

SIMPSON—Central Australian Notes.

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By H. Simpson.

Writing from Finke, on the railway line 142 miles south of Alice Springs, under date of 23/2/1933, he stated:—Owing to having serious trouble with the quicksand rising in the bores, I have not had much time to investigate this place for birdlife. My pumping section is from Abminga to Bundooma, nearly 100 miles. No general rain has fallen for quite a considerable period, only an isolated thunderstorm. Travelling along on the motor quad I run through patches of country with waving green grass and trees shooting out afresh and green, then I get out of the storm area back to the dead trees and drifting red sand. It is marvellous what a few points of rain can do up in this country. From the Finke to Bundooma it is practically all sandhills and they are ever on the move. With the slightest breeze the red sand drifts like a fine mist. Not many birds frequent this drought-stricken strip of country, only an occasional Hawk or a stray Quail-Thrush (*Cinclosoma*). Bundooma pump-house is situated right on the bank of the Alice Creek. Nearby is Alice Well, at one time a police station, 89 miles south of Alice Springs. This creek abounds with birdlife. I have noticed the following birds about the troughs at Alice Well:—Crested Pigeons (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), Nankeen Kestrels (*Falco cenchroides*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Cockatoo-Parrot (*Leptolophus hollandicus*), Port Lincoln Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius*), Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Cōracina novae-hollandiae*), White-winged Trillers (*Lalage tricolor*), White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*), Masked Wood-Swallows (*Artamus personatus*), Yellow-throated Miners (*Myzantha flavigula*), Pipit (*Anthus australis*), Chestnut-eared Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*), Pied Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*), Magpie (*Gymnorhina* sp.). A good variety of Hawks were in the neighbourhood, but I could not identify any as only the under portions of them were visible. Every day the overhead tanks take toll on the flocks of Chestnut-eared

Finches. Barn Owls are also often found drowned. Shell-Parrots (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) are scarce up this way, only one flock of ten noticed between Abminga and the Finke. An Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*) and two young ones were noticed on the 21st of this month near Abminga. Four Grey Teal (*Querquedula gibberifrons*) were flushed from a pool of water near the railway line last week. At the Finke every morning flocks of Crested Pigeons and Chestnut-eared Finches surround the drinking-drum which we put there for the purpose. Accompanying them are Galahs (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*), Magpie-Larks (*Grallina cyanoleuca*), White-plumed Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga penicillata leilavalensis*), Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*), Pipits, and Crows (*Corvus* sp.). About six weeks ago a Bourke Parrot (*Neophema bourki*) flew under the cottages verandah exhausted. It was easily caught and afterwards released. A pair of Grey Falcons (*Falco hypoleucus*) was noticed last week hovering over the Finke pump-house.
