

the board room of the Farmers' Union Building, in Adelaide Terrace, Perth.

TUNA SURVEYS TO END

Both the aerial and surface tuna surveys will be completed this month. The "Estelle Star", the 85-ft. vessel chartered by the Commonwealth Government to survey the commercial potential of tuna fishing off the south coast, will sail from Albany on July 6. After calling at Esperance, she will return to her home port in South Australia. It will be remembered that the "Estelle Star" was chartered in that State and sailed from Port Lincoln on August 2, 1961, to undertake the survey, which was conducted in the waters of our south coast and off the west coast as far north as Jurien Bay. She is now being sold.

The aerial surveys, which have been conducted by a twin-engined chartered aircraft, will be concluded with a flight over the offshelf area, west of Rottnest. Mr K. Godfrey, Technical Officer of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., who has been acting as spotter, informs us that no tuna have been sighted in any of the aerial surveys to date. Although the "Estelle Star", towards the end of her programme, was taking up to 400-500 tuna a day, the fish were not visible from the air as they were being enticed up from deep waters by live bait. Sightings during the aerial survey, Mr Godfrey says, were virtually limited to whales and pilchards.

FAUNA NOTES

Miss C.A. Nicholls, who nurses a great number and variety of sick and injured birds back to health, recently advised that two black swans were fit to face the world again. Before being released on May 4, the birds were banded with rings numbered 150-01207 and 150-01208, respectively. The first was turned loose in Queen's Gardens, Perth, and the second at the Como Jetty. The latter bird "crash landed" at 150 Waterloo Street, Tuart Hill, on May 9, but on being retrieved was found to be unharmed and was released again at Como.

Mr R. Kirkham, of 300 Great Eastern Highway, Midland, rang to say that he had, on May 10, found the body of a native cat, or chudich (Dasyurus geoffroii),

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on the side of the road at the 42-mile peg on the Great Eastern Highway. This was the second report in recent weeks of this now rarely seen, but one-time common, carnivorous marsupial having fallen victim in the rising tide of road fatalities.

The Fleet Maintenance Officer, Mr A.J. Bateman, reported that on June 25 he sighted a black-browed albatross, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the North Mole at Fremantle. The occurrence of this species in the waters between Rottnest and the mainland is most unusual, he says.

The first report of the capture of a banded giant petrel comes from Assistant Inspector D.H. Smith. The bird was caught at North Beach by Mr Eric Sullivan, on June 14, and was found to be carrying band No. 50-15451. The bird was released on the same day by Mr Smith at Fremantle Harbour and when last seen was swimming out to sea. Thanks are extended to Mr Smith, not only for the report, but also for his proper releasing of the bird with the band intact. Incidentally, in a private letter, Dr D.L. Serventy (who is at present overseas) writes that the banding authorities have personally expressed to him their sincere thanks for the part being played by departmental officers and other observers in recording the details of band recoveries.

Evidence of quite large populations of possums were observed by Fauna Protection Officer H.B. Shugg and Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler in the forest country near Nannup early last month. The officers were taken to an area around St. John's Brook by a Busselton naturalist, Mr R.A. Breeden, and were later joined by his friend, Mr A. Chugg. The party carried out day and night surveys by road and on foot of a considerable section of the forest country in the area. Evidence of pockets of quite heavy possum populations were the well-defined tracks up trees and a plenitude of scats. Perhaps due to fairly continuous rain, no possums were seen. However, sightings of a few kangaroos and a larger number of brush wallabies and one wambenger were recorded. The possums, apparently, were more-mindful of the unpleasant weather than were the enthusiastic searchers!

Mr D. Gibbs, of 195 Walcott Street, Broome,

wrote that when on his way fishing one day last April, he had sighted a black swan in the sea near the town wharf. This was only the second he had seen near Broome in the last 12 years. Mr D. Wright, Mate of the r.v. "Peron", also reported having observed black swans at sea. On April 10, and again on April 12 and 13, he saw them feeding in Tegg's Channel, Carnarvon. Later, on May 17, he observed one sitting on the water approximately 100 yards from the vessel, which was then in Block 64 of Shark Bay. He said it was quite unperturbed by the presence of the vessel and its crew and it was still in sight when darkness fell. The sea that day was a flat calm. Mr Wright added that in April last, local residents had reported that swans were also observed upstream and at the northern mouth of the Gascoyne River, but only in flocks of five or six.

In a series of good reports on bird observations, Mr Wright mentioned in May that he had not sighted any Australian gannets during the period since February when the "Peron" had been in Shark Bay waters. He asked whether they appeared to be in normal numbers farther south. Coincidentally, Inspector E.I. Forster, of the p.v. "Kooruldhoo", reported in his diary on June 30 that he had sighted 14 adult and 1 juvenile Australian gannet approximately 1 mile from the North Mole at Fremantle. He mentioned that the vessel was able to approach within 100 yards of the birds before they lifted. Comment on the normality of occurrences of the species in waters from Geraldton south would be appreciated.

PRAWNS

Research Officer R.J. Slack-Smith has established a colony of prawns in marine tanks in the laboratories at Head Office. To be used for experimental purposes, they were caught in the Swan River in May and June, and comprised a king prawn (Penaeus latisulcatus) and a number of Swan River or greasy-back prawns (Metapenaeus dalli). They are being fed on a diet of finely-ground fresh mullet and appear to be doing very well. Mr Slack-Smith is quite pleased with the progress of the prawn research programme as a whole, and it is stimulating to have commercial exploitation continuing hand in hand with the research programme.

Mr W.S. Wilson, the American marine biologist, who as reported earlier in this issue spent a few days aboard the r.v. "Peron", handed over the following recipe to Mr Slack-Smith with thanks for the hospitality extended