

BLACK-FLANKED ROCK WALLABIES

In May an historic event took place. Black-flanked Rock Wallabies were released back into the Avon Valley National Park!

THE deep gorge on the Avon which is now part of the National Park is the 'type location' for this species, as it was named from a specimen collected there by John Glibert in 1842. It remained fairly common until 1909 but the last sighting was recorded by Walter Chitty in 1946. Then nothing - it had gone locally extinct.

Fortunately, a small population survived on wheatbelt rocks, and fox baiting by CALM has enabled numbers to build up (see "How to manage your granite outcrops" for the story). Indeed, they have been translocated to another inland rock. Now, they're back in the Avon Valley!

Many *LFWers* in the Toodyay, Gidgie, and Chittering areas (adjacent to AVNP) had expressed interest in the mammal translocation programme, and so *LFW* collaborated with CALM's Western Shield biologists to ask the community if they would like to be involved. There are two phases, first, to help with the actual animal release, and secondly, to monitor their survival.

Meetings were arranged in Toodyay (coordinated by *LFW* and the Toodyay Naturalists' Club) and in Lower Chittering (*LFW* and North Swan LCDC), at which Peter Orell explained about fox control, small mammal survival and the proposed release into the AVNP. Then, for three days, two (very wet!) days south of the river and one north, a total of 37 rock wallabies (from Mt Caroline Nature Reserve) were released into the park. It was really quite emotional as the little fellers



bounded off among the boulders! All told, over 50 people turned up to help, a wonderful response, and the scientists were very appreciative of the community's support.

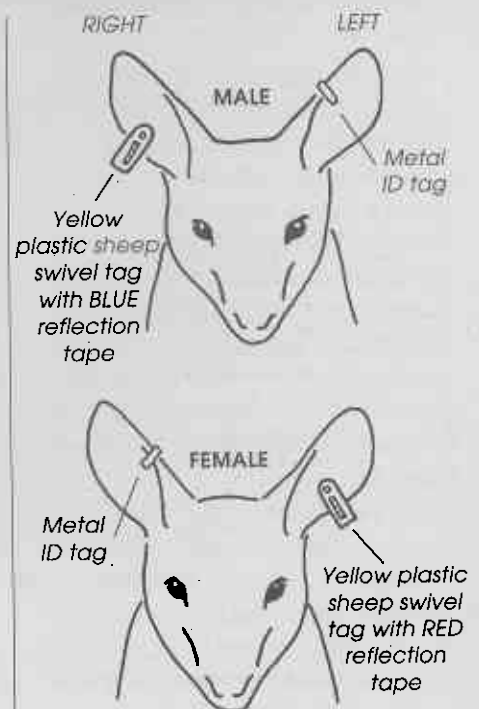
CALM would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Copley family and the Australian

Wildlife Conservancy, through Paruna Sanctuary, in making the rock wallaby translocation possible. Paruna forms a 13km long fox-baited bridge between Avon valley and Walyunga National Parks. Ten rock wallabies have also been reintroduced into Paruna Sanctuary.

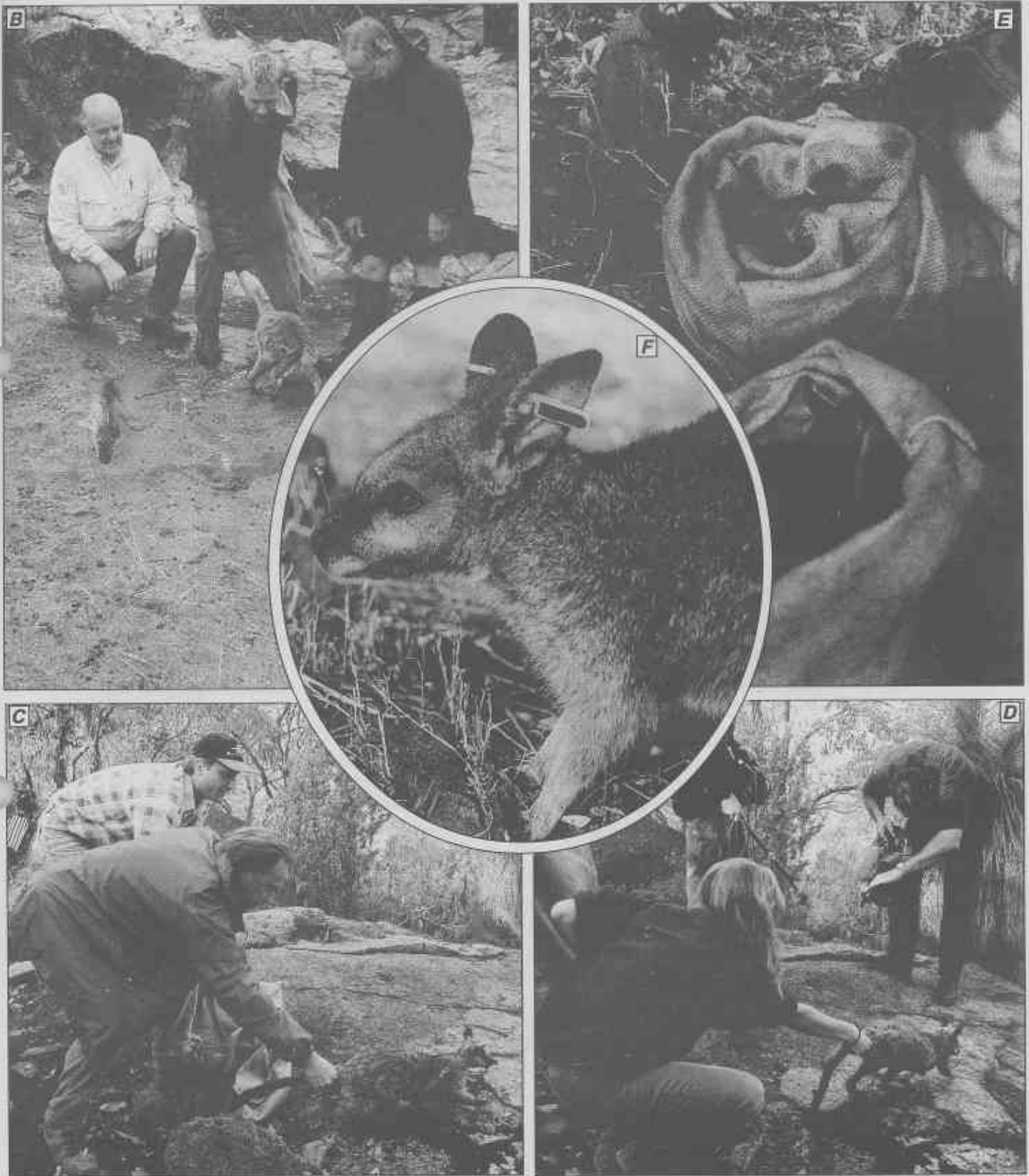
BUT WILL THEY SURVIVE?

FOR at least until this time next year, Western Shield needs reports of rock wallaby sightings. They bask on ledges and boulders in the morning or afternoon sun, especially during the cooler months - if you take your binoculars on a bushwalk to the right place, and then sit quietly, watching and filling in a simple record sheet, you could help this monitoring effort. The animals have ear tags for ID (see pics). Ring *LFW*, Toodyay Nats or Chittering Landcare Centre to pick up a map and recording sheet.

Make it a family excursion! The Avon Valley NP is a great place for a picnic anyway! As *LFWer* Fleur Crowe said on ABC News "People from Perth will now be able to see them!"



RETURN TO THE AVON VALLEY



A. Carrying rock wallabies to the release site. photo: P. Hussey
B. Jim Maher, Peter Mawson and Bob Frayne. photo: R. Huston
C. Roger Joyner and Peter Orell. photo: P. Hussey
D. Raffi Andreoli being filmed for ABC News. photo: R. Andreoli

E. Tammars, released a week earlier into dryandra thickets, in their carry-bags. photo: M. Meffert
F. A tammars, showing the ear tags. Is it male or female? photo: M. Meffert