

While in Perth Dr Thomson and Dr Chittleborough will attend a conference of representatives of local whaling companies on sperm whale research. The Director will also be present with Mr Saville, and Mr D.J. Gates, of the Fisheries Division, Department of Primary Industry, Canberra, will represent that Division.

During their 10 days' stay in the State, Dr Thomson and Mr Stark will visit Bunbury and Albany in connection with the Australian salmon research programme now in train.

Congratulations are extended to Dr G.F. Mees, Curator of Vertebrates in the Western Australian Museum, who has been awarded an \$1800 U.S. study tour grant. Dr Mees will leave in February for museum and field studies in ornithology in Malaya, Europe and the United States.

PROFESSIONAL CADETSHIPS

We are very happy to announce that approval has been signified to the creation of two professional cadetships in the Department. The selected applicants, who must have matriculated in science, will be given three years' training, leading to a B.Sc. degree, in the University of Western Australia. While both cadets will major in Zoology, one will be trained for research work in fisheries and the other in fauna conservation and wildlife management.

THE NOISY SCRUB-BIRD

For many years now, the epitome of wishful thinking in ornithological circles has been to dream of finding the Noisy Scrub-bird. The scattered reports of sightings of this elusive will-o'-the-wisp over the years have never failed to bring forth the sceptically ironic grimaces which the expert reserves for the wilder "boners" of the hopeful amateur. A report that this species had been seen was ipso facto proof of the mental aberration of the claimant. And probably rightly so in many cases, but some now seem likely to have been factual.

On Christmas morning ornithologists were given the nicest present most could imagine. It was the authentic-sounding report by Harley Webster, of Albany, a well-known and respected worker, that he had cracked one of

the biggest wildlife jackpots of recent times in re-discovering the Noisy Scrub-bird, previously lost to science for more than sixty years.

This shattering news whisked Dr D.L. Serventy from his home, despite the family-importance of the season, and in short time he had joined Mr Webster and had confirmed beyond doubt that the truant had been found. Since then a number of ornithologists have made the pilgrimage to Two People Bay and have been rewarded with sightings of the bird. They include honorary warden Julian Ford and Advisory Committee member J.B. Higham. Mr Ford must be acknowledged as unlucky to have missed making the discovery for he revealed to the Department many months ago his belief that the bird existed in the area and he had spent some time searching for it.

Serventy and Whittell, in their "Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia", recorded that the Noisy Scrub-bird had been collected by only four naturalists - John Gilbert, the noted collector who obtained the type specimen, George Masters, William Webb and A.J. Campbell. It was the latter who collected at Torbay in 1899 the last specimen known to science. As Dr Serventy has written since the re-discovery, Webster's find completed a remarkable year in the restoration to the living of species of Australian fauna previously considered to be extinct. In the one year, 1961, the Night Parrot and Goyder's Grass-Wren were found in central Australia, Leadbeater's Possum in Victoria and finally the Noisy Scrub-bird in this State.

The area where Mr Webster has found the bird includes land already reserved and it is expected that a special reservation will be made, either as a national park or as a sanctuary. Other precautionary protective measures, including a complete ban on the taking of specimens, will be imposed. Arrangements for the close study of the creature in its environment are being made.