

ITEM VI

Submitted by Seagoing Inspector, Mr. K.V. Steicke -

"All Departmental patrol vessels should be equipped with pot winches."

Branch Heads were in full agreement that all Departmental vessels should be equipped with pot winches. As funds become available pot winches will be installed on all vessels.

ITEM VII

Submitted by the late Inspector, Mr. I.H. Cardon -

"That amateur crab fishermen working drop nets from boats be restricted to the number of nets they can use, by allowing them to work only drop nets attached to the boat; and that Fisheries Inspectors be empowered to confiscate drop nets not attached to a boat".

Again most syndicates were in agreement with this suggestion. There are many aspects to the crab fishing problem as the size of the Department file on this subject will testify. Some of these relate to interests of amateur fishermen, to popular misconceptions about the maintenance of crab populations, and of course to the sale of crabs by 'Shamateurs'. The problem pertaining to crabs is under consideration by the Minister, by the Director, and by the General Fisheries Advisory Committee. Such thoughts as were expressed at the Annual Staff Conference have been forwarded for inclusion in discussions and deliberations.

ITEM VIII

Submitted by the late Inspector, Mr. I.L. Cardon -

"That the marron season be opened on December 15".

The majority of syndicates were against an earlier opening date for the marron season. Branch Heads endorsed this view and expressed agreement with the suggestion that it be most advantageous to wait with making amendments until such time as Mr. N. Morrissy, the Department's Freshwater Fisheries Research Officer, reports on the result of his research work.

THE FAUNA OFFICER SPEAKS
ON WAYS TO
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Mr. H.B. Shugg, in his recent radio broadcast spoke on ways the man on the land can assist in the conservation of our wildlife.

Herewith is the text of Mr. Shugg's address :-

"The increasing number of students and scientists coming here from overseas to see and study our fauna is proof of the world interest in our wildlife. By and large, most Australians, too, are sympathetic to the need for wildlife conservation, but sympathy by itself can achieve nothing. We have to take practical steps to retain this natural asset which history has shown is so easily lost, and, once lost, is so impossible to recreate. It is you, the countryfolk, who have the real opportunity to save our heritage.

Wildlife, like all other animals, needs certain things to survive. These include unpolluted air, food and water, cover and breeding and living space.

To provide these things, the first requisite is an adequate reserves system in which the natural habitats may be retained. Such a system calls for reserves ranging down from thousands of square miles to hundreds of square miles and even down to a few odd acres. They must set aside all kinds and classes of land and not just poor and useless areas such as rocky ridges or salt flats. The fauna of the good agricultural lands have to be saved too.

Secondly, we have to ensure that these reserves are not just isolated islands in a sea of farms. An interchange of birds and other animals between the reserves is essential to maintain their health and diversity. This calls for adequate roadside reserves and also for strips and clumps of bush in farms alongside the roads to give cover for the animals moving from one place to another. These communication strips must be properly managed and not incinerated every year as so many are at present by unimaginative fire control programmes.

We need to allow, and indeed to encourage, more wildlife to persist in the cultivated lands. Maintaining natural vegetation on farms as mentioned previously will help but is not enough. We have to dam the odd creek in isolated reserves to provide water through the dry summers for the shy wild creatures. We need to provide additional dams on farms, or fence off some existing ones to provide watering and sheltering places for those waterbirds which will not mingle with farm cattle. Food and cover must be made available to fauna cut off from their natural feeding and sheltering places. Nesting boxes of different designs and sizes must be erected to provide various birds with the opportunity to breed in security. More flowering trees are needed to augment the nectar supply for insects on which small marsupials as well as birds feed.

We must look too, at our natural resources pool and ensure that it is put to the best long-term community use and not eroded merely for short-term individual gains. We have to restore devastated lands - unnecessarily drained swamps, overgrazed and overcleared properties - before we make fresh inroads into the remaining store of wild areas.

Finally, we need to form wildlife clubs in which we can teach each other about our fauna of which so many of us know so little. The Busselton Wildlife Club is, I believe, the only one outside the metropolitan area. This is not good enough. Every region must have its club. In conservation as in other things, Governments and public servants can do little without the active and informed assistance and co-operation of the man on the land".