

# SALT WATER CROCODILES NOW PROTECTED

Under the Fauna Conservation Act salt-water crocodiles are now fully protected in Western Australia. Fresh-water crocodiles have been protected for eight years.

The protection order was made by the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* on 24th April, 1970. This was done by removing salt-water crocodiles from the list of unprotected reptiles.

In 1969 Dr. H. R. Bustard of the Australian National University was engaged by the Department of Fisheries and Fauna to undertake a survey of crocodiles in Western Australia and, following on his recommendation, the protection order was issued.

The survey showed that the freshwater species, though protected, had been poached to a stage where it faced extinction and that salt-water crocodiles were at a low level and could easily be wiped out.

Consideration was being given to increasing the penalties for poaching.