

PROTECTION OF INLAND AND TIDAL WATERS AND WETLANDS

One of the major conservation problems in Western Australia is the continuing deterioration of our wetlands. Not only draining for agriculture, urbanisation and industrialisation but also the deterioration caused by the dumping of refuse.

Honorary wardens should certainly be aware of the following extracts from the Fisheries Act and Regulations and from the Fauna Conservation Regulations. Perhaps they and other readers are not aware, however, that Section 106 of the Police Act 1892-1972 also prohibits the dumping of rubbish and interference with the course of waterways.

1. FISHERIES ACT AND REGULATIONS

(It should be noted that, in this section, "fish" means and includes all or any of the varieties of marine or fresh water fishes and crustacea or marine animal life.)

- (a) **Regulation 17.** No person shall deposit any filth, refuse, or other deleterious matter in any tidal or inland waters or into any watercourse, whether dry or not, leading into any tidal or inland waters where fish are or are likely to be.
- (b) **Regulation 18.** No person shall deposit any filth, refuse, or other deleterious matter, or discharge any matter from mining works, sawmills, gas-works or other manufactories or boiling-down or wool-washing establishments in any place in a manner which will cause or be likely to cause the destruction of fish in waters near or adjacent to the place in which the matter aforesaid is deposited or discharged or injury to any fishing grounds.
- (c) **Section 26.**
 - (1) It shall not be lawful by the explosion of dynamite or any explosive substance, or by means of any poisonous or noxious thing, to destroy or take fish in any Western Australian waters: And if any person shall explode any dynamite or any explosive substance in or under such waters, or place or cause to flow therein any poisonous or noxious thing, such person and all other persons assisting or being at the time in company of such persons shall, for every such offence, be severally liable to a penalty not exceeding one hundred dollars and not less than twenty dollars; But nothing herein contained shall apply to any person duly authorised by the persons and in the manner to be prescribed by the regulations to explode torpedoes or dynamite in any such waters.
 - (2) If any person is found in possession of, or has in his boat, any dynamite or other explosive substance immediately after such explosion, it shall be *prima facie* evidence that such person caused such explosion.

2. FAUNA CONSERVATION ACT

Regulation 46. Except as the Chief Warden of Fauna may authorise in pursuance of a management scheme or working plan or in the administration of the Act and these regulations, a person shall not, in respect of any sanctuary:—

- (a) remove or disturb any humus, leaf mould, rotting vegetation, soil, stone, sand, rock or gravel;
- (b) cut, pick, pull, break, remove, injure, poison, strip or destroy any tree, shrub, herb, grass or other plant thereof, whether living or dead;
- (c) interfere in any manner with the water level or water supply in any sanctuary, including any lake, swamp, watercourse, river, drainage flow, well, water hole, or dam, whether natural or artificial, or use any water therefrom.
- (d) introduce, place, drop, pour, spray, fog, mist or otherwise use or discharge any dangerous, poisonous or noxious substance.

3. POLICE ACT 1892-1972

Section 106.

Every person who shall cast any bottles, earthenware, filth, rubbish or any noxious substance into any watercourse, drain, river, ornamental water, canal or reservoir, or shall obstruct or divert from its channel any public sewer, watercourse, drain, or canal, shall, on conviction, forfeit the sum not exceeding \$40, and shall pay the cost of removing such filth or obstruction, or of restoring such sewer, watercourse, drain or canals to its proper channel.

Wetlands and samphire flats play an invaluable role in natural life cycles and are among the richest feeding areas for crabs, prawns, fish, birds and other forms of wildlife. Because of this their use as sanitary land fill sites is inadvisable as it must lead to further depletion of the State's fish and wildlife. Already over 500,000 acres of valuable wetlands on the coastal plain alone have been drained, filled in or otherwise destroyed and wildlife stocks have been impoverished as a result. It is considered that those that still remain must be retained unless a careful evaluation by all interested parties suggests it would be in the public interest to do otherwise.

HONORARY WARDENS — APPOINTMENTS

John James, of Roy Hill Station, via Meekatharra.
John Albert Payne, of Snag Island, C/- Golden Gleam, Geraldton.
Robin Atkinson, of 319 Pellew Street, Exmouth.
Robert John Skinner, of Post Office Box 73, Wittenoom.
Donald Edward North, of corner of Murat Road and Pellew Street, Exmouth.

HONORARY WARDENS — CANCELLATION

Mr. F. Richards of P.O., Dardanup.