

# Australian Pests<sup>1</sup>

3 Lots of pests have been worrying the Australians the last three centuries. Most of them are animals and plants that were brought from Europe by white settlers.

6 When only the Aborigines lived in Australia (that was until 1787, when the first ship with settlers arrived in Botany Bay), plants and animals were in harmony. The Aborigines were hunters and collected plants and fruit to eat.

Then white settlers brought plants and animals from Europe, for example the **blackberry bush<sup>2</sup>** and the rabbit.

9 Today blackberry bushes cover large areas. Because they are not destroyed by bushfires, they **spread<sup>3</sup>** more quickly than other plants. Of the many different animals that came to Australia in the last 300 years, the rabbit became the greatest pest. Five rabbits were brought to Sydney around 1800. Later there were millions of rabbits all over Australia. Six rabbits eat as much as one sheep does. So the sheep farmers had to try and kill as many rabbits as possible. Today this problem no longer exists.

12 In 1866, camels were brought to Australia to be used in the outback. Now people use landrovers instead and the camels have become wild again. Farmers do not like them because they **pollute<sup>4</sup>** drinking water, break down fences and frighten horses.

15 Another pest that Australians have had to fight is the dingo, a wild dog. The dingo came to Australia with the

18 Aborigines many thousands of years ago. Dingoes are very intelligent, **cautious<sup>5</sup>** and fast animals. One dingo can kill nearly a hundred sheep in one night. Dingoes even attack cows and kangaroos although these animals are much bigger. To save Australia's millions of sheep from the dingo, a long fence was built right across Australia. This is probably the longest fence in the world - 6000 miles long. The fence is 6 feet high and goes 6 inches into the ground, so that the rabbits cannot get through either.

21 The fence is inspected every week by **boundary riders<sup>6</sup>** who travel in landrovers. Quite often there are sandstorms which cover the fence with sand. Then the boundary riders have to make the fence higher so that the animals cannot get across. Boundary riders also put poison into water-holes and lay out poisoned meat to kill off dingoes.

## I. Answer the questions!

1. How did the Aborigines live before the white settlers arrived?
2. Why could the blackberry bush spread so quickly?
3. What makes the rabbits a pest?
4. What makes the camels a pest?
5. What is the job of the boundary riders?
6. In what way do the Australians try to fight the pests? (3 items)

## II. Explain or replace the following words!

1. century (line 2)
2. settler (line 3)
3. Aborigine (line 4)
4. to inspect (line 19)

## III. Translate

from line 13 ("Another pest...") to line 16 ("...right across Australia.")

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<sup>1</sup>pests - Plagen, Schädlinge

<sup>2</sup>blackberry - Brombeere

<sup>3</sup>to spread - sich ausbreiten

<sup>4</sup>to pollute - verschmutzen

<sup>5</sup>cautious - vorsichtig

<sup>6</sup>Boundary rider - Grenzpatrouille