

MEMBERS PAGE

More on the pesky fox - a foxymoron?

A Bushy Tale

John Lambie's April issue article on foxes attacking small stock and kangaroos calls to mind an incident that occurred about 25 years ago near my home on the Wolery community, Denmark. Early one summer's morn, an overnight visitor went for a walk with his two-year-old daughter. On coming to a nice marri log set about with dry pasture grass, he took a seat and let his child play around for a bit.

Very soon, he became aware of a 'dog' creeping through the grass as though stalking something. Curious to see what the 'dog' was after, he kept his eye on the movement of the tall grass and soon began puzzling as to why the movement was coming towards them. Then, all of a sudden, the 'dog' rose up and charged - towards his playing daughter!

He just had time enough to leap up from the log, grab his child and whirl her away from the 'dog's' charge. But the 'dog' was persistent,

and kept trying to bite the little girl. Only when our visitor managed to give the 'dog' a hefty kick did it give up and run away.

On returning to the house, our visitor related, with much consternation, what had happened and asked if we knew the owner of a savage dog, about as big as a kelpie, but reddish in colour and with a bushy tail!

It's not only dingoes

'Roo Fights Back

Some years later, I awoke one morning to the typical screeching sound that a fox makes. Leaping out of bed, I grabbed my .22 rifle (no safety cabinets in those days) and went out to see if I could get a shot. There, about 40 metres from the house, in the early light, a fight was going on, the two combatants standing up on their rear legs and going round and round in close combat. They were so engaged that I was able to creep to about 15

metres from them and saw that a fox was trying to get a young kangaroo by the throat. But they both stood about the same height and the 'roo was valiantly fighting back. For fear of shooting the 'roo, I waited. Then, all of a sudden the fox pulled out of the fight and the 'roo took the opportunity to race away. The fox remained sitting there, licking its belly, so I was able to shoot it.

On examining the dead fox - a truly beautiful animal - I found that the whole length of its belly had been slit down the middle as if with a stanley knife. So kangaroos are far from being defenceless.

As I arrived back at the house, carrying the rifle with one hand and the fox by its tail with the other, some visitors arrived. Great was the hilarity as they joked about the *au naturel* hunter returning with his catch. I hadn't dressed!

Ian Conochie, Denmark, WA