

# NATURE NOTES



WHO OWNS THIS  
HIDEOUS FACE?  
FIND OUT ON  
PAGE 5.

PHOTO: "Rainforests  
of Australia" by  
V. Serventy, p. 86



# ...EDITORIAL...



Hello there,

How would you like this beautiful rainforest area on the left to be bulldozed and turned into suburban blocks or cow paddocks? Yet this is what is happening to jungles all over the world. As you may know, the world's population is growing rapidly, especially in "Third World" countries like those in Africa, South-East Asia, Central and South America. Hungry for extra land and food, many of these

countries help themselves to develop by exporting products like woodchips and minerals. All over the world, including Australia, rainforests are shrinking and shrinking as they are turned into 'cash'. Re-planting might help the growth of new, often different trees but once the life cycle of a rainforest has been broken, it cannot be re-made by man. Botanists believe that jungles hold the key to finding answers to many of the questions they ask about life, how it began and how it changed. Other scientists believe that rainforests play an important part in the weather patterns of our whole planet. This month Nature Notes' is looking at our countries small but very important rainforest areas.

CHEERIO FOR NOW, Debra Brydon

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## WALLY & WILBUR WAFFLE ON.....



BY A.CARMICHAEL  
ARTIST: Wilma Prohasky



# THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

CAROLYN CASSOWARY, YOU EXTRAORDINARY RAINFOREST BIRD, COME ON UP.

Yes, you Carolyn. Don't be shy. I expect you're wondering why such an ugly bird as yourself has been chosen to star on such a popular T.V. show as "THIS IS YOUR LIFE". Of course, it's not for your beauty. We at the station just got sick of that most common bird, the emu, getting all the attention. I mean, anyone would think it was...

Australia's only giant bird. What a show-off it is. I'm sure it wouldn't want anyone to know that most cassowaries are heavier, even if a bit shorter, than most emus. Of the world's four giant flightless birds, you, Carolyn, rate as the second heaviest.

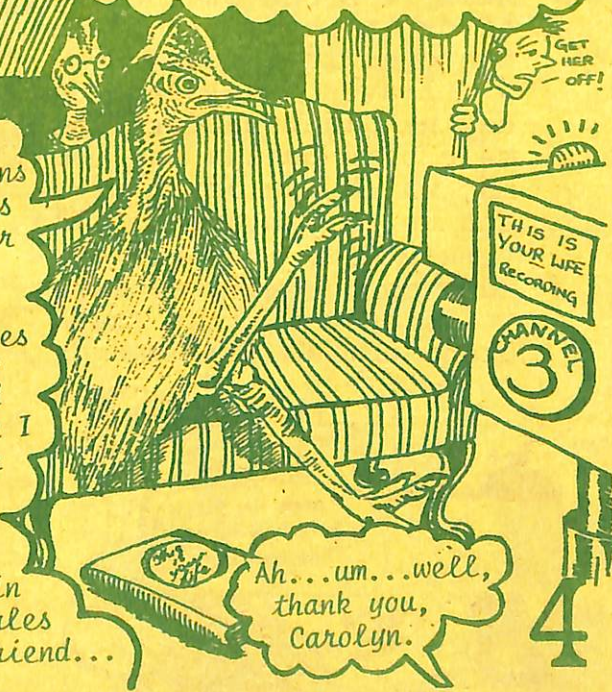
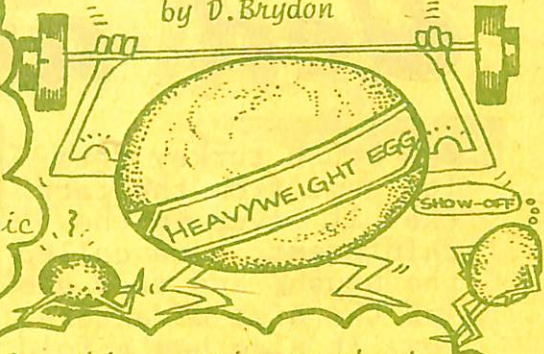
What a rude reporter you are, mate. Anyone can see that I am very beautiful, in my own special way. My plumage may be of a dull dark blue colour but my head and neck are a brilliant blue and red. Compared to my dreary cousin, the emu, I'm a real glamour girl. Did you know, I was beautiful as a baby, too. The egg I was born from was a lovely...

...blue-green colour. It was nine times heavier than the average hen's egg and, of course, all the other birds were so envious. Even when I hatched, I had the most attractive stripey feathers you could ever see. I must add that my voice is terrific, too. Everyone tells me that it's much stronger and louder than my puny emu cousin.

One thing worries me about you, Carolyn. You may be gorgeous looking but you do have a bad reputation for violence. I mean, look at that crash helmet on your head. What's that for? Look at your legs...they're so powerful. I've been investigating your family history and I must admit there have been several cases in New Guinea and one in north Queensland where your relations murdered human beings. Ah, but I'm not saying that you'd do that, Carolyn. You're so beautiful!

Actually, those murders are very embarrassing to my family. However, they were rare occasions and as you know, many more of us have been killed by humans for our delicious flesh. By the way, my crash helmet is not for use in fights. All it does is to help me push my way through all of the vines and scrub of the rainforest where I live. Now...if you don't have any more of your ridiculous questions, I'd like to send a cheerio to my mother at Cape York, my second cousin, Basil, in Indonesia, my great-uncle Charles in New Guinea and my best friend...

ARTIST: Carol Measures  
by D. Brydon



Ah...um...well, thank you, Carolyn.



# Ted and Tilly Talk Turkey

The brush turkey gets its name from the fact that it lives in the rainforest, once called the brush, and it's about the size of a turkey. It also has a fold of skin hanging from its neck like a turkey.



The brush turkey is in fact a very clever and specialized bird. When its cousins were first sighted by early explorers in the Philippines they couldn't believe their eyes, and it wasn't until 1821 that the brush turkey and its amazing secrets were again found.

So what's so special about this bald headed bird? Well it's one of the few birds in the world to lay its eggs in a mound of old leaves, mould and decaying plant matter. The male bird builds the mound, which can be 2m high and up to 5½m across. The female digs into the mound when the male declares it is at the right temperature. She lays one egg at a time.



She lays one egg at a time, covering each egg up as she goes. She can lay up to 60 eggs in 2 years!



by A. Carmichael

ARTIST: Carol Measures



The male then has his work cut out! He has to watch over the buried eggs, and make sure they get just the right amount of warmth. His sensitive beak can tell the temperature inside the mound with amazing accuracy. If the eggs are too hot, he scrapes some of the leaves away. If they're too cold, he piles more on top.



When the chicks hatch, in around 10 weeks time, they push their way up through the soft mound, and arrive fully feathered and able to fly!



There are still many brush turkeys living in the rainforest, and they are often seen rather tame in National Parks. They are spread around the areas east of the Great Divide, where there are wet forests. They have been seen 195km west of Cairns, at Chillagoe, but this is not usually where they live.



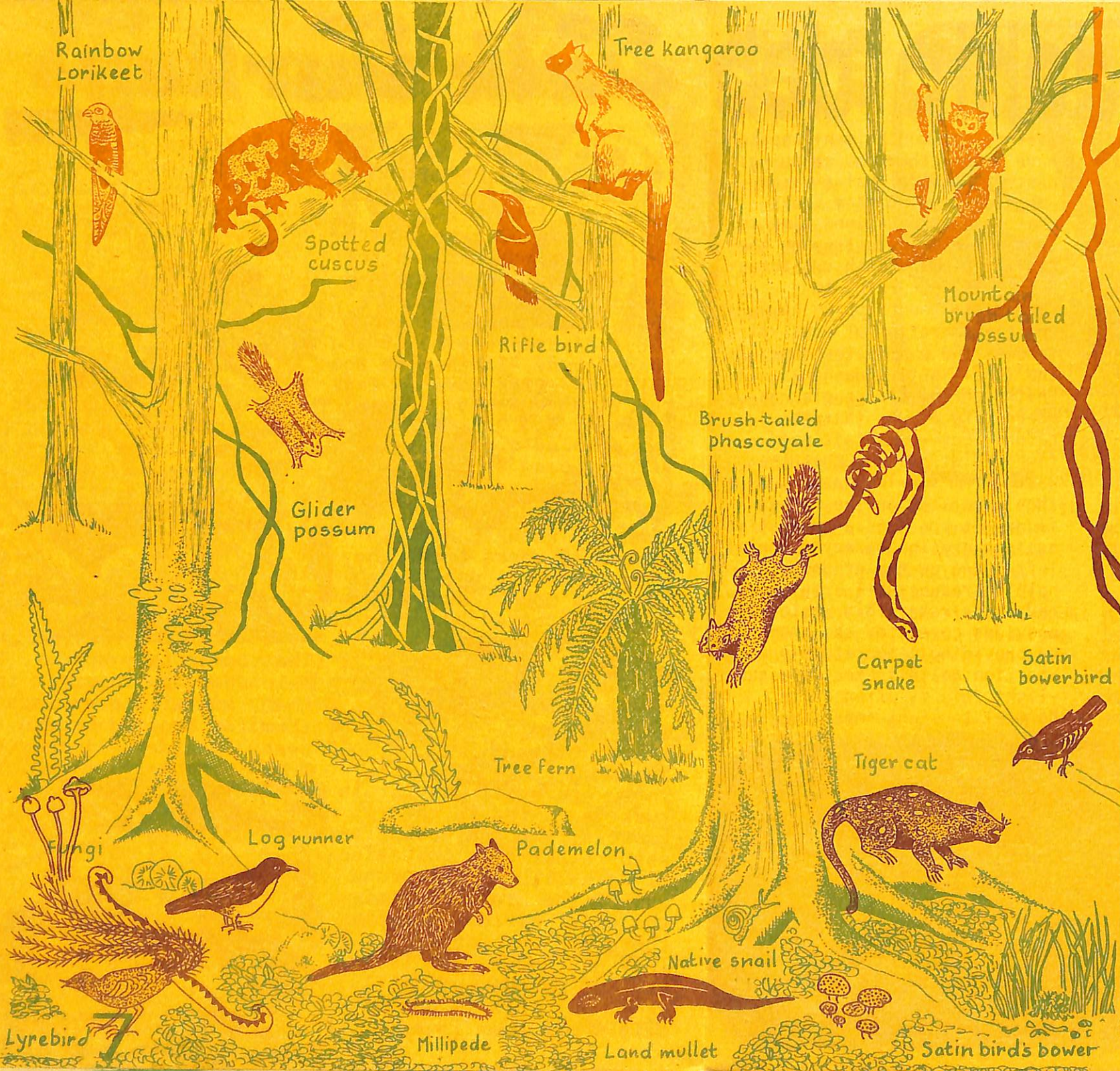
The male has to watch out for egg thieves as well. His main enemy is the tree goanna, who he will fight readily. He uses his strong legs as weapons.



The moment they appear, the male shows no interest in them, and will even attack them for hanging around the nest. Just as well they can fend for themselves eh?







Tropical rainforest covers approximately 13 million square kilometres of the earth's surface. This sounds like a lot of space but in fact, it isn't. Find out how many square kilometres make up the entire Earth's surface and you'll be surprised. Much less than 1% of Australia is covered by tropical rainforest but there are other types of rainforest not included in this figure.

The tropical rainforest can be best described as a COMMUNITY of broad-leaved woody plants which are generally evergreen and are arranged in layers. Looking at it from the top downwards the canopy is one of these layers. The tree tops are so close together that they act like an umbrella over the lower two layers of rainforest. As a result, it is always dim and humid. This allows many sensitive plants such as orchids, fungi, mosses and ferns to grow. In many ways, the tropical rainforest is like a glasshouse. The lives of many plants and animals are closely 'webbed' together in the rainforest. In the canopy are the birds and mammals which feed on insects, fruits, leaves and flowers. Other birds live most of their lives on the ground where they scratch out their food from the leaf litter. Meat-eating tiger cats move up and down trunks hunting animals on the floor and in the canopy.



THE  
GREAT

# Woodchip debate

No doubt many of our readers have visited National Parks either here or in other states. Many of you, probably, have been driven through the Dandenongs. Perhaps you have even stayed long enough to enjoy a barbeque and a leisurely stroll along one of the many bush walks throughout the Dandenongs. No doubt you could all think of your favourite hiking spot. Now imagine if that favourite spot were to be denuded or stripped of its trees! Would the spot you thought of still retain its natural beauty? If left in this now 'barren' state, how long do you think it would take to become wasteland?

Woodchipping has to do with the harvesting of 'pulpwood'. Pulpwood is said to be low quality timber that cannot be used as saw-logs (those suitable for building purposes). Because of its inferior or poor quality, it is not suitable for cutting into lengths to be used as sawn timber. Such pulpwood, however, can be pulped and used to make paper, cardboard, hardboard and other similar products.

Over recent months, many people have argued that woodchipping destroys the natural environment—destroying many trees that have taken a long time to grow as well as destroying the habitat of many bush creatures and flora. According to foresters, "woodchipping helps the re-generation of eucalypt forests and eliminates some of the fire-fighting dangers. Environmentalists—people concerned to ensure that the natural environment is not tampered with, argue that the waste from saw-log operations should be left on the forest floor. It provides a protection against erosion as any material left lying on the ground will help to reduce soil erosion caused by rain. This waste also provides cover for the ground by providing temperature protection against excessive sunlight. This is often quite harmful to light sensitive

flora on the forest floor. It also offers habitat for ground dwelling animals, giving them protection from predators and a food source.

Apparently, there are three types of wood-chipping operation in use today. One method is the "once-only" type where the forest is treated as a "non-renewable resource"—where no attempt is made to replant. Here, the wood is extracted for entirely profit-making reasons with little thought for the after-effects. This type of cutting is widespread in areas of Brazil and Malaysia.

Another method, in use in some

Clear-felling can lead to severe erosion. Soil washes into rivers and finally into the sea where it can cause serious problems. The entrance to this inlet near Eden is blocked off by silt, as can be seen above.

PHOTO: "Wildlife Heritage" p.3146

parts of Australia, is known as the 'forest-rotation' operation. This involves the payment of money by the woodchipping companies to the state government (since most woodchipping is conducted on government lands). Are all of these companies Australian? Which country is our biggest customer for woodchips? Of course, some money is used to establish a second generation for "chipping". A third system rotates a different crop of some kind between generations of trees for chipping.

Wood-chipping is different from the more traditional forestry methods in that it does not require tall, straight trees because...

by B. Archibald CONT. ON P.15





**THE** Melbourne City Council plans to turn this rubbish-strewn, weed-choked block of wasteland in Footscray into a nature reserve.

By GARY TIPPET

The 1.3 ha site, off Dynon Rd., is littered with broken concrete blocks, land fill, tin drums, scrap metal and a stripped car body. A badly silted, oily canal runs through its centre. But if the council's proposal goes ahead, it could be filled with native trees and shrubs, a haven for birdlife and an oasis in a noisy, industrial desert.

meeting on Monday, even provides for a bird-watching hide.

But it all depends on the State Government agreeing to meet half the estimated \$250,000 cost.

It is also subject to Local Government Minister, Mr Lieberman, consenting to the council's share of the cost being provided from the discontinued roads reserve fund.

The plan to develop part of the Dynon Ca-

nal swamps as a nature reserve was first approved by council in July, 1979.

After discussions with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, a detailed plan was made.

Senior field project officer Mr David Venn recommended the stripping and removal of existing vegetation, deepening and widening the canal, earthworks to create mounds and low-lying areas, construction of paths, a hide and roosting areas, and planting native vegetation.

Isn't this a wonderful story, readers? I'm sure there are areas near your school that look just like the photo above. Perhaps YOU and your grade could do something about making it a better home for native birds. Of course, you may need council permission first!



• Mr Pukallus . . . bees and a bus.

# Eugene's buzz in a bus

**BRISBANE — Eugene Pukallus runs the busiest bus service on the Darling Downs, taking 320,000 passengers to and from work every day.**

Was he frightened of driving around with 320,000 bees? "No, they're Italian bees, harmless and docile. If they were just ordinary bush bees you'd be running by now."

But he does admit it's one bus that always gets right of way. A local auctioneer, Mr Pukallus runs his apiary on wheels as a hobby.

This week a party led by the Queensland Tourism Minister, Mr Elliott, met his bees.

Mr Pukallus had ripped out all the seats of his bus and replaced them with 32 hives.

"Don't worry, after you've been stung thousands of times you don't sting, you just swear," he told the group.

With those words, he picked up a handful of bees and methodically described how one was in the process of stinging him.

It is a common practice in Germany. But it is like Russian roulette for the bees. There are 32 hives for the bees to fly into, but if they go in the wrong one, they are killed instantly.

- \*Why does Eugene Pukallus drive 320,000 bees around in his bus?
- \*What is an APIARY?
- \*Where in Australia is the Darling Downs?
- \*The bees are used for POLLINATION. What does this mean?



# Hairy Bungler and the Lowland Sisters

BY D. BRYDON.... ARTIST: Cindy Humnam

PREKKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY-SIDE, OUR FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALIST **HAIRY BUNGLER**, IS JOINED BY THOSE OTHER FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS, THE **LOWLAND SISTERS** IN A QUEST TO SOLVE THE MANY MYSTERIES OF NATURE. THIS MONTH, THE TRIO ARE GIVEN AN IMPORTANT TASK BY THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES COMMITTEE....

...THE PROBLEM IS GUYS, THAT WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ATHLETES TO FILL ALL THE EVENTS AT THE BRISBANE GAMES THIS YEAR. IT'S SO EMBARRASSING!...



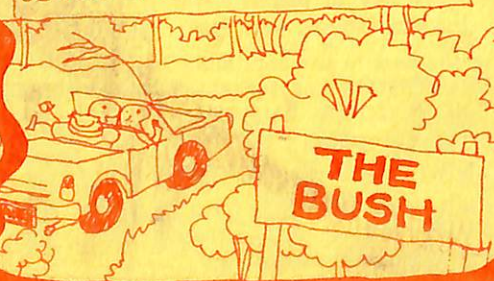
STRUH! ...THAT IS SERIOUS. HOW CAN WE SHOW ALL THOSE OTHER NATIONS HOW TERRIFIC WE AUSSIES ARE IF WE CAN'T SHOW THEM WHAT GREAT BODIES WE HAVE..?

..I MEAN, I CAN GO IN THE WEIGHT LIFTING, THE SPRINT, THE HURDLES, THE DISCUS, THE JAVELIN, AND THE PENTATHLON - BUT WHO CAN WE GET TO DO THE HIGH JUMP?



ARE WOMBATS USUALLY THIS BIG-HEADED LUCY?

...THE TRIO HEAD TO THE BUSH IN SEARCH OF A JUMPING CHAMPION...



...AND ARE SWAMPED BY CROUNDS OF ENTHUSIASTIC ANIMALS ANXIOUS TO REPRESENT THEIR COUNTRY AT THE GAMES....



BUT NONE COULD COMPETE WITH THE TREE KANGAROO FROM CAPE YORK...

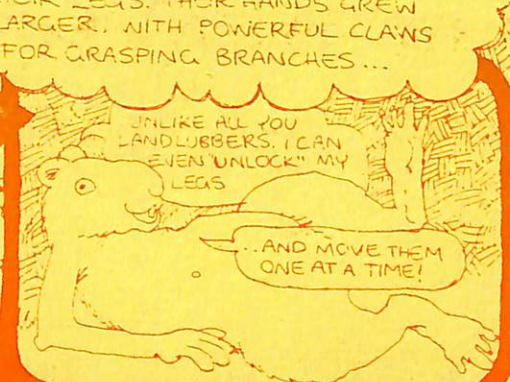


I KNEW THAT ONE DAY I'D BECOME FAMOUS... YOU SEE, I'M QUITE SPECIAL...

...SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT MANY YEARS AGO, TREE KANGAROOS WERE JUST LIKE ALL OTHER KANGAROOS. TO FIND MORE FOOD OR MAYBE TO ESCAPE THE DANGERS OF GROUND LIVING, MY ANCESTORS DECIDED TO MOVE BACK UP INTO THE TREES. OVER MANY YEARS, IT'S THOUGHT THAT THEIR FEET BECAME SHORTER AND BROADER. THEY GREW CUSHION-LIKE SOLES COVERED WITH A ROUGHENED SKIN TO PREVENT SLIPPING ON THE BARK OF TREES. THEIR ARMS BECAME STRONGER AND CLOSER IN LENGTH TO THEIR LEGS. THEIR HANDS GREW LARGER, WITH POWERFUL CLAWS FOR GRASPING BRANCHES...



LOOK AT THE SHARP, CURVED CLAWS!



UNLIKE ALL YOU LANDLUBBERS, I CAN EVEN 'UNLOCK' MY LEGS

...AND MOVE THEM ONE AT A TIME!

...SO, HAIRY'S EFFORTS TO PLEASE THE OLYMPIC SELECTION COMMITTEE TURN OUT TO BE IN VAIN...



WE'RE SO GRATEFUL TO YOU HAIRY. YOU'VE REALLY FOUND US AN ALL ROUND CHAMPION - SOMEONE WHO CAN GO IN ALL OUR UNFILLED EVENTS.

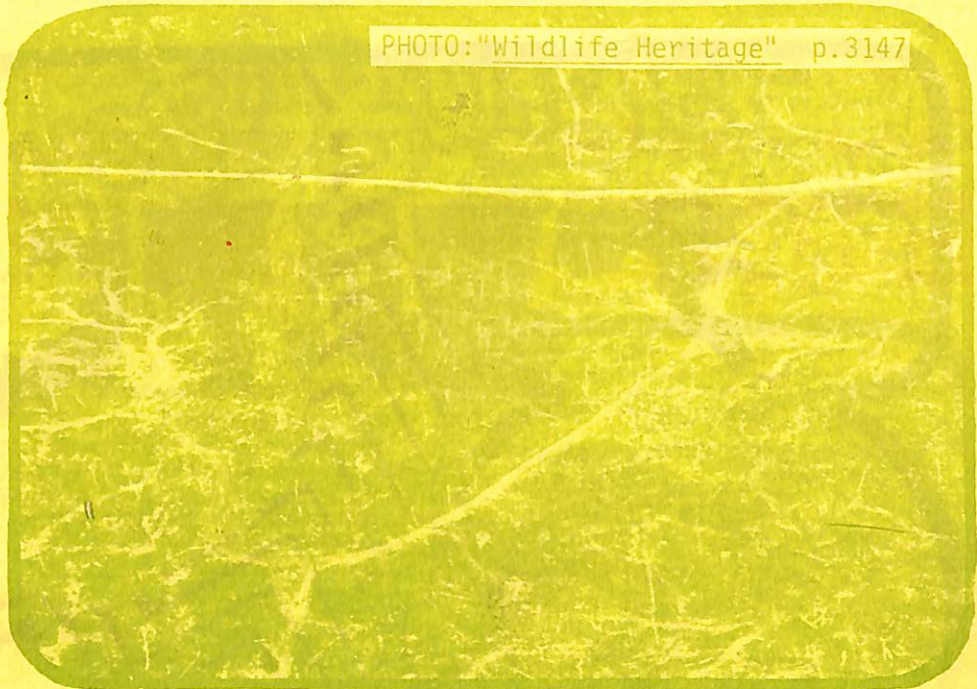
...WITH HAIRY'S CHANCE OF A GOLD MEDAL DASHED, HE TAKES TO THE TREES IN A BID TO IMPROVE HIS CHANCES...



IT'S BEEN A WEEK AND NOTHING'S HAPPENED YET! .. DON'T CRY!

OH COME ON DOWN HAIRY!





the process changes all timber into chips. Woodchipping 'clearfells' all the plant and tree growth in an area of natural forest and chews it into fragments.

In an article entitled "Woodchips-Threat or Promise?", the Forest Commission says that it believes that the term 'clear-felling' is rather misleading. "Harvesting", according to the Commission, "takes place gradually in small well defined logging areas". Many conservationists, however, would disagree with this. They argue that even though new trees are planted, the original forest area cannot be re-created as the 'forest-cycle' has been broken. The Forest Commission argues

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that it does leave small pockets of trees suitable for the habitats of

plants and animals. Environmentalists claim that this is just not enough. An important point to remember is that BOTH sides fail to give us clear evidence to support their case for or against woodchipping. What do you think?

Photographs A and B are given by the Forest Commission to show the before and after of their 23 year regeneration programme. But does this happen everywhere? The photograph above suggests that it does not. Photographs, anyway, don't tell us much about what is happening to the flora and fauna of an area. In making up your mind about woodchipping, there are many questions you should ask as the information given here is brief. What are some of these questions? Which, do you think is the most important one?