

Advice has also been received from the company that its prawn trawlers will cease operating for the season in Shark Bay on September 1. The company has been advised that all its prawn vessels may engage in crayfishing during 1963, subject to the usual 30th parallel restriction. Nor'-West has also been advised that if their vessels fail to engage in crayfishing, their licenses next year will be endorsed with the condition that the boats will not be permitted to take crayfish south of the 24th parallel.

Towards the end of the month, after his return from a meeting in London of the International Whaling Commission, Mr. Moore said that his Company would work closely with this Department and the C.S.I.R.O. in investigating the commercial possibilities of tuna fishing off the North-West coast. The most economical fishing methods would be investigated, he said, while markets would also need to be found. New boats and men with the necessary know-how would be required and for the venture to be profitable, big quantities of fish must be caught. Large concentrations of tuna occurred from 50 to 300 miles to sea, where they were being taken by Japanese longline tuna boats. He said that if an industry were established, it would be based at the Company's processing works at Babbage Island.

Overseas reports indicate that the tuna market in the United States is passing through a difficult time. Japanese interests who export large quantities of tuna to the U.S.A. noted with alarm the export of a large shipment of tuna to India. Apparently, it could not be absorbed at the time on the United States home markets.

PELICANS' NEST AT MANDURAH

On August 12, Inspector G.C. Jeffery, of Mandurah, reported that a fisherman had found a large number of pelican nests and eggs on the south-west end of Creery Island in Peel Inlet. Mr. Jeffery added that he had made an inspection of the rookery on August 9 and, as the birds were approached, 47 were seen to fly away. He found 102 eggs. A few days later, the number of eggs had been greatly reduced, and on a still later visit he noticed that all the birds had disappeared from the area and the eggs were broken. The cause of the destruction is unknown, but possibly foxes were in part responsible.

Nevertheless, on August 27 the Fauna Officer, Mr. H.B. Shugg, accompanied by Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan, and Dr. D.L. Serventy, of the Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O. with his Technical Assistant, Mr. A.G. Matthews, went to Mandurah to inspect the rookery and to take photographs. The previously known southernmost nesting ground of the species is at Pelican Island, Shark Bay, which Warden McLaughlan states is similar to Creery Island in many respects. A second nesting site about 50 yards away was also seen, but this too had been deserted.

Unusually large numbers of pelicans were at the time still frequenting the Peel Inlet, and Dr. Serventy considers it possible that the birds might make a further attempt at nesting, either on Creery Island or elsewhere. To date, however, no further reports have come to hand.

As the birds were not previously recorded as having nested in this State south of Shark Bay, it was of particular interest to note an item published in the July, 1963, issue of the "Newsletter" published by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia. The "Newsletter" said it was believed that pelicans had successfully reared young in that State last summer, the first time for an unknown number of years. This had followed the establishment of the breeding area as a sanctuary, to which all entry was prohibited except by permit.

FAUNA NOTES

The following notes were compiled from information given by Mr. W.G. Pearce, a pioneer settler of Woogenellup, about twelve miles east of Mount Barker. We think they are a valuable record of fauna occurrences in the earlier days of the State.

1. POSSUMS: Brush-tailed (Trichosurus vulpecula) and
Ring-tailed (Pseudocheirus occidentalis)

1902 Ringtails plentiful in the area 12 miles east of Mount Barker.

1903 Caught many possums for their skins, but only one ringtail. The ringtail was the last seen in the district. There was scarcely any agricultural development at that stage, and habitat destruction could not have been the cause of the disappearance of the possums.