoining small lakes and swamps. It was decided that representatives of the Committee, together with the Chief Vermin Control Officer, Mr. A.R. Tomlinson, carry out a survey of the area and also meet members of the road boards concerned and discuss aspects of fauna conservation and vermin control in the area.

To clarify the legal position regarding fauna reserves, advice was sought from the Crown Law Department. The Acting Crown Solicitor said that in his opinion :-

- (i) any land reserved under Section 29(g) of the Land Act for the conservation of fauna is automatically a sanctuary;
- (ii) it is possible to make regulations providing for protection of fauna in a sanctuary notwithstanding that the control of the sanctuary has been vested in another body;
- (iii) it is possible to make regulations providing for the control of any such sanctuary by the Committee, but only to the extent of carrying out the purposes and intentions of the Fauna Protection Act;
- (iv) no regulations should be gazetted which are inconsistent with any regulations made under the provisions of the Fishing, Vermin, Whaling and Zoological Gardens Acts which over-ride the Fauna Protection Act;
- (v) any regulations made in respect to a sanctuary controlled by another body should be made only after close liaison with the other body.

Interstate Fauna Conference :

The Chairman explained that the purpose of the proposed Conference was to improve interstate co-operation on fauna conservation and protection. It had been decided to hold the Conference in September and to formally open it on Tuesday, September 20. Delegates from all the other States and from the

Northern Territory, and observers from the C.S.I.R.O., are expected to be present. They will be taken on a field trip to the Dryandra Forest Reserve in the Cuballing Road District and to the Pemberton forest area and trout hatchery before the formal discussions are commenced. A visit will probably be made to Rottneest Island.

The Committee agreed that a symposium on fauna conservation should be held at the conclusion of the conference. It was decided to invite speakers from the Royal Society, W.A. Naturalists' Club, the Zoology Department of the University and the Wildlife Survey Section of C.S.I.R.O. The Chairman said that speakers would be asked to prepare papers which could later be published as a permanent record.

Open Season :

(a) Kangaroos: After considering replies to a questionnaire from those districts where there was an open season last year, the Committee decided to recommend an open season this year in a reduced number of districts. Members thought that it was of little use proclaiming an open season in those areas where farmers had been unable to take advantage of previous openings. It recommended to the Minister that an open season be declared from July 15 to November 30 in the Upper Blackwood, Plantagenet, Manjimup, Tambellup and Gingin Road Districts.

(b) Emus: The Committee discussed the effectiveness of the open season last year in the Albany, Denmark, Manjimup and Plantagenet districts, and decided that a further open season this year was not warranted in any of the areas where emus are protected.

(c) Bronzewing Pigeons: Complaints had been received from the Capel area that bronzewings were particularly troublesome in the clover paddocks, and caused serious damage. The Committee believed that the position was not serious enough to warrant an open season. It resolved to recommend to any farmers who were troubled that they take advantage of the permit system by obtaining a license authorising the destruction of protected fauna causing damage to property.

(d) Finches: As reports indicated that bird life in the Kimberley Division had enjoyed a good season, and it was anticipated that finches would be plentiful, it was decided to recommend the usual open season this year from September 1 to December 31.