

1. Investigation of phyllocoma larvae of Western Australian Crayfish, by R.W. George and P. Cawthorn;
2. Length frequency and growth rate studies of the Western Australian crayfish, by B.K. Bowen;
3. Exploratory fishing and biological studies of prawns, by R.J. Slack-Smith;
4. Catches of Australian salmon in Western Australia in 1961 and 1962, by W.B. Malcolm;
5. Research on humpback and sperm whales in Western Australian waters, by R.G. Chittleborough;
6. Monofilament nets and net selectivity generally, by J.M. Thomson;
7. Legal minimum crayfish tail weight, by B.K. Bowen;
8. Proposals for the establishment of marine sciences institute, by E.P. Hodgkin, of the University of W.A.;
9. A report by the project leader, by J.M. Thomson;
10. The responsibilities of committee members, the organisations represented, the project leader and research personnel, by J.M. Thomson.

In addition, addresses were given by Mr J.A. Gulland of the Fisheries Research Laboratory, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Lowestoft, England, on population dynamics in fisheries, and by Mr A.A. Stark, biometrician of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, who has been seconded to the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O.

Copies of the reports of the proceedings of the Committee, including summaries of the addresses, will be made available in due course to all members of the staff.

FAUNA NOTES

Following reports of unusual biological phenomena in last month's issue, it is of interest to note that Mr W.H. Miller, of Albany, when applying for a renewal of his professional hunter's license, said that he had recently found twin joeys in a doc's pouch. Unfortunately, he said, they were too immature to survive.

Honorary warden H.C. Atkinson, of Bibra Lake, advised last month that last August he had captured a specimen of the long-tailed dunnart (Sminthopsis murina) at Daveyhurst, a hundred miles north-east of Coolgardie. He said that the animal had been identified by himself and his father before it was released at the point of capture. He also reported that jerboa-marsupials, possibly Antechinomys spenceri, were common in the area between Southern Cross and Lake Barlee. If the identification of the jerboa was correct, it would seem to extend a long way westward the known range of this species.

Senior Inspector J.E. Munro reported last month having observed a flock of five or six galahs in the Yanchep area and also a flock of 14 to 15 in the Maddington area. The latter had been seen several times in the last few years.

Fleet Maintenance Officer A.J. Bateman advised that on November 25, a hot hazy day, he had observed a large flock of skuas feeding in the vicinity of the Harbour Trust's offal barge, about 2½ to 3 miles outside Fremantle. He estimated that there were between 300 and 400 birds in the flock. He was not able to identify the skuas, which he said he had never seen in such numbers before. They might have been the Arctic skua, which is a summer visitor from the northern hemisphere. Reports from any other sea-going personnel who might happen to sight groups of skuas, no matter how few birds are involved, would be greatly appreciated. If the species cannot be identified a description of their plumage could be given together with a comparison of their size to other well known birds.

On a recent visit to areas north of Dowerin, Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan reported having observed four crested pigeons in the Dowerin district. According to two local wardens, the species had not been seen there prior to 1960 but had gradually increased and were now more common than bronzewings.

Mr McLaughlan also reported observing nine white swans (Cygnus olor) on the Avon river in the Northam town-site. Two of the birds appeared to be nesting, he said, on a small island between the traffic bridges. This is one of the few spots in the State in which this species survives. It was acclimatised there many years ago, and

(244)

in one or two other places, but has not yet shown any tendency to increase or to spread.

Last August, Mr R. Coleman, an apicultural officer of the Department of Agriculture, reported finding a mallee fowl's nest in forest country, three or four miles eastwards of the 64-mile peg on the Great Northern Highway. He left explicit directions for finding the mound and on November 15 it was inspected by Fauna Wardens S.W. Bower and N.E. McLaughlan, accompanied by Cadet Research Officer J.H. Jacoby and Mr D.V. Merton, of the Wildlife Branch, New Zealand. Our wardens reported that the mound stood approximately 2 ft. 6 in. high, had a diameter of 6 feet, and was constructed principally of gravel and loam. A hole measuring about 18 inches in diameter was found leading into the middle of the mound and to a depth of 15 inches. Examination revealed about a 5-inch depth of leaf mould and some egg shell. The shell was later compared with mallee hen's eggs in the Museum and appeared to be identical. As the mound was in jarrah forest, it was of particular interest.

SWAN RIVER NOTES

Good Prawn Season Forecast

Senior Inspector J.E. Munro says that although crabs are scarce in the river this year, prawns appear to be very plentiful and he anticipates a most satisfactory season for amateurs and professionals alike. He thinks that the late rains which brought a considerable quantity of silt into the river may be the reason why crabs had not appeared in any numbers, for they usually show up in October.

No Dolphins, None Sharks

Mr Munro added that no dolphins had been seen in the river to his knowledge for two or three years, but that reports kept coming in that whaler sharks were more prolific. Evidence of their presence in the river included damage to fish while being hauled, including a mullock which had its tail chewed off and with a large gash in its throat. A whaler shark was seen in the vicinity by the fisherman who was aggrieved at the loss of the mullock's tail.

Amateur Net Fishermen's Licenses

Staff are reminded that amateur fishermen using prawn nets, or any other type of nets, need to be licensed.