

FAUNA IN CAPTIVITY

The publication of a photograph on the front page of "The Daily News" in its issue of February 28 highlights the popular misconceptions held on the laws relating to the keeping of fauna in captivity.

Regulation 12A states precisely that a person who holds any fauna in captivity must be licensed. The only exception to this requirement is in respect of a person who has nine or less birds of unprotected species. If a person holds any other fauna whatsoever he will need a license. The lad mentioned in the press item was photographed with a salt-water crocodile which, although an unprotected species, is one which we do not allow to be kept in captivity. The reason for this is obvious. If one survives in captivity it will grow up only to become a very real problem.

Quite a few children, many of whom may be "budding" naturalists, are tempted to keep various reptiles in captivity and seem to be unaware that this too is forbidden except under license. Generally, these unfortunate creatures are held in unsatisfactory conditions and given a totally inadequate diet. Due to the ability of reptiles to go for long periods without food, their young owners think their "pets" are doing well, but they almost always starve to death. In any case, almost all species of reptiles are protected - the only unprotected ones being the front-fanged poisonous snakes and the salt-water crocodile.

Another common offence is the keeping of kangaroos in captivity. Whether these animals are the unprotected red or euro, or the partially-protected grey kangaroo, or the protected brush wallaby, none may be kept by any person unless he has been given special approval. The keeping of any kangaroos in the metropolitan area is generally frowned upon as they tend to be held in quite inadequate areas and under unsatisfactory conditions. Furthermore, experience has shown that there are frequent escapes, thus providing traffic hazards and generally creating a nuisance. It has been laid down that animals shall not be kept even in country areas unless each is allowed at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land for itself, is provided with sufficient food, shelter and water, and is kept under aesthetically satisfactory conditions.