

# HONORARY FAUNA WARDENS report . . . . .

## DISTRICT 1—KIMBERLEY

### WARDENS 33—REPORTS 10

- G. F. Bell—Argyle Downs Station
- H. C. Bromby—Derby
- R. F. Condon—Katherine, N.T.
- A. J. Davis—Wyndham
- D. J. Gibbs—Broome
- F. J. Hamlett—Broome
- L. G. Hill—Wyndham
- D. Ledger—Derby
- B. J. Quilty—Wyndham
- Illegible—Broome

#### Dry Season:

Rainfall was well down during the months January to February according to several warden's reports in this region. With many water holes dry, the numbers of waterfowl were much lower than usual.

#### Bustards:

Although wild turkeys were reported as "common" they were reported as seen only in small groups.

#### Brolgas:

"Large numbers" of brolgas were reported in the Derby area, together with several sightings in the region of Beagle Bay Mission.

#### Kangaroos:

Kangaroos generally were reported as few although euros appeared to be common in the Wyndham area. Mr. Quilty of Wyndham is of the opinion that the euro stocks are diminishing because of attacks by dingoes.

Dozens of small wallabies of an unidentified species were reported around the Mabel Downs homestead.

#### Jabirus:

Two sightings were reported—a pair at a creek crossing at Argyle Downs Station and "occasional birds" in the Derby area.

## DISTRICT 2—NORTH WEST

### WARDENS 24—REPORTS 6

- D. G. Bathgate—Exmouth
- B. J. Bolitho—Wittenoom
- D. A. Henwood—Onslow
- M. J. L. McGrath—Onslow
- R. L. Stone—Newman
- R. C. Wade—Tom Price

#### Pelicans:

A long way off course, but from Wittenoom comes a report of a pelican sighted. This was apparently blown in from the coastal region during a cyclone.

#### Bustards:

Although four reports indicate that wild turkeys are scarce in the area, Mr. Henwood of Onslow reported that Onslow residents consider them to be in greater number than for many years, possibly due to the unusually dry conditions. Mr. Stone of Newman also considers wild turkeys to be "common" in small groups.

#### Vermin:

A report from Exmouth indicates that foxes and feral cats are prevalent. The cat problem appears to stem from the large transitory population of Exmouth—people leave their pets behind when they depart from the area.

#### Oriental Pratincoles:

Flocks of up to 2,000 birds were observed in the vicinity of Learmonth and the Vlamingh Lighthouse during February and March. Many of the birds were killed as they constantly flew into the pathway of vehicles. Mr. Bathgate reports that an examination of the crops and stomachs of these birds revealed that the birds fed exclusively on cicadas.

#### Bower Birds:

Two bower birds have been kept under observation in the Exmouth area for the past 12 months, but nests have not been located.

#### Rock Wallabies:

Some large colonies have been observed in the deep gullies on the western aspects of Cape Range. They are living in small tunnels on the cliff faces.

#### Small Mammals:

Both dunnarts and species of notomys have been observed by Mr. Bathgate over a wide area of Exmouth region. The dunnarts frequent the rock outcrops, while the notomys are confined to the red sand dunes.

#### Red Kangaroos:

These are reported as being generally plentiful in the area.

## DISTRICT 3—EASTERN

### WARDENS 1—REPORTS 0

## DISTRICT 4 — GASCOYNE

### WARDENS 33—REPORTS 9

S. Armstrong—Meekatharra  
P. M. Butler—Gascoyne  
T. F. Fitzgerald—Carnarvon  
J. N. Hutchinson—Carnarvon  
W. H. B. Lacey—Meekatharra  
J. A. Maslen—Carnarvon  
W. J. Smith—Carnarvon  
C. Wainwright—Carnarvon  
Unsigned—Carnarvon

#### Bustards:

According to a report received by Mr. T. F. Fitzgerald of Carnarvon, wild turkey were in numbers in excess of those seen during the last 30 years.

Many wild turkeys—mostly young—are reported as frequenting the coastal areas of the Carnarvon region. One unsigned report even quotes them as “hundreds upon hundreds—more than I’ve seen in 21 years”.

Several wardens reported on rumours—and some evidence—of wild turkey hunting in the district.

#### Bronzewing Pigeons:

Mr. Wainwright reported having sighted some 100 bronzewing pigeons at a mill on Mardathuna Station.

#### Pied Geese:

Two independent and separate reports were made to Mr. Hutchinson in Carnarvon of sightings of 8 pied geese. Assurances were given that these were not black swans!

#### Brown Honeyeater:

A brown honeyeater, reputed to be the first seen in Carnarvon, was observed over a period of two weeks at the Carnarvon Research Station. This was reported by Mr. Hutchinson.

#### Feral Cats:

Feral cats are still active in the Carnarvon region and 11 were reported as having been trapped and destroyed by the Tracking Station staff.

#### Swallows:

An unsigned report from Carnarvon reads “A most unusual sight this year was the swallows which died in hundreds. They huddled on the river bed with ruffled feathers, flying only a few feet when approached. Large numbers died where they sat”.

## DISTRICT 5 — GERALDTON

### WARDENS 34—REPORTS 8

J. V. Atkinson—Sandstone  
R. A. C. Glass—Kalbarri  
R. H. Haines—Three Springs  
R. Hill—Morawa

D. B. Ross—Sandstone  
R. C. Salkilld—Three Springs  
N. C. Summers—Dongara  
L. Vince—Perenjori

#### Bronzewing Pigeons:

Although Mr. R. Glass of Kalbarri reports on a *decrease* in the number of bronzewing pigeons over the past three years, there appears to be an *increase* at Dongara according to Mr. N. C. Summers. At Dongara the birds feed on “extensive areas” of acacia.

#### Bustards:

Reports from many areas indicate an increase in wild turkeys.

#### Dunnarts:

A “few” dunnarts were sighted in the Three Springs area by Mr. R. Hains—one carried 6 young which appeared old enough to leave the pouch.

#### Euros:

These appeared to be common in the Three Springs area.

#### Emus:

“During a recent trip in this country it was a commonsight to see emus in a dying state falling over and unable to get up. In a trip of about 200 miles, I say at least 50 in this condition and a lot of others that could hardly raise a trot”. This was reported by Mr. D. B. Ross of Sandstone, who indicated that only 3½ inches of rain was recorded for the area for the 15 months ending in March.

#### Echidnas:

Mr. Haines of Three Springs reported on having seen a “few” echidnas in his district.

## DISTRICT 6 — MELBOURNE

### WARDENS 33—REPORTS 15

J. R. Adamson—Eneabba  
W. J. and I. P. Bradley—Cervantes  
W. G. Chitty—Toodyay  
C. J. Clarke—Bolgart  
S. Cook—Toodyay  
A. E. Cooper—Wannamal  
G. H. Gare—Moora  
J. Haworth—Coorow  
A. Hill—Carnamah  
A. Hobbs—Coorow  
M. J. Horton—Gingin  
A. M. Popplewell—Moora  
J. J. Rome—Bindoon  
M. J. Russel—Cervantes  
C. Thornett—Eneabba

#### Brush Wallabies:

Mr. S. Cook of Toodyay reports that brush wallabies are breeding well in the district although many are being killed by vehicles on the Red Hill Road.

On the south-west corner on the Regan's Ford Road (Gingin), Mr. M. J. Horton reported seeing 28 brush wallabies although he was of the opinion that up to three times this number may have been present in the area.

#### Western Rosellas:

From Toodyay, Mr. W. G. Chitty reported on sightings of western rosellas—seen for the first time in 5 years.

#### Seals:

Seals are still being shot on Beagle and Fisherman's Island according to a report from Mr. A. W. Hobbs of Coorow. Last November he reported the presence of 72 seals on Fisherman's Island, but during the Easter of 1970 he recorded only two. Several carcasses were found which appeared to have been shot and the few seals located on the islands were "generally shy and disturbed in comparison with their usual behaviour".

#### Grey Kangaroos:

Mr. A. E. Cooper of Wannamal reported sightings of grey kangaroos in his district in groups of 12-15, and that they were fairly tame.

## DISTRICT 7—NILGARN

### WARDENS 56—REPORTS 12

O. V. Cail—Kalannie  
R. E. Curtis—Kellerberrin  
G. H. Evans—Dowerin  
A. S. Merridge—Goomalling  
E. Hind—Burracoppin  
S. Johnson—Kellerberrin  
Mrs. J. K. Leake—Kellerberrin  
J. R. Masters—Northam  
A. D. Morgan—Northam  
M. Prior—Kalannie  
F. E. Pryor—Goomalling  
L. A. Sewell—Goomalling

#### Bustards:

Before cyclone Ingrid passed through the Nilgarn district many wild turkeys were sighted, but after the rains they appear to have dispersed with no subsequent sightings. This was the position in Kalannie district according to a report received from Mr. O. V. Cail.

#### Maned Geese:

The drought conditions caused many maned geese to congregate at farm soaks, where they remained until after the cyclonic rains, reported Mr. A. Morgan of Northam.

#### Crested Pigeons:

According to reports received from Mr. E. Hind of Burracoppin, Mr. M. Prior of Kalannie and Mr. F. E. Pryor of Goomalling, there is apparently a widespread increase in the number of crested pigeons in the area. They are reported as plentiful and, in one instance, 4 nests containing young were established adjacent to the homestead.

#### Kangaroos:

In general kangaroos within the district have been reported a few from the majority of wardens.

#### Gwardars:

From Mrs. J. Leake of Kellerberrin comes a report that the banded Gwardar was very common in the district during the early part of the year.

#### Suitable Habitat:

Mr. G. Evans of Dowerin reported—"A considerable area of rock scrub and jam country on my property makes euros, echidna, mountain devil, legless lizards, etc., quite common here, but not general to the district. These conditions, and rock holes containing water, maintain a greater variety of bird life than elsewhere."

## DISTRICT 8—MURRAY

### WARDENS 67—REPORTS 19

F. Baldisseri—Collie  
B. A. Bremner—Waroona  
R. L. Brown—Collie  
A. Caldwell—Wandering  
H. E. Carrots—Boddington  
F. C. Edmonson—Mandurah  
J. A. Fetzer—Dardadine  
I. Flugge—Darkan  
G. F. Horley—Duranillin  
R. G. Little—Jarrahdale  
I. R. Milroy—Collie  
E. Johansson—Pinjarra  
R. V. Knapp—Darkan  
E. A. Morgan—Bunbury  
J. F. Oliver—Darkan  
C. M. Robertson—Wagerup  
G. A. Stewart—Collie  
E. Teede—Bunbury  
A. W. Toussaint—Mandurah

#### Parrots Used as Food:

A report from Waroona indicates the depletion of bird life in areas of the Shire where there is close settlement of migrants. On two known occasions, migrants were in possession of ring-neck parrots which, they intimated, were to be eaten. While this particular species is not protected, it certainly indicates that other *protected* species may be subject to shooting for culinary purposes—especially in view of the absence of other bird life in these areas.

#### Kangaroos:

Grey kangaroos are reported as generally common in the area with quite a number reported on the far side of the Leschenault Estuary near the old Belvedere Homestead and in the Collie area.

#### Bronzewing Pigeons:

Although still reported as fairly common in the Collie area, the indications are that the numbers are fewer this year than in previous years.

### **Numbats:**

Numbats appear to be the most common of the small marsupials around the Collie District and reports of sightings are consistently received by Honorary Wardens.

## **DISTRICT 9—AVON**

### **WARDENS 80—REPORTS 18**

A. L. Ainsworth—Pingelly  
L. W. Bell—Wagin  
D. Bradford—Narrogin  
T. Catling—Woodanilling  
R. M. Chester—York  
P. S. Dawson—Dumblebung  
R. Evans—Brookton  
R. D. Giles—Kulin  
R. Goldsmith—Wagin  
W. L. Keighley—Lake Bidby  
J. L. Knox—Wickepin  
R. J. Lane—Kulin  
E. O. Lange—Pingelly  
J. D. McLean—Beverley  
A. M. Mutton—Wickepin  
N. B. Shenton—Quairading  
J. C. Trott—Corrigin  
H. Sudholz—Brookton

### **Echidna:**

Mr. R. D. Giles reported on the behaviour of an echidna which had just been disturbed during grading operations. The echidna was lying on its back with a naked baby on its stomach and appeared to be making an effort to return the baby to the pouch.

According to Mervyn Griffiths in his book "Echidnas", a similar action was observed while an echidna was attempting to replace an egg which had fallen from the pouch. It is therefore quite likely that the baby had fallen from the pouch when the mother was disturbed by the grader and her actions were, in fact, those of returning the baby to the pouch.

### **Bustards:**

On a recent tour through the Kimberleys, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales Mr. R. Ainsworth of Pingelly noted that, while he saw many wild turkey in Western Australia, there appeared to be very few in the Northern Territory and none were sighted at all in New South Wales. He saw no evidence of shooting of these birds (although other reports indicate that shooting still takes place), but encountered three dead birds which had been killed by vehicles.

Mr. Ainsworth was four months on the trip and maintained a diary of all fauna sightings and items of interest.

Mr. Trott of Corrigin expressed the opinion that large areas of suitable land should be set aside in his district as reserves for the preservation of wild turkeys—with more stringent protection against the birds being shot.

### **Banded Anteater:**

A banded anteater was noticed travelling along a road in the Narrogin district. The area was devoid of natural cover and Mr. Bradford of Narrogin reported placing the animal over the rabbit proof fence where it would have more chance of locating cover. On the road, the anteater had approached to within two or three feet of him and had merely deviated slightly from its course when he stood in front of it.

### **Bird Life in Wagin Area:**

According to a report from Mr. L. Bell, the drought conditions at the beginning of the year were responsible for an influx of bird life to the district. He reported the presence on the lakes of birds not normally common in the district, e.g., straw-necked ibis and spoon-billed heron. Power lines erected between the lakes took a steady toll on bird life.

## **DISTRICT 10—EUCLA**

### **WARDENS 33—REPORTS 5**

C. N. Collard—Leonora  
I. R. Hancock—Esperance  
H. A. King—Edjudina  
W. Nicholson—Moorine Rock  
N. Walmsly—Esperance

### **Warburton Range Area:**

Mr. C. N. Collard of Leonora reported—"I recently made a trip into the country between the Warburton Range and the Western Australian border. Conditions there were the worst I have seen for some twenty years. In ten days I saw only three dingoes, one fox, one rabbit, one domesticated cat gone wild, two crows and only a few insect-eating birds. There were some lizards, but the sandy hill country which normally is alive with the smaller marsupials was devoid of any tracks of these small animals. We removed many dried-up carcasses of kangaroos and dingoes from watering places. Conditions were better in the area north of the Rawlinson Range where the country had received some benefit from the tail-end of the monsoon".

### **Esperance:**

Reports indicate that the number of wild turkeys is increasing in the National Park area and that grey kangaroos are plentiful. "Quite a few" brush wallabies have been sighted and the willy-wagtail appear to be well established in the area.

## **DISTRICT 11—SOUTH WEST**

### **WARDENS 73—REPORTS 22**

G. W. Barron—Boyup Brook  
J. A. Bennett—Dardanup  
R. A. Breeden—Busselton

A. Chugg—Busselton  
 M. Coffey—Margaret River  
 F. J. Connor—Boyup Brook  
 J. W. Cooper—Balingup  
 A. V. Corker—Kulikup  
 A. J. Ewart—Balingup  
 F. A. Gifford—Bridgetown  
 T. C. Hall—Dardanup  
 R. C. Johnston—Busselton  
 E. J. Kemp—Donnybrook  
 M. B. McGregor—Busselton  
 G. V. Mitchell—Donnybrook  
 H. A. Parker—Busselton  
 N. R. Payne—Boyanup  
 K. J. Rooney—Manjimup  
 E. E. Scott—Elgin  
 T. Scott—Margaret River  
 T. J. Shine—McAlinden  
 L. G. Wilkinson—Busselton

#### "1080" Baiting:

Reports that "1080" is affecting birdlife in the South-west is further supported by a report that in one instance more than 500 wood ducks were poisoned within a radius of six miles on properties in the Busselton district.

Miss McGregor of Busselton noted that bronze-wing pigeons are attracted to, and in the "1080" furrows also; she had not actually seen the birds eating the oats. She reported that the berries of a shrub (since identified as *heptomeria scrobiculata* R. Br) once common to the area, are a favourite food of the bronzewing pigeon. Agriculture in the area had almost eradicated this native plant and it is possible that the pigeons, having to seek alternative food, may resort to the poisoned oats.

One report referred to overhearing rumours of deliberate poisoning of ducks, but no evidence was available.

#### Feral Cats:

A report that these animals are increasing in the Busselton area has been submitted by Mr. R. A. Breeden.

The status of the domestic cat gone wild is that under the Fauna Conservation Act it is an unprotected species and has also been declared vermin throughout the State.

#### Brush Wallabies:

Although reported as common throughout the district, there appears to be a fairly high mortality rate from cars. One report stated that only a few of the animals had been sighted and that these had mostly been dead on the road.

#### Habitat Destruction by Fire:

Mr. M. Coffey of Margaret River reported that early in the year some 30,000 acres of coastland vegetation was destroyed by fire at Gracetown. This took a heavy toll of honey-eaters, finches, wrens and other birds which inhabited the area.

#### Grey Kangaroos:

These have been reported as "common" and "rapidly building up in numbers" throughout the district. Mr. Shine of McAlinden reported that shooting restrictions appear to have caused an increase in the number of joeys in the district and that these are creating traffic hazards on country roads.

#### Swans at Collie:

Reports appeared in the press early in the year of interference to swans by water-skiers using the "Stockton" open cut at Collie. Mr. K. T. Rooney of Manjimup reported that he had checked the situation (on several occasions) but had never seen any swans in the locality. He believed, however, that for a period some nine swans were there, although now there is almost a complete absence of any "water life" in or on the open cut.

#### Yellow-Billed Spoonbill:

Mr. R. Breeden of Busselton reported the daily occurrence of a yellow-billed spoonbill on the Vasse River throughout February. This area is generally beyond that normally encompassed by this species and the sighting was therefore referred to Doctor D. L. Serventy as a matter of interest.

## DISTRICT 12—GREAT SOUTHERN

### WARDENS 71—REPORTS 19

J. Andrews—Amelup  
 W. A. Beeck—Katanning  
 P. J. Bellfield—Denbarker  
 H. R. Carter—Albany  
 L. Falconer—Bremer Bay  
 H. Harper—Rocky Gully  
 W. A. Maskell—Albany  
 A. R. Jury—Bremer Bay  
 F. A. Lilford—Denmark  
 S. J. Lilford—Cranbrook  
 C. Mitchell—Cranbrook  
 H. W. Norris—Jingalup  
 W. J. Packard—Coyrecup  
 W. G. Pearce—Woogenellup  
 S. J. Sagers—Kendenup  
 E. Simmons—Albany  
 E. F. Smith—Katanning  
 F. W. Smith—Cranbrook  
 M. C. Toovey—Cranbrook

#### Wood Duck:

Wood ducks are considered a pest in the Kojonup area where Mr. H. W. Norris has on several occasions been called upon to disperse them. Some 750 were dispersed into three flights of approximately 250 each on the Anna Downs property.

Mr. F. A. Lilford of Denmark also reported wood ducks in pest proportions.

### **Foxes:**

Mr. H. Harper of Rocky Gully reported a decreased number of foxes following an epidemic of mange.

A number of wardens reported "mange" to be fairly widespread among foxes at the beginning of the year.

### **Pygmy Possums:**

Four pygmy possums were sighted during the first quarter by Mr. N. A. Beeck of Katanning, which he considers would indicate a fairly large population in the area.

### **Willy Wagtails:**

Mrs. P. J. Bellfield reported that willy wagtails are again becoming quite common around the Mount Barker area after an absence of many years.

### **Grey Kangaroos:**

Grey kangaroos are a pest in the Rocky Gully area reported Mr. H. Harper. In common with several other reports, he noted that there seemed to be larger numbers of young greys than in previous years. Mr. S. Lilford of Cranbrook reported that a shortage of feed in the paddocks during the quarter had resulted in grey kangaroos becoming a pest on the road during the night.

### **Marron in Lake Coyrecup:**

Several years ago Mr. W. J. Packard of Coyrecup released young marron into the lake. During the quarter Lake Coyrecup was dry apart for some water in the inlet creek (which had a high salt content), but marron were found in "various stages of development". Under normal conditions these animals would have continued to breed, reported Mr. Packard.

### **"1080" Poison:**

Several reports referred to the possible loss of fauna through the laying of "1080" poisoned oats. Many of our animals and birds are grain feeders and, according to Mr. H. C. Toovey of Cranbrook—"I feel as though "1080" is taking a heavy toll on our wild life". Although unconfirmed, one report alludes to possums in some colonies being killed by "1080".

Any specimens which, it is believed, have died from "1080" poisoning may be sent to Doctor A. A. Burbidge of this Department's Reserve Management Section at 236 Hay Street, Perth. The specimen should preferably be frozen and accompanied by a note giving details of the location and all other pertinent information.

## **DISTRICT 13 — METROPOLITAN**

### **WARDENS 222—REPORTS 39**

W. A. Allnutt—Swanview  
C. E. Brindley—Armadale  
R. C. Burking—South Perth  
W. J. Burnett—Wanneroo  
L. Corthals—Wanneroo

R. Coulson—West Midland  
E. H. Day—Armadale  
R. R. Doddmaid—Maylands  
J. Double—South Perth  
W. A. Farmer—Rottnest  
V. W. Fowler—Shenton Park  
L. R. Frizzell—South Guildford  
C. E. Gibbs—Wanneroo  
R. J. Gillzan—Balga  
W. H. Gravell—West Perth  
J. Harris—Middle Swan  
S. A. Hart—Greenmount  
G. R. Hartley—Innaloo  
S. M. Harvey—Manning  
K. A. Holland—Gooseberry Hill  
D. J. Ingram—Bedfordale  
W. Le Vaux—Glen Forrest  
J. A. Longden—Bedford  
R. A. P. Noak—East Bullsbrook  
C. W. Pearson—Glen Forrest  
A. Y. Pepper—Scarborough  
J. Philliphoff—Triggs Island  
S. N. Reading—Balga  
F. A. Rogers—Claremont  
J. Rose—Walyunga National Park  
W. L. Stevenson—Coolbellup  
D. J. Sullivan—Rottnest  
M. K. Tarburton—Victoria Park  
D. H. Trout—High Wycombe  
J. H. Turner—Floreath Park  
J. Ward—Jandakot  
J. T. Williams—Redcliffe  
I. J. Wood—Midland  
C. J. Wright—East Victoria Park

### **Pheasants on Rottnest Island:**

According to Mr. W. A. Farmer, the decision of the Agricultural Protection Board to exclude the Rottnest Island colony of ring-necked pheasants from the vermin list pleased both islanders and tourists.

The birds were first introduced in 1880 when, for the three months annually, Government House (now the hotel), Rottnest, was the official Vice-Regal summer residence. Apparently the reason for introducing the birds was to provide something more palatable than the usual game—the banded stilt, which was then called "Rottnest snipe".

In the confines of the island's dune scrub and thickets, the pheasants appear to be becoming more ground runners than fliers. Mr. Farmer reports seeing startled cock birds, attempting to fly over the smallest lake, "run out of steam" three-quarters of the way across and have to paddle ashore.

He also reported on examination of dead birds' crops which were crammed with snails even though seed was in abundance.

### **Bird Population on Shenton Park Lake:**

Mr. V. W. Fowler's report commented on the large number of coots and other waterfowl which inhabit the Shenton Park Lake. He referred to the possibility of translocating some of this wild

life to other lakes, but Officers of the Department's Fauna Research Branch advised that such a move would probably be unsuccessful. The birds are attracted by an abundance of food provided by the public and would, no doubt, return to the lake upon release.

#### **Oil Pollution:**

Mr. R. R. Doddmead of Maylands reported increased waterfowl numbers in the district, but is perturbed at the presence of oil on the water adjacent to the power house. According to the report, this oil contamination is increasing.

#### **Increased Bird Life:**

Many of the reports received from the metropolitan area refer to the apparent increase of birdlife in the suburbs. In some cases, this is attributed to the increased number of native shrubs and trees which are being planted in home gardens.

Mr. C. E. Brindley of Armadale has observed the preference of birds for different species of eucalypts which he has planted in his garden. It appears that, in addition to providing food for the birds, these trees offer shelter and protection from stray and wild cats.

#### **Coastal Plains Fauna:**

Over the Easter period, Mr. S. Reading of Balga undertook a four-day trip from Perth to Sandy Point via the coastal tracks and sandhills. He expressed disappointment at the apparent absence of wildlife which he partly attributed to the very dry conditions then prevailing. The return journey through Gingin was equally unrewarding—only one dead rabbit was seen.

#### **Echidna:**

Mr. J. Rose of Walyunga National Park reported occasional sightings of echidnas in the park.