

FERRET SKULL RARE FIND

The skull of a ferret discovered by Honorary Fauna Warden H.L. Miller of Waroona has become a valuable addition to the Museum collection of the species Mustela putorius.

From the remains of the animal, which was discovered at Black Rock in the Yarloop area, a sketchy description was possible, the identification being made by Mr. J.L. Bannister, Curator of Mammals at the W.A. Museum.

Mr. Bannister said that the ferret was domesticated from the albino form of the European polecat probably because albinos are often more docile than the normal form. In Europe escaped ferrets have now interbred with wild polecats to such an extent that there are probably very few wild polecats left.

Ferrets were introduced fairly widely in Australia to help in reducing the rabbit population in the 1930's and Mr. Bannister believes that the specimen found at Black Rock could be a descendent of these.

EXCEPTIONAL WHITING SEASON

Large catches of sand whiting at Mandurah, Bunbury and, to a lesser extent, Augusta have ensured what is believed to be one of the best whiting seasons for many years.

Excellent catches of King George Whiting have also been made and well received at the Perth markets and fishermen are generally pleased with the prices they are receiving. Most are receiving up to 20c per lb. at the Perth market.

In one day 100 cases of whiting reached the market and sold well. This is much higher than the 15 to 20 cases per day considered to be good in recent years. Much of the whiting has been processed into 20 lb. frozen packs and is finding a ready market in the Eastern States.

Amateur fishermen are also having a good whiting season. Excellent catches are being made at both Mandurah and Bunbury.

FAUNA PATROL TO BERNIER & DORRE ISLAND

A party of shooters left Perth at the end of July to undertake a goat eradication programme on Bernier and Dorre Islands.

Destruction of vegetation on the islands by goats has been of concern to the Department for some time. The expedition consisted of Fauna Wardens C. Ostle, A. Pearce, A. Marshall and Fauna Cadet R. Emiliani. Research Officer J. Mott also accompanied the party which is under the control of Senior Warden S.W. Bowler.