

IT'S TIME FOR MUTTON- BIRDING TO STOP

colonies were closed to the birders.

No surveys have yet been carried out to assess any recovery in those populations. It is said that recovery can take up to 14 years as the shearwaters take between 4 and 14 years to breed for the first time, and because poaching is a major problem at many of Tasmania's mainland colonies and on Bruny Island.

Recreational birders are given a brochure by the Parks and Wildlife

Every Easter on Tasmania's west coast and islands, muttonbird chicks are pulled from their seaside burrows and killed. Over 200,000 are slaughtered for a commercial trade. They are sold locally or canned for export, principally to New Zealand.

Up to a further 100,000 chicks are estimated to be killed in a two week long recreational 'harvest'. Some 600 recreational licences are sold each year, with each 'birder' being able to kill 15 chicks per day in West coast colonies and 25 per day on the Bass Strait islands. On the West Coast some colonies have their chick population reduced by 70 per cent over the short season.

During the 1980s some colonies had 90 per cent 'harvest' rates and after complaints from ANZFAS, other welfare and environment groups, and public complaints about the carnival atmosphere of opening weekend kills and inhumane practices, many

MUTTONBIRD is the common name for the migratory sea bird, the short-tailed shearwater.

The birds pair for life and most live for some 20 years if they survive their first migration to the northern hemisphere. Several banded birds were known to be at least 36 years old and one bird on Fisher Island was 38 years old.

Muttonbird parents fly thousands of kilometres from the northern to the southern hemisphere to spend three months rearing their single chicks, only to have them killed at about the time they would migrate.

Service which advises them how to kill birds humanely. There is no policing of the kill. The chicks are large, about 800g and almost twice as heavy as their parents at the time of slaughter. They are pulled from their underground burrows and either a flick of the catcher's arm is used to break the neck, or some inexperienced or unskilled recreational birders literally swing them by the neck in an attempt to break the chick's neck.

Nevertheless, John Cleary, Tasmanian Minister for Parks Wildlife and Heritage, recently assured ANZFAS that the taking of muttonbird chicks from their burrows and their killing was now humanely carried out. He asserts that the birders would be "held to ridicule by their peers if incompetent".

Apart from being killed by humans, muttonbirds face many risks such as damage to burrows by birders, grazing and denuding of colonies by cattle and rabbits, fires, predation, disease, starvation (during migration) flooding of low-lying nesting areas, and gillnet fishing. At present it is estimated that more than 40,000 shearwaters are drowned in salmon driftnets in the North Pacific. An 'unknown but large number of shearwaters are being caught in the southern bluefin tuna fisheries within Australia's 300 km Economic Exclusion Zone. Other risks include the ingestion of plastic and the effect of the accumulation of chemical pollutants from Northern Pacific feeding grounds.

The methods used to kill the chicks and the unknown incidence of cruelty make muttonbirding totally unacceptable, for either profit or recreation.

TELL THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT IT'S TIME FOR MUTTON-BIRDING TO STOP.

Please write to:

**The Hon. John Cleary, MP
Minister for National Parks
and Wildlife
PO Box 138
Rosney Park Tasmania 7018**

and also to:

**Senator John Faulkner
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

Situation still critical for animal victims of Kobe earthquake

Tens of thousands of dogs and cats were left homeless after the disaster, and a considerable number are still struggling to survive. Many have serious injuries.

Animal Refuge in Kansai, Japan (ARK) and other animal welfare organizations are rescuing and caring for as many as possible, but the situation is critical.

In the earthquake which damaged about six cities apart from Kobe, 5400 people died and an estimated 250,000 dogs and 500,000 cats were affected, as well as other animals.

Before the earthquake, about 50 per cent of Kobe homes kept dogs, mostly on chains. Many were trapped under collapsed buildings where they died slowly, or were engulfed by fires. Some pulled loose from their collars and fled towards the mountains. Dogs with chains still attached and burnt cats are roaming the streets. The lucky ones were rescued by their owners, but most temporary housing won't allow pets, and the government has made no provision for them.

Funds are needed for building temporary shelters and to buy food, medicines, blankets, cages. Also needed are volunteers experienced in animal rescue/shelter work who are able to pay their own travel expenses. Basic accommodation will be provided at ARK.

Donations can be sent to ARK c/o ANZFAS, PO Box 1023 Collingwood, Victoria 3066. Please make cheques payable to ANZFAS KOBE ANIMAL APPEAL.

Volunteers should contact Elizabeth Oliver, ARK Animal Refuge, 595 Noma Ohara, Nose-cho, Toyona-Gun, Osaka-fu 563-01 JAPAN. Ph 0727 37 0712. Fax 0727 37 1645.

Also, contact the **Japanese Embassy**, 112 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla ACT 2600. Ph: (06) 273 3244, and ask them to put pressure on the Japanese Government to allow people to keep their pets with them, and to provide financial help to care for animals left homeless.