

# LARGE SCALE BIRD SMUGGLING UNCOVERED

Readers will recall that in our editorial in SWANS Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn 1971, the Department said that although it knew of illegal trafficking in birds, it was powerless to act without evidence.

Just how lucrative smuggling of this nature can be was highlighted by a recent case at Derby.

On April 22, 1972 Detective Sergeant Davis of the Derby C.I.B. reported sighting three men with a truckload of parrots. Fauna Warden G. Hanley was called in to investigate, apprehended the persons concerned, seized the birds, and found that they consisted of the following:

- 103 Mallee Ring-necks
- 4 Gang Gang Rosellas
- 42 Western Rosellas
- 19 Adelaide Rosellas
- 19 Superb Parrots
- 9 Eastern Rosellas
- 7 Regent Parrots
- 125 Mulga Parrots
- 6 Blue Bonnet Parrots
- 15 King Parrots
- 6 Stubble Quail
- 6 Spinifex Pigeons

An estimate of the value of these birds on overseas markets is up to \$200,000. Ill-treatment caused the death of some of the birds, but the remainder are being cared for at the South Perth Zoo.

On May 2, in the Derby Police Court, Robert William Turner of Flinders Park, South Australia, was fined a total of \$260 for breaches of the Fauna Conservation Act, Fauna Conservation Regulations and the Police Act. A private aeroplane and four vehicles used by the accused are being held, and charges under the Commonwealth Customs Act are yet to be heard. The maximum penalty for exporting prohibited exports is \$1,000 and forfeiture of any vehicles or other means of transport used in the smuggling.

Comparing the estimated value of the birds with the amount of the fines which can be imposed under the governing Acts, it is obvious that consideration needs to be given to provision for stiffer penalties.