

Officers who will start annual leave this month include Technical Officer R.J. McKay on June 4, Assistant Inspector L.R. Frizzell on June 4, and Inspector A.V. Green of Geraldton, who is at present on annual leave, will resume duty on June 11.

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Cadet Inspector P.C. Willey will commence annual leave on July 1.

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The r.v. "Lancelin", under the command of Captain C.J. Seabrook, with Mate C.R.C. Haynes, and Cadet Inspector P.A. Smith as deck hand, will sail in the first week of July for Onslow. Technical Officer J.S. Simpson will also be on board while Senior Research Officer B.K. Bowen and Technical Officer R.J. McKay will join the vessel at Onslow about July 23 to carry out fishing tests and underwater observations on the various species of coral crayfish. They will use 30 steel-framed, wire and cane-covered pots and a "tangle" net to try to assess the catchability of the northern crayfish.

#### FISHERIES TRAINING SCHOOL

The 1963 Australian Fisheries School for field officers will be held at the C.S.I.R.O. Marine Laboratory, Cronulla from September 9 to 27. The Minister for Fisheries Mr. Ross Hutchinson, has again approved three officers attending from this Department. Those selected are - Pearling Superintendent R.J. Baird, Technical Officer E.H. Barker and Inspector D.P. Gordon.

#### BERNIER ISLAND SURVEY

With her return to Geraldton on May 28 the p.v. "Vlaming", under command of her

skipper Inspector F.J. Campbell with crew member Assistant Inspector A.H. Ullrich and Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan acting as pilot, successfully completed the Shark Bay-Bernier Island-Carnarvon run outlined in the previous issue of this Bulletin. In his report on the trip, Mr. McLaughlan said that the "Vlaming" sailed from Geraldton on May 11 for Shark Bay which she reached the following day after familiarisation runs through South Passage and in the inner bar area. A survey of the anchorage at Herald Bight was also made. On May 16, after taking on board the scientific party and their stores, she sailed from Carnarvon to Bernier and unloaded the party and their gear at Hospital Anchorage. An inspection on the following day revealed that three boats were operating on the snapper grounds north of Koks Island. They were the "Rex" and the "Lapwing", which were both using handlines, and the "Canberra" which was using traps. None of the vessels were enjoying good catches. The fishermen said that the snapper had not commenced to school. "Vlaming" anchored at Cliff Rock that night in strengthening winds. The following day, May 18, she ran down to Quoin Bluff on Dorre Island to collect specimens for the scientific party and then returned to Bernier Island where Messrs McLaughlan and Ullrich went ashore to search for a particular species of spinifex - Triodia plurinervata. They found one extensive patch of this plant - it was half-a-mile long and 500 yards wide - about one mile south of Red Bluff. Twenty-six goats were also observed along the cliffs on the west coast opposite Red Bluff, and five were shot for food. Further assistance to the shore party was not possible for some days as strong south-east to north-east winds were experienced from Sunday evening, May 19, to Wednesday, May 22. A small fishing party of three men in an open 15-ft. launch with an outboard were stranded at Bernier Island and were taken aboard "Vlaming" during the cyclone.

Mr. McLaughlan said that this was a most uncomfortable period. The combination of cyclonic winds, high seas and rain, and the lack of a safe anchorage endangered

the vessel and drenched the crew. Anchor watches had to be maintained each night, and shifts in the wind made it necessary to move the vessel from one anchorage to another, and back again, and to safer sections of each anchorage in turn. On the night of May 21, the fishing vessels "Rex" and "Canberra", which with the "Lapwing" had been anchored alongside "Vlaming", moved out to sea to ride out the gale. The conditions rendered sleep and cooking almost impossible and all bedding and clothing were drenched. The shore party fared little better, being unable to cook on their exposed campfire, and most of their equipment and clothing was also soaked through. Although the adverse weather conditions restricted activities the party were very happy with the overall results of the trip, in which the main objects were achieved. Indeed, some surprising results have been reported by Dr. Ride who has promised a full report of the scientific findings.

"Vlaming" returned the party to Carnarvon on the morning of May 23, and, after refuelling, sailed in the early afternoon for Cape Peron, anchoring for the night at Herald Bight. The following day, bad weather forced her to seek shelter in South Passage, and she finally got to Denham on May 25. She sailed from that port for Geraldton the following day. Mr. McLaughlan returned to Perth by road bus on May 28.

It has been decided to send the "Vlaming" back to Shark Bay for six to eight weeks to carry out night patrols in the southern prawn grounds which are closed to trawling.