

ROTTNEST BIOLOGICAL STATION COMMITTEE

The quarterly meeting of this committee met at the Fisheries Department, Perth, on January 24. Those present were Mr. A.J. Fraser (Chairman), Drs. E.P. Hodgkin, K. Sheard and G.M. Dunnet, and Mr. T. Sten. The Secretary (Mr. B.K. Bowen) was also in attendance.

Reports containing information of general interest were submitted by Dr. Hodgkin (University), Dr. Dunnet (C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Survey Section) and Dr. Sheard (C.S.I.R.O. Division of Fisheries and Oceanography). The following is a summary of those reports -

(1) Dr. Hodgkin said the annual students' camp had been held at the station in November. The twenty students present had been engaged, among other things, on population studies of the Rottnest quokka and marine organisms. He said the examination of blood samples from the quokka was being continued, as were nutritional experiments on the animal.

(2) Dr. Dunnet stated that the quokka census was still being carried out on part of the Island. To capture the animals nets of about 100 yards in length were being used at Lake Bagdad and Serpentine Lake, where the quokkas came to drink, every second week. Some difficulties had arisen in estimating the population owing to the definite pattern movements of the quokkas. One thousand nine hundred quokkas had now been colour-marked. He estimated the population at being not less than 10,000, but the work had not proceeded far enough to make an accurate assessment.

(3) Dr. Sheard reported that Mr. R.W. George had successfully fenced off a rock pool in Wilson's Bay to facilitate the study of the reproduction of crayfish, their nutrition and growth rate, and the effects of intra-specific competition among crayfish.