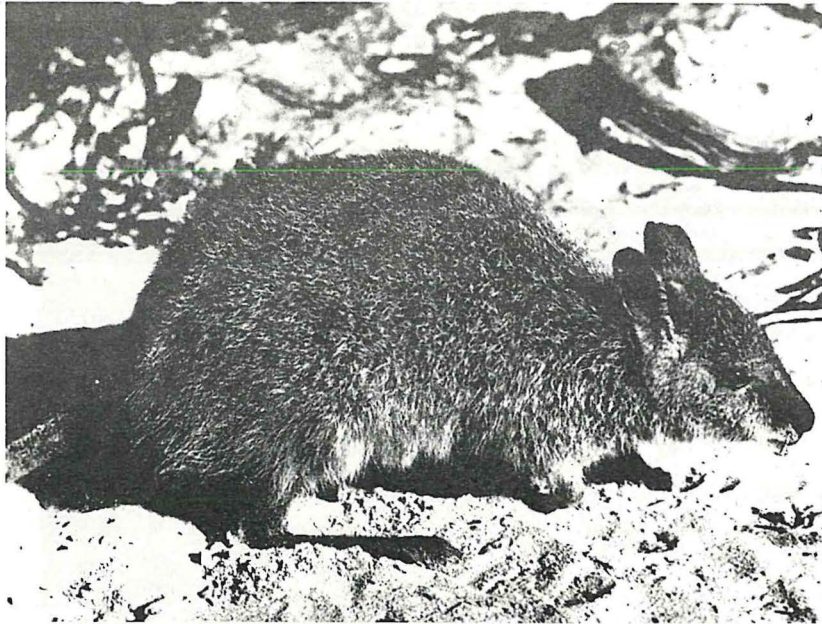


BERNIER AND DORRE ISLANDS

For a number of years the controlling body of Class A reserve No. 24869, the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee until 1968, and since then the W.A. Wild Life Authority, has received requests to relinquish parts of Bernier Island to permit its development as a tourist resort. In July 1959, the Committee decided to arrange that a biological survey be made as there was no recent information available in relation to the status of the fauna and flora of this island.

In its report (published in Fauna Bulletin No. 2), the Committee made a number of recommendations.

Its examination of the biology of Bernier and Dorre Islands clearly showed that their fauna is quite outstanding, both in its biological interest and in its richness. As biological reserves, they are of paramount important to anyone who is conscious of the need for the permanent preservation of areas of natural land which clearly illustrate the state of Australia before the advent of the white man and his introductions.



The Western Hare-wallaby, *Lagorchestes hirsutus*, is the rarest wallaby of the Islands (adult female).

To the scientist and naturalist the faunas are unique. They are rich in species, as compared with other islands off the Western Australian coast, and they contain representatives of species which are now either rare or extinct on the mainland, or are only known from the two islands. In addition, Bernier and Dorre will provide generations of Western Australian biologists with the opportunity to study the interaction of closely related species in a restricted, but natural, environment. They will also act as standards of reference against which the changes, occurring on Dirk Hartogs and the adjacent peninsulas, as a result of human activity, can be measured.

The Committee was unanimous in recommending that Bernier and Dorre both remain natural reserves for the preservation of fauna and flora; that no part of them be utilized for any other purpose because of the danger of the unwitting introduction of alien species or fire; that no jetty or pier be built from them which, in allowing decked craft to moor alongside, might facilitate transference of alien species (such as rats) from vessels to the wharf; that parties of visitors to the Islands be strictly supervised to prevent accidents with fires; that dogs be prohibited; that firearms be prohibited, except by special permission of the Chief Warden of Fauna; that a major effort be made to acquaint the fishermen of the Bay with the great value of the reserves and the danger of lighting fires on them; and finally, that the goat population of Bernier Island be exterminated without delay.



Alyogyne cuneiformis at north end of Bernier Island showing destruction caused by browsing goats.

The Department, in its effort to carry out the recommendations which were adopted in toto, has implemented them where possible and conducted goat shoots on Bernier Island to keep the population minimal. The appointment of a permanent Warden at Carnarvon should assist further to have the Committee's recommendations more efficiently applied.

* * * * *