

diminution in the numbers of the saltwater crocodile. We consider the animal worthy of protection and in need of conservation.

With controls over export exercised at ports, the legal protection afforded the creature can be enforced with some measure of efficiency. However, we are somewhat embarrassed by claims that consignments of skins have been brought into this State from animals taken in the Northern Territory. We are concerned too that consignments could easily be transported from this State to the Northern Territory or Queensland for shipment from ports outside our control. It would be of considerable help if the Northern Territory and Queensland were to bring in complementary measures in their areas - if only in relation to control over imports and exports - so that there could be co-operation in respect to the policing of illegal trading in this State. The Commonwealth, too, could assist by refusing permission to export until the State authority granted an export permit similar to that issued for other fauna.

We in Western Australia have so far been able to resist attempts by traders to bring freshwater tortoises into Western Australia for sale. As delegates might recall, the fad of keeping immature specimens of those creatures in bottles flared up some time ago, and branches of chain-stores in Perth sought to bring in large numbers. Fearing that their owners would tire of them and release them in lakes and streams, we gave short shrift to the proposal to introduce the fad and the animals into this State. Too little was known of the life history of our Short-necked Tortoise (Pseudemys umbrina) to say whether the eastern States animal (Emydura macquarii) would be a competitor in the same ecological niche. However, the risk that it could be so was not worth taking. The provisions of section 92 of the Constitution loom as a threat to local protection laws, particularly when there are no complementary ones in other States. It would, therefore, be of considerable assistance to Western Australia if the other States and the Territories would take power to exercise control over reptiles, so that we could secure their co-operation in these matters.

NOTES FROM THE NEWS

Spotlighting on Roads:

A Bill introduced into Parliament last month is

expected to assist to some degree the problems of fauna wardens in policing illegal kangaroo shooting. The Bill seeks to strengthen the control over spotlight shooting on roads throughout the State by amendment to the Firearms and Guns Act. On the other hand, the result might be that shooters will be forced to operate deeper in forest country where illegal hunting will be more difficult to intercept.