

RED KANGAROO MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 1977 QUOTA

Having considered the recommendations of the Red Kangaroo Advisory Committee and its working group, the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife has decided that the quota of red kangaroos to be taken in Western Australia from January 1 to December 31, 1977, shall be 150 000 animals, plus a predicted shortfall from last year of 18 000. The 150 000 quota was recommended by the Biological Working Group of the Committee.

Data available on changes in average carcase weights and take per unit of effort support the view that previous management decisions have been generally consistent with the concept of harvesting the kangaroos produced in excess of the numbers required to maintain the field populations. The most recent data (1976) have indicated an increase in the abundance of the species, which is in accord with reports being made to the Department. The increase in quota approved for 1977 is therefore reasonable.

Control of the actual kangaroo harvest within limits prescribed on an annual quota basis is achieved by limiting the issue of carcase tags which also assist in regulation of trading within the continuously operating kangaroo industry. In order to allow normal day to day trade operations to proceed without unnecessary interruptions it is necessary to supply shooter licensees with tags in advance. The holding required for effective operation within Western Australia is equivalent to a 4-8 week operating surplus on average. Variations in field conditions and other circumstances affecting the operations of shooters may thus affect the numbers of carcase tags on advance issue at the completion of a particular quota year, or in extreme circumstances lead to a large discrepancy between the projected quota available and the actual numbers of animals harvested in the year in question. The deficiency in the actual harvest (shortfall) relative to the projected quota which arises in these circumstances is clearly unrelated to the abundance of kangaroos.

The depressed market for skins which still exists due to the continued absence of the U.S.A. from the market place, is a source of economic hardship to the industry at present. The Western Australian Government is hoping that joint State-Commonwealth discussions and further negotiations with the United States Government will lead to the lifting of the prohibition on the importation of kangaroo products into the U.S.A.