

EXPORT OF FAUNA.

The Acting Collector of Customs for Western Australia has advised of two decisions reached by his Department in relation to the export of native fauna. The first was that the export of fauna for scientific purposes may be allowed if approved by the State authority, but each case will be treated on its merits. The second was that overseas bound passengers may take with them only those pets to which they have become attached. They would not be allowed to take fauna purchased immediately prior to their departure. It will be remembered that the Commonwealth Government recently placed an almost total ban on the export of native fauna regardless of the views of the States.

The Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Hutchinson, recently received from his counterpart in New South Wales (the Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourist Activities in that State, Mr. C. A. Kelly) a request that Western Australia should allow only certain fauna to be exported to New South Wales. On behalf of the Fauna Protection Panel of his State, Mr. Kelly said that it had been decided to discontinue issuing licenses for the import from other States of birds which are protected in New South Wales.

In reply, Mr. Hutchinson said that the action of the Commonwealth Government in prohibiting the overseas export of fauna had already reacted to the detriment of trappers and dealers in this State and implied that this new move would further adversely affect the livelihood of established dealers. In view of the likely effect of the Panel's policy, and because of certain constitutional issues involved, Mr. Hutchinson requested that the matter be deferred until all States had the opportunity of discussing its wider implications at the forthcoming interstate conference of fauna authorities to be held in Brisbane in September.

SEAWEED AT MANDURAH.

During the visit of the Minister and Director to Mandurah last month, representatives of the Mandurah Chamber of Commerce and the Mandurah Licensed Fishermen's Association asked that something be done to counteract the spread of an algal organism which became entangled with fishing nets, causing them to roll up and to lose their efficiency. Subsequently, the advice of Dr. J. M. Thomson, Acting Chief of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., was sought. Dr. Thomson has suggested that an exact identification of the organism seemed desirable and in pursuance of that suggestion arrangements have now been made for Mr. G. G. Smith of the Botany Department of the University of Western Australia to give us a report.

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Dr. Thomson pointed out that the weed was probably one of the filamentous algae usually referred to by fishermen as slime. While it could be killed by certain weedicides, or towed ashore, its removal would reduce the food values in the estuary and affect its carrying capacity. Dr. Thomson likened the process of removing the algae to mowing a paddock and removing the cropped grass which reduced the amount of food available to the stock in the paddock. He suggested that nature should be allowed to take its course. With the onset of late summer and autumn, he said, the weed would die off and would help replenish the estuarine nutrients which were essential, indirectly, to all the plant and animal life of the estuary.