

Bourke Parrot (*Neophema bourki*).

By J. Sutton.

On 11th March, 1929, two birds were sent to the S.A. Museum by Mr. L. O'Toole, Oodnadatta, for identification, with an intimation that they were the only ones that he had ever seen. They turned out to be specimens of the above Parrot. On asking for further information about the birds, Mr. O'Toole advised:—"Since writing you last (3rd March) we have had a drop of rain, and the birds have gone away again. As they were strange birds to me, I took notice of them. They are ground feeders; fly swift to water just before daylight, odd ones at night. They do a lot of flying at night, but are very shy with other birds, Crows, etc. They finish watering before Bronzewing Pigeons, and when feeding they fly with a motion of the small Doves. Old camp fires and new camp fires seem to attract them in the daytime, and I have seen them walk nearly into the fire. They were about Pundalarrinna Rock Hole for about three weeks. I do not know anything about their nesting habits. I don't know where they come from, and the aboriginals from the Musgrave and Everard Ranges do not know them."

Pundalarrinna Rock Hole is 130 miles in a straight line slightly north of west from Oodnadatta. It is approximately long. 133° 15' E. and lat. 27° 25' S.

Captain S. A. White, in the account of an Expedition into the North-Western Regions of South Australia (June-July 1914), Trans. Royal Society of S.A., Vol. 39, 1915, pp. 746-7, writes:—"This beautiful little Parrot was first met with at Flat Rock Hole, where it came in to drink up to nine o'clock at night. Flying round several times in small parties of four or five birds, they uttered a plaintive little whistle, at times almost warbling. They alighted on the bare rock and walked to the water's edge. It is quite possible these birds have made it a practice to come to water late, owing to birds of prey, as a rule, watching watering-places both morning and evening. Later on a small covey of these birds was flushed from amongst the dry grass when the camels were passing through some open mulga country. They rose quickly, alighted on a dead mulga for a few seconds, then flew away quickly out of sight. The crops of the specimens procured were very distended with small grass-seeds."

Flat Rock Hole is about 23 miles south-east of Mount Ferdinand, in the Musgrave Ranges, and 40 miles north-west of

Moorilyanna Native Well (near which this Parrot was seen on the second occasion by Captain White). This Native Well is 43 miles north-west of Pundalarrinna Rock Hole.
