THE SAGA OF ALFRED COVE

It is at present the off-season of conflict between residents and the endangered Swan River foreshore bird habitat at Alfred Cove.

Because the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife had seen fit to disallow the Cove to be contaminated with pesticides, the resultant increase of insect breeding caused discomfort to nearby residents and concern to the City of Melville Council.

In March a deputation to the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife resulted in a small amount of spraying being allowed in the infested sections only. This was then at a time when migratory wading birds were again leaving for their breeding grounds in Siberia and would be least affected. Unfortunately, the food chain within contaminated waters is always affected.

Solving the problem of conflict at Alfred Cove is a difficult one.

While the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife searches for biological references and tries to determine a research programme to satisfy all, the usual rash of letters to the newspapers suggest nonsense programmes and demand immediate solutions.

The Director of Fisheries and Wildlife, Mr B. K. Bowen recently had discussions with Dr Winston Bailey, Lecturer in Entomology at the University of W.A. and Mr Tony Wright of the same University's Department of Microbiology, covering the mosquito problem at Alfred Cove.

From these discussions it became evident that if a pesticide is to be used for control purposes then it would be far preferable to use Dibrom rather than either Abate or Malathion. Both the latter two chemicals have a very detrimental effect on the crustacean larvae. Although Dibrom has a higher toxicity than either of the others it has a very short life (probably less than 24 hours) and as it is oil based, it does not sink to the bottom where the crustacean larvae live. Mosquito larvae, however, as they rise to the surface, are killed very quickly.

The Town of Canning has had in the past, similar problems with insect pests and they have now developed an approved and successful technique for dispersion of Dibrom.

A fogger is used not only over wetlands but also in areas of affected dwellings where it is most efficient.

On April 9 the Department suggested to the Melville City Council that they discuss with the Canning Town Council the possibility of borrowing the equipment and perhaps receiving assistance from their operators.

Next summer the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife will finance a research programme by a post-graduate student to determine the effects that the mosquito controls were having on mosquitos and invertebrates in the area. A check would be kept on 3 to 4 indicator species of invertebrates rather than the whole range and this could lead to a better informed approach to future controls.

In the meantime, however, as previously stated in S.W.A.N.S. Vol. 6 No. 1, a rare natural habitat such as Alfred Cove must be protected from any imbalance by people unaware of the necessity to retain important areas of natural environment.

It should be expected that persons who wish to live in any low lying wetland areas must accept the immediate natural environment as one of their own choosing.

It should also be pointed out that some land developers do not consider the future residents in areas adjacent to aquatic environments and truths are often left unsaid—another case of monetary values having precedence over aesthetic values.

Alfred Cove foreshore with Perth skyline on the horizon.

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Five-ringed Snake—*Demansia modesta*
Little Whip Snake—*Denisonia gouldii*
Black-naped Snake—*Vermicella bimaculata*
Black-striped Snake—*Vermicella calonota*
Allied Bandy Bandy—*Rhynchoelaps approximans*
Crowned Snake or Werr—*Denisonia coronata*
White-lipped Snake—*Denisonia coronoides*
Spotted Snake—*Denisonia punctata*
Northern White-lipped Snake—*Denisonia suta*
Red-naped Snake—*Aspidomorphus diadema*
Yellow-naped Snake—*Aspidomorphus christieanus*
Little Brown Snake—*Elapognathus minor*
Mueller's Snake—*Rhinhoplocephalus bicolor*
Bardick—*Denisonia curta*

Introduced

All species of the class Reptilia.