

Report of Tammar north of Geraldton.

While assiduously following a possible breach of the Fauna Protection Act last August, Inspector A.V. Green received a report on the occurrence of small wallabies at Balline Station, north of Port Gregory. The report was followed up by Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler, who with Inspector Green and Assistant Inspector L.R. Frizzell, searched the Balline Station area and also a property known as "The Swamps", about 7 miles east of Port Gregory. Although no tammar was sighted by the searchers, the skin of a wallaby that had been shot by Mr. Taylor was inspected and later forwarded to the Western Australian Museum. It appeared to be from a tammar. A further search of the area will be made as it is important to establish whether there is a mainland distribution of the species to complement that on East and West Wallabi Islands in Houtman Abrolhos. The existence of a number of species on the Abrolhos, well north of their mainland range, was long considered to be an indication that at the time the islands were separated from the mainland, many south-western species occurred far north of their present distribution. It was considered that their range had shrunk on the mainland through the gradual desiccation of our northern and inland areas and that their survival on the Abrolhos was due to its insular climate. However, discoveries in recent years that some of the species still occurred on the mainland north of their previously known distribution boundaries, have cast more than a shadow of doubt on the theory. Paradoxically, there is understood to be some latterday evidence in the distribution of reptiles that supports the old theory.

Report of Dalgite at Margaret River.

Last month we received a most intriguing report from Honorary Warden E.V. Teede, of Bunbury, that a strange animal had been sighted by Mr. A. Pell of Prevelly Park. According to Mr. Pell the animal had three peculiarities -

1. when it moved it appeared quite ungainly;
2. it had a fairly long tail with a white or creamy coloured crest;
3. it had very long ears.

These features were sufficient to make him stop and reverse to where he had seen it cross the road. By the time he alighted, however, it had entered some thick scrub on the road side and he was unable to find any trace of it. Later, when Mr. Teede showed Mr. Pell a plate in Troughton's "Furred Animal's of Australia", Mr. Pell unhesitatingly pointed to the reproduction of a dalgite.

When this report was referred to the Director of the Western Australian Museum, Dr. W.D.L. Ride, he said that this sighting was very important indeed. He hoped it meant that the dalgites of the south-west would stage a comeback, because in his opinion there was no doubt at all from the description that the animal Mr. Pell had seen was a dalgite. Dr. Ride added that these animals were uncommon in the south-west up to the 1930's, and pointed out that we have come to regard them as being possibly extinct.

In an effort to follow up the observation, Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan went to the area with a number of small mammal traps. He reported that the place where the sighting occurred was approximately one mile from Prevelly Park, on the Margaret River Road. The area was one of thick and almost impenetrable scrub on sandy soil interspersed with limestone outcrops. The vegetation consisted mainly of peppermint with some jarrah, banksia, redgum, acacia, bracken, zamia palms and blackboy. Although he kept the area under inspection during daylight and at night, and used a spotlight at night, Mr. McLaughlan found no trace of dalgites though he reported that rabbits were observed and there were numerous burrows and fresh scratchings. The traps, baited with "bardies", toast, and crushed peanuts, were worked over three nights but caught only one common rat. Further searches will be made as time permits, but we would like honorary wardens and any inspectors passing through the district to be on the qui vive.

MONOFILAMENT NYLON NETS

We were advised last month, by Mr. A. Spencer, that in accordance with a decision of the 1962 Commonwealth-State Fisheries Officers Conference and Ministers' meeting (of which he was Secretary) a working party has been set up to plan, supervise and report on the testing of monofilament nets. The party comprised Mr. P.D. Lorimer, of the Department of Primary Industry; Mr. J. Robins, of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O.; Mr. A. Temple, of the Victorian Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, and Mr. J. Williams, of the State Fisheries office, New South Wales. It would co-opt other officers to work with the group as required.

Subsequently, we were pleased to receive the party's first report, dated September 17. The group outlined in the report a number of serious difficulties which limited their action. They pointed out that coastal and estuarine fishermen used nets of varying mesh sizes, lengths and depths and had different methods of hanging them.