

Because of the large numbers of eggs produced by these animals it seems likely that enough larvae will settle to take the place of those removed by fishing. In addition, the estimates of growth rates, so far available, indicate that, under good conditions, the fishable size is reached in a few years and, after this, the rate decreases.

This would mean that a minimum size limit of about three inches is not only sound from the point of view of the economy of the industry's market, but also from the aspect of the species' biology.

At present the possibility of interference with the animals' habitat by fishing is undetermined. This could be reflected by changes in weed growth on the rocks or by changes in the numbers of other kinds of animals competing with abalone for food or space. Close observation of commercially fished areas, and the experimental fishing of others, will be combined with feeding studies of abalone -- and possible competitors -- for their algal food.

In addition to the study of Roe's abalone other species are also being investigated as time and facilities permit -- particularly the large southern species so far not exploited in Western Australia.

With the present rate of development of this industry in Western Australia it is anticipated that many of the questions most important to the understanding and rational exploitation of this fishery will be available before any serious depletion can occur.

CRESTED GREBE FOUND NEAR PERTH

Sightings of the Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) in the metropolitan area are not frequent, however recently three sightings were recorded. On March 11, Cadet Fisheries Inspector, Mr. D. Mell, found a juvenile bird near the Sir Charles Cairner Hospital, Hollywood. It was apparently brought down by trees or hit by a vehicle. Although there were no visible signs of injury, the bird made no attempt to fly off. On liberation in the pond at the Department's District Office, Victoria Park, the Crested Grebe dived and swam freely.

Later the bird was handed over to the Director of the Zoological Gardens. Mr. Spence said that it became the first of its kind the zoo had.

Mr. H.B. Shagg, the Fauna Officer, recorded the other two sightings recently. One bird was seen at Butler's Swamp, Claremont and four birds were seen at Thompson Lake.

Serventy and Whittell in their hand book "Birds of Western Australia" record the Crested Grebe being confined to the South - West corner of the State, from Gingin to Bremer Bay. It is definitely an uncommon species, but individuals appear from time to time on reservoirs and larger bodies of water, including brackish estuaries.

