

# W.A.W.A. TOUR – 1973

In March this year members of the Reserves Committee of the Western Australian Wildlife Authority and observers made a tour of some of the fauna reserves of the South West.

The tour party consisted of—

- Mr B. K. Bowen, Director of Fisheries and Fauna; W.A.W.A. Chairman.
- Mr A. J. Mearns, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Mr D. W. Arnold, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Mr R. F. Ward, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Mr D. Munro, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Mr E. Dell, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Dr A. A. Burbidge, Department of Fisheries and Fauna.
- Mr J. L. Bannister, Deputy Director of W.A. Museum.
- Mr R. D. Royce, Curator of State Herbarium; (W.A.W.A.).
- Mr W. H. Eastman, Deputy Conservator of Forests.
- Mr R. P. Bowe, Chief Bush Fire Liaison Officer, Bush Fires Board.
- Mr L. B. Green, Senior Bush Fire Liaison Officer, Bush Fires Board.
- Mr N. A. Beeck, Western Australian Wildlife Authority.
- Mr A. H. Robinson, Western Australian Wildlife Authority.

The party left Perth on the morning of March 12, and travelled by coach to Tutanning. En route, brief inspections were made of Boyagin Wildlife Sanctuary and Noombling Flora Reserve.



A road hazard encountered in the Boyagin Reserve by the party required the assistance of all hands.

Boyagin Wildlife Sanctuary consists of two reserves (Nos. 19128 and 20610) both vested in the Authority. Over the past decade considerable research work has been carried out on these reserves into the needs of the wildlife occurring there and on the effects of fire on the native fauna. Control burning commenced during the Spring of 1971 and was carried out by the Forests Department which is experienced in this type of work and

which possesses the necessary equipment and manpower. Due to unseasonable conditions, this year's programme of prescribed burning was not carried out and will be added to next year's programme.

The Boyagin Sanctuary harbours a diverse range of fauna. Mammals found there include the Common Dunnart (*Sminthopsis murina*), Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus fuliginosus*), Western Brush Wallaby (*Macropus irma*), Little Bat (*Eptesicus pumilis*) and Gould's Wattleed Bat (*Chalinolubus gouldii*). During a fauna survey for animals in 1972, sixty-three species of bird were noted incidentally. The party also visited Noombling Flora Reserve in order that they might assess the value of this reserve being vested in the Authority.

Members had lunch at Tutanning where the Department has a research station, and the afternoon was spent touring the reserve. Tutanning Wildlife Sanctuary covers only about 5,000 acres but contains a wide variety of marsupials, which are the Tammar (*Macropus eugenii*), Red-tailed Wambenger (*Phascogale calura*), Ring-tail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), Woylie Brush Wallaby (*Macropus irma*), Short-nosed Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*), Brush-tailed Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), Common Marsupial Mouse (*Sminthopsis murina*), Yellow footed Marsupial Mouse (*Antechinus flavipes*), and the Pigmy Possum (*Cercartus concinnus*).



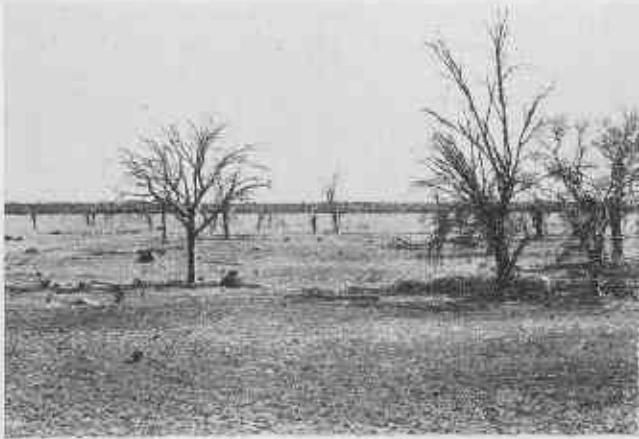
The diverse forms of vegetation on the Tutanning Reserve are protected by firebreaks. Controlled burning ensures adequate regeneration.

The tour party was shown how fire control was vital to the conservation of the habitat of the diverse range of fauna and how prescribed burning of chosen areas was used to regenerate the vegetation.

During the evening a spotlight tour of the reserve was carried out with members taking turns adopting precarious perches on the roofs of landrovers. There was one moment when there was some doubt as to whether this article would appear as your short-sighted Assistant Editor was nearly swept off the roof by an overhanging branch.

The night was spent at Tutanning, and in the morning members visited Toolabin and Taarblin lakes. Both

lakes were found to be completely dry following four years of drought conditions. Taarblin Lake was of particular interest as the possibility of raising the water level is the subject of a feasibility study by members of the Authority. At present outlet pipes drain the lake and also the lakes further north which drain into Taarblin Lake. If a levee was built above the level of the pipes, water would remain in the Lake for a longer period each summer—possibly until January. Consultations are to be held with engineers of the Public Works Department to ascertain whether raising the level of the lake would cause flooding of the surrounding land.



The dry bed of Lake Taarblin.

The highlight of the morning was the sighting of several Yellow-billed Spoonbills and one Royal Spoonbill at "Rushy Swamp" on private property near Woodanilling. Serventy and Whittel give the general southerly limit of the Yellow-billed Spoonbill as Moora although in 1954 one bird was seen at Cannington and in 1958 single birds were observed in the Bunbury district. This sighting at Woodanilling can therefore be considered exceptional.



Wallaby on the property of Mr. Neville Beeck. This animal was rescued during the Ord Noah project.

Authority member and Honorary Warden, Mr Neville Beeck, entertained the party to a splendid lunch at his property at Katanning and showed members his fauna sanctuary which contains Grey Kangaroos, Emus and Boodies, and animals rescued during Operation Ord Noah—Nail-tail Wallabies and an Agile Wallaby.

Camel Lake Game Reserve in the shadows of the Stirling Ranges was the only stopping point in the afternoon and the party arrived hot and tired at Albany at 6.30 p.m. Following dinner at the hotel a Reserves Committee Meeting was held.



Looking across Two People's Bay from the Reserve.

On the Wednesday, an extensive tour of Two People's Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was made. The reserve is famous as being the only surviving habitat of the Noisy Scrub Bird as well as being a popular fishing and picnic spot.



Noisy Scrub Bird (*Atrichornis clamosus*)

The management of the reserve and the protection of the Noisy Scrub Bird's nesting sites has not been compromised by permitting tourist activity. No access is permitted to the Mount Gardner area where the bird is known to nest (an estimated 45 nesting pairs are present at the moment), and access to some other areas is permitted only by walking along the prepared tracks. Near the ranger's residence a delightful picnic and barbecue area has been established; a recent addition is a display board with a photograph of the Noisy Scrub Bird, and details of its relationships and habits. By pressing a button on the display board visitors can hear a recording of the bird's song and further details of its habits.



The display unit mounted in the picnic area of the Two People's Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.



This gully is the main habitat of the Noisy Scrub Bird.



CSIRO Research Officer, Dr. Graham Smith (in light coloured trousers) explains to the party details of his research programme on the Noisy Scrub Bird.

Members of the party were most impressed by the efforts of the present ranger Ron Smith and the previous ranger Dick Grayson.

The party left Albany for Perth at 3.30 p.m.