

UNUSUAL EXPORTS

Licenses have recently been issued under the Fauna Protection Act to allow salt-water crocodile skins and emu skins to be exported from the State on a trial basis. The crocodile skins were forwarded from Broome by a person licensed to hunt these reptiles for gain or reward. Emu skins were sent by one of Fremantle's well-known skin dealers as samples to satisfy an inquiry in the eastern States to investigate the possibilities of an overseas market. Both licenses were issued on a trial basis, free of fees and royalty.

PLATYPUS AND WHITE IBIS REPORTED IN SOUTH WEST

Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan caused a fluttering in the dovecotes when, on August 21, he reported having on the previous day seen a platypus in waters north of Perth. About midday he had waded approximately 60 ft. out from the bank of a small lake, or bayou, connected with the upper reaches of the Swan River system, and was standing motionless in about 3 ft. of water on the fringe of a dense paper-bark thicket, when he saw a small furred animal swimming on the surface towards him. He said that at first he thought it to be a water rat, but as it drew closer he realised that it was a platypus. He said that the animal continued to swim leisurely towards him till it was less than 3 ft. away, when upon a slight movement on the watcher's part it dived into a tangled mass of fallen tree limbs. Mr McLaughlan asserted that there was absolutely no possibility of mistaken identity, as he had the animal under observation for almost three minutes. He used binoculars first, but later they were not necessary as the animal came close enough for him to touch it.

While it is suspected that a number of attempts have been made to acclimatise these monotremes in Western Australia, the only actual record is that of a pair forwarded by Mr David Fleay, when he was at the Healsville Sanctuary in Victoria. They were airfreighted to Perth in March, 1951, and subsequently released, we believe, in Mahogany Creek in the John Forrest National Park, Swan View. Incredible as it may seem that the observation was factual, Mr McLaughlan is in no doubt about it and attempts to record further observations will be made in the near future.

In an earlier report, Mr McLaughlan said that during the afternoon of August 15, in the company of Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler, he observed a flock of six white ibis

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(Threskiornis aethiopica) on the southern bank of Bibra Lake, a few miles south of Fremantle. He added that the identification was positive, as the officers walked to within two hundred feet of the birds and, with the aid of binoculars, had them under observation while they were feeding on the ground.