
*HARVEY—Coombe District Notes.***Coombe District Notes.**

By Walter J. Harvey.

On my return journey on 29th March, 1932, I saw some Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) at Culburra, about 18 miles N.W. of Coombe, and on arriving at Coombe I saw some more. I drew my brother's attention to them and he said they were the first that he had seen this season. The following day (30th) when riding around on a tour of inspection, I flushed a single bird of the *Neophema* species from a "burn-off" three months' old. That date was later than I had seen the species here previously, and I have never seen them feeding on other than grass country before. On 20th April I noticed four Dotterels feeding with Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*) on burnt grass country. They were there for some days, but I could not identify them as they would not allow me to get near. I saw and heard the first Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo (*Chalcites basalix*) on 6th May. I thought that it must have been one that stayed from last season, but on 9th May I saw the first Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) and within a week I had seen several. They are more plentiful now than in any previous year. Emus (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*) are very plentiful with some of the settlers this year. There are from 20 to 36 on our crop almost every day. They do a lot of damage, and the time is approaching when the settlers will have to take concerted action in thinning them out. Some of the settlers are poisoning them by means of heaps of poisoned wheat scattered around the paddocks. The manager of one of the largest holdings hereabouts told me that he shot 27 during the last harvest. We had the misfortune to lose our staghound a few weeks ago, so until we get another hound of some sort we can do nothing but shoot at them. They are too keenly sighted to allow a shot like

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myself to get close enough to be effective. On horseback I chased some a short time ago, and one of them blundered through a wire gate and broke a piece of strong 3 inches by 2 inches stringybark as easily as I could break an inch mallee stick. Apparently there were no ill effects as the birds were back the next day. Two of the regular visitors have the creamy feathers on the neck, an adult and one younger.

The following myths come from the tribe of aboriginals, of which a remnant are about Salt Creek Coorong:—

Why the Eastern Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*) is so gaudily garbed, and why the Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*) is disliked by other birds.—In the very earliest times the Rosella and the Boobook Owl were very good friends, helping each other, where they could, in finding nesting hollows and telling each other of suitable food, but one day they had a severe quarrel and the Owl gave the Rosella a fearful thrashing and pulled its feathers out. The other birds were very annoyed with the Owl when they saw what had been done, so they chased it whenever they saw it, until the Owl decided to feed at night instead of in daylight, when it was worried by the other birds. They also nursed the Rosella, and to make up for the damage done to its plumage the birds all plucked some of their own feathers and stuck them in the Rosella, so now it is one of the gayest birds of the country.

Why the Brolga (*Grus rubicundus*) has the naked red patch about the face and throat.—Ages ago, when the first Brolgas had mated and hatched their eggs they had as many chicks as a good pair of Emus have now. The Emus saw the Brolgas with their large clutch of chicks and became very jealous. After much thinking they decided on a cruel ruse. The Emus hid all of their chicks but one in the scrub, then taking that chick with them they went to the Brolgas and said, "How foolish to have such a large family; you will soon have all the food eaten and die of hunger; why not do as we have done and kill all but one chick?" So the Brolgas went away and talked it over and decided to take the Emu's advice, but to save two chicks, instead of one as the Emus had done; but after they had killed their young ones the Emus paraded the whole of their large family. When the Brolgas saw the mean trick that had been played on them they became so annoyed and grief-stricken that they put their heads in a nearby fire and scarred themselves and their kind for ever.