

# ORD FAUNA SURVEY

A team from the Western Australian Museum will carry out a survey of the Ord River catchment area from September 30th to October 30th. The purpose of the survey is to gain a familiarity with the physiography and biota of the area prior to the filling of the dam in November or December. No survey of this type has been undertaken in this area previously, and the data obtained will be of great value in monitoring any changes which occur in future years as a result of the Ord dam project.

The survey team will endeavour to determine the numbers and distribution of any fauna in the area, and which species could be significantly affected by the rising waters. Close consideration will also be given to those areas which will become island refuges and which species would best be suited to living on these islands.

The Museum party will be led by Dr. Darrell Kitchener, Curator of Mammals, who will study the ecological systems of the area; other members of the team are Mr. Rolly McKay, Assistant Curator of Crustaceans and Fishes, who will study the reptiles and invertebrates, and Dr. Barry Wilson, Curator of Molluscs who will study shell-life and other molluscs. A preliminary survey of the major ecosystems will be made by naturalist Mr. Harry Butler from September 8th to September 20th. Mr. Butler will present his findings to Dr. Kitchener and then join the survey team for the final stages on October 20th. The two members of the Western Australian Wild Life Authority, Messrs. Neville Beeck and Henry Hall, who will lead the Noah team will be with the survey party for a short period familiarising themselves with the area and any animal populations.

The base for the survey will be the line camp of Argyle Downs Station which is situated about 12 miles from the main dam site and has a 6,000 foot airstrip. A Cessna 175 four-seater plane, piloted by Mr. Rick Grave, will generally reconnoitre the area to spot any larger animals and concentrations of animals and radio this information to the ground parties. Transport for members of the survey team will be by landrover as it is anticipated that there will be insufficient water in the dam to necessitate the use of boats at this stage. One landrover will be taken from Perth and two more will be made available at Wyndham.

The results of the survey will be submitted to the Ord Noah sub-committee of the Western Australian Wild Life Authority to enable them to evaluate the need and extent of subsequent rescue operations.