

been applied and others are to be introduced. They were agreed upon at the last meeting of the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee and have been endorsed by the Minister for Fisheries, Mr Ross Hutchinson.

A list of rare fauna will be drawn up and collecting of the named species will be prohibited or permitted only under strictly controlled conditions. A total ban has been applied on the taking of the short-necked tortoise and the noisy scrub-bird. Other species which will be similarly protected are the rufous and western bristle-bird, the western whipbird and the ground parrot. It is probable that some marsupial species will also be included.

With the exception of one small lot, negotiations for the acquisition by the Crown of the Bullsbrook swamps where the short-necked tortoise was found, have almost been completed. The final acquisition of the land, however, will not mean that our worries in the care of this rare species will end. Indeed, although it will be a relief to have the area reserved, and fenced, it will mark the commencement of new problems of management, while the onset of the first winter rains will see wardens and honorary workers paddling about all over the place searching for additional populations.

Approaches for the protection of the habitat of the noisy scrub-bird have been made to the Lands Department by this Department as well as by the National Parks Board. Both authorities are seeking to achieve the postponement of the development of the Two People Bay townsite, as well as the reserving of the surrounding areas, where a series of species of other rare fauna, including both bristle-birds and the western whipbird, occur. It is expected that tourists will be attracted to the area, not only to glimpse the rare fauna to be observed there, but also to enjoy the magnificent scenery and rugged terrain of the whole promontory, which includes Mount Gardner and its surrounding and densely vegetated ravines.

#### FISH MORTALITY

In the February, 1962, edition of "Fisheries Newsletter", Dr G.L. Kesteven wrote at length on the phenomena of mass fish mortalities. Another instance of such occurrences has been reported by Supervising Inspector J.B. Bramley. On Saturday morning, March 24, while aboard the p.v. "Dampier" with Skipper A.T. Pearce, and crew member, L. Frizzell, Mr Bramley observed a vast quantity of dead atherines (silver-sides) in the waters of the

southernmost group of Houtman Abrolhos. He said that fishermen potting in the centre of the group had reported that the atherines were floating on the surface in large quantities over an extensive area in the group. A very large mass was noticed in Whales Bay, where sharks and tuna were seen to be feeding on them on the surface. Mr Bramley says it occurred to them that the mortality might have been caused by underwater explosions and the crew checked to see whether explosives had been used in attempts to free the reef-stranded "Morning Star". These investigations showed, however, that none had been used so the cause of the mortality remains a mystery.