

Senior Research Officer B.K. Bowen will leave Perth on October 28 to attend a course in population dynamics in applied fisheries research to be held in Sydney. He will return on November 11.

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Mr. G.C. Ferguson, of Head Office, returned to duty after annual leave on September 24.

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Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan returned to Perth by air from Broome, on September 20. A résumé of his report will be published in the next issue.

#### VALE ROY DOWNEY

A recent press report says that the search for Roy Downey has been abandoned and he must be presumed to have lost his life while crayfishing off the south coast of Tasmania. Mr Downey was skippering his own 52-ft. vessel "Woodanah" at the time and was believed to be fishing around the 27 fathom line when some particularly bad weather broke in the area. It is understood that Mr Downey had only one crew member with him and that an air search failed to find any trace of the vessel or the men. Mr Downey was well known in this State first as mate of the then C.S.I.R.'s research vessel "Warreen", and later as skipper of its "Derwent Hunter". Borne at Tyne Dock in England in 1914, Mr Downey came to Western Australia at the age of eight and was educated first at Narrikup and later at Albany High School where he was awarded an inspector's scholarship. A forceful and colourful personality, Mr Downey was a master mariner with a Board of Trade ticket. He leaves behind a wife and two sons living in Snug, Tasmania. To them and to other members of his bereaved family we extend our sincere sympathy.

#### AUSTRALIAN FAUNA AUTHORITIES CONFERENCE

The Director, Mr A.J. Fraser, and Fauna Protection Officer H.B. Shugg, who were this State's delegates at the Conference held in Hobart from September 4 to 6, report that it was a very successful one and that this State's background papers (which were published in the previous issue) were well received. Resolutions in respect of each were carried on the motions arising from them.

In due course, when copies of the full report of the Conference have been received from the secretariat, they will be available, through our Library service, for perusal by any staff members. For general information, however, the resolutions carried at the Conference are published hereunder, the headings being editorial addenda-

1. Key to Conservation:

Conference stresses that the essential factor in conservation of fauna is the preservation of habitats and recognition of the factors that may impair them.

A primary object of all Fauna Authorities therefore should be to ensure public appreciation of this important principle.

The preservation of habitats should include the reservation of representative samples of all the environments within each State or Territory and should be of adequate volume. This should be considered by the appropriate authorities in the planning of land development schemes.

There should also be continued recognition of the value of other types of reserves such as native forests, water catchments and even such restricted samples as roadside verges, natural and planted woodlots, farm dams, crop headlands and riparian fringes.

Attention is directed to the factors which seriously impair the efficiency of natural habitats, these including:-

- Grazing of domestic stock on wildlife habitats,
- Unbalanced land development projects,
- Unnecessary firing of lands,
- Clearing of vegetation along stream banks,
- Stream pollution from industrial developments,
- Over-zealous drainage of wet lands,
- The establishment of excessive stands of exotic trees, e.g., pines, which create local ecological deserts,
- Some aspects of river or stream flow control,
- Release of exotics,
- Misuse of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals,
- Undesirable husbandry practices such as wholesale removal of trees in pastures and other practices that lead to soil erosion and stream siltation and salt encroachment.

2. Do Pesticides, etc., kill fauna:

Conference, while appreciating their value to



agriculture, expresses its grave concern at the potential danger to wildlife communities of the increasing use of Compound 1080 and other pesticides, chemicals, etc.

An investigation of these matters would be a difficult task and beyond the immediate resources of existing organisations and Conference therefore recommends that the Commonwealth Government makes adequate finance available for an investigation of the effects of these substances on Australian fauna.

3. Water and Fauna Conservation:

Conference stresses the need for State and Commonwealth bodies to consult with the appropriate Fauna Authorities in the planning stages of water conservation schemes such as the proposed Chowilla Dam on the Murray River, the hydro-electric scheme on the Mersey River in Tasmania, and other like projects.

4. Powers wanted to control release of Exotics:

Conference is opposed to the introduction and release of exotic fauna. It recommends that fauna authorities be given adequate power through Legislation to control the release of fauna.

5. Exploitation of 'Roos causes concern:

Because of the severe diminution of red kangaroo populations in some areas, Conference believes a more cautious approach in marsupial utilisation should be adopted. It recommends that in some places, notably in New South Wales, strong measures be taken to restrict the taking of kangaroos and that other States and Territories review the position in their areas and gather accurate data.

6. Bagging for Waterfowl Research:

Conference adopts the report of the Australian Waterfowl Advisory Committee and stresses the importance of adequate staffing by all States and Territories to carry out the essential work envisaged in the reports.

7. Wanted - Vital Information:

Conference agrees that there is a pressing need for field surveys to provide the basis for the conservation of Australian animals. It resolves that a Committee be set up -

- (a) to determine what has been done in this field in Australia;

- (b) to seek to co-ordinate activities of all bodies in this work;
- (c) to contact the Australian Academy of Science and advise that body of the determinations of this Conference and confer with it on any future programme; and
- (d) to report to the next Conference.

8. Reptiles deserve protection:

Conference having considered a submission by Western Australia on the protection of reptiles, recommends that all States and Territories review the need for conservation of these animals and that the Department of Customs and Excise co-operate with those States where protective restrictions already apply.

9. Zoo security standards:

Conference is concerned at the release of animals from quarantine and the transfer of others from A Class zoos to those of lower security standards. It requests the Commonwealth Department of Health not to permit any live animal to be released from quarantine or transferred without the acquiescence of the relevant fauna authorities.

10. Poisons and Pesticides - authority for sale:

Conference recommends that the attention of State and Commonwealth authorities responsible for the registration of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals be drawn to the necessity of considering also the potential effect of these substances on wildlife before authorising their sale and use.