

Despite the open season in those districts, any person wishing to take kangaroos for gain or reward, or to sell their meat or skins, must be licensed. The open season has the effect of allowing farmers to destroy kangaroos causing damage without the need to apply for individual licenses and to authorise licensed professional hunters to operate. It also, of course, permits sporting shooters to follow their sport within the affected districts.

FISH MORTALITY IN SHARK BAY

Early last month, the Minister for Fisheries issued a press release on the result of the investigation ordered by him into the phenomenon of the large-scale fish mortality reported in Shark Bay last April.

It was established that the majority of fish killed were deep-water reef varieties, such as gropers, cods, wrasses, parrot fishes and blow-fishes. The water was olive-green in colour and looked dirty. It was so thick that even in shallow water it was impossible to see the bottom. The surface was covered with a slimy substance, apparently decomposed algae. It emitted a most unpleasant odour, redolent with the smell of stagnation, and it was thought probable that the mortality was caused by de-oxygenation of the water resulting from the take-up of oxygen by the decomposing algae.

FAUNA NOTES

An honorary warden, Mr R.T. Wells, of Mingenew, wrote last month that he was mustering sheep about 6 a.m. on May 4 when he disturbed a fox from a patch of scrub. It was immediately pursued by an eagle. The fox, he said, would run about 2 chains then "bail up". The eagle would settle on the ground nearby until the fox started running again, whereon the strange pursuit would recommence. Mr Wells said that his "hack" these days is a Volkswagon car and with it he aided the hunt by tooting the horn to keep the fox on the move. Unfortunately, he concluded, the fox managed to reach another patch of scrub and Mr Wells had to leave to continue his job so that he did not see the end of the affair.

Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan made an unusual "arrest" on April 30. At Greenmount, on the roadside, at least twenty miles from its natural marine haunts, a little, or fairy, penguin (Eudyptula minor) was found wandering at large. He was taken into protective custody and released in Fremantle Harbour.