

Point.

Writing from Onslow, Mr A.H. Clark, the wharf-inger and fisheries inspector, said that black swans were quite common in the Ashburton district, both in the sea and in the coastal tidal creeks. They also occurred inland in freshwater pools. Mr Clark said that he had seen a female with six smallish cygnets in the ocean at Onslow. The birds were there for some time and were believed to go into the local creek at night. Odd pairs were seen from time to time in the many creeks. Mr Clark added in his letter (dated December 3) that reports of crayfish in spawn had been coming in and that small groups of flock pigeons were in evidence earlier in 1961.

A fisherman operating about a quarter of a mile offshore and 5 miles south of Ledge Point, on January 3, was surprised to have a visit from a black swan. It spent some time swimming around his boat and appeared to be quite at home in those surroundings.

Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan, with Honorary Warden L. Miller, were told last month of increased numbers of quokkas and numbats in the Willowdale, Hoffmans and Tallanalla areas. The report came from Mr G.M. Treasure, who is also an honorary warden and, like Mr Miller, is an overseer employed by the Forests Department. He said that all the swamps in the area had small quokka populations and that odd numbats were observed on any sandy areas throughout the forest. The greatest number of quokkas he had seen in recent months was six. These ran out of a small swamp when a controlled fire was put through. Mr Treasure attributed the increase in wildlife to the decrease in the number of foxes since the area was baited regularly.

KANGAROO EXPLOITATION

The interest in wildlife displayed by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, during his visit last year gave a fillip to wildlife conservation in Australia. His impending return, in the company of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, should do much to ensure continued interest at the new level. One of the tangible results of this higher level of interest has been the movement, particularly in the eastern States, towards greater control over kangaroo exploitation. Prior to his Australian visit Prince Philip, when speaking at a

banquet given in London for the World Wildlife Fund, had cited the uncontrolled exploitation of kangaroos as an example of indiscriminate hunting. Later, in Canberra, when addressing a meeting of 65 fellows of the Australian Academy of Science, His Royal Highness drew attention to man's responsibility for ensuring the continued survival of our wildlife heritage and referred specifically to the Noisy Scrub-bird and the Short-necked Tortoise. Prince Philip maintained an active interest in the conservation of both species during his stay in this State. One of the guests summoned to Government House to dine with him was Dr D.L. Serventy, a principal research officer of the Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., and a foundation member of the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee. Dr Serventy reported that many topics had been discussed and that Prince Philip had shown great interest in wildlife conservation in this State.

It will be remembered that in the October, 1962, issue of this bulletin, we published a report of the recommendations of the Australian fauna authorities conference held in Hobart in September. That report indicated that delegates had referred to the severe diminution of red kangaroo populations in the lower south-western area of New South Wales, and had expressed the belief that a more cautious approach to marsupial utilisation should be adopted. In fact, Conference recommended that strong measures be taken to restrict the taking of red kangaroos in New South Wales and that other States and Territories review the position in their areas by gathering accurate data.

Since then a new society has been formed in Melbourne. It is titled the Native Fauna Conservation Society, and Dr A.J. Marshall, Professor of Zoology at the Monash University, is its first president. Professor Marshall's immediate action was to send to the Prime Minister a resolution which was carried unanimously by over three hundred people present at the inaugural meeting. The resolution called on the federal authorities to ban the export of kangaroo meat for a period of five years. With this resolution and that of the Australian fauna authorities conference before him, the Prime Minister called for a background paper from the Chief of the Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Mr H.J. Frith. A copy was subsequently sent to the Premier of each State for comment. A reply drafted by this Department has now been sent by our Premier in the following terms:-

1. Western Australia considers that there is no need to alter the present policies of kangaroo control and conservation. At the same time it supports

the federal authorities conference resolution that additional statistics are required.

2. We regard wildlife as a community resource and consider that it should be managed as such. We therefore support the proposal put forward by Mr Frith and others that the possibilities of farming kangaroos should be investigated wherever it is likely that their protein-productive capacity would make it more economic to harvest them than the usual domestic herbivores, such as sheep.
3. We would resist any attempt to prohibit the export of kangaroo meat or skins.

While these are our considered views we must admit there is a growing concern on the part of some farmers and observers in the south-west for the well-being of the grey kangaroo, especially in some of the open season areas. This concern emphasises our lack of adequate statistics on the population dynamics of the species and highlights the merit of the conference resolution that a careful watch be kept on all commercial exploitation. As Professor Marshall has pointed out, there are compelling examples in history of wild animals which were once amazingly abundant but which became extinct or were brought to the threshold of extinction due to uncontrolled harvesting and interference with their habitat. The North American bison, the Australian koala and the American passenger pigeon have been well cited as examples of this sort of thing.

Arrangements have recently been made for Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan and Cadet Research Officer J. Jacoby to co-operate with the research team of the Agriculture Protection Board in checks on the effects of kangaroo control measures to be carried out in the lower Great Southern.

PINGRUP MALLEE FOWL RESERVE UNDER FIRE

On Saturday, March 9, the Minister for Fisheries, Mr Hutchinson, and the Director, will attend a meeting in Albany to hear representations that a large reserve east of Pingrup be amended. This reserve, which comprises over 230,000 acres, was set aside in 1957 to reserve in perpetuity an area of mallee country typical of the more arid southern parts of the State. The reserve is vested in the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee. It is understood that the local authorities,