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*Bird Notes.*

By L. R. Rees.

"Minnie Downs," via Marree, S.A., 9th June, 1933.

. . . We had two falls of rain during May, 30 points each fall, but it has not, so far as I can see, made any difference to the bird-life in the district. During a dry spell all the birds live along the river (Diamantina) and it is only when rain falls that they visit the tableland (the watershed between the Diamantina and Cooper's Creek). The present flood in the Cooper has reached the Coongy Lake, but it will not fill the lake. I have just spent a fortnight there, and none of the lakes have any water in them. Usually there are millions of

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waterfowl of all descriptions on these lakes. The birds must make south when the lakes dry up, as the waterholes in the district are not frequented by them. Between Miranda and Coongy (100 miles roughly) the country is stony tableland (Sturt's Stony Desert), the actual track Sturt travelled in one of his expeditions. There is no water between, yet there are always birds to be seen when crossing it. We have a cat plague, tame ones gone wild, at present, so the ground birds will suffer. These brutes may get a rabbit or two, but their principal food is birds. I have not for years seen so few birds nesting, but as most of my work is between wells, that may account for it. When I go along the frontage (Diamantina), I expect to see nests of most of our birds. The Galahs (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*) and Bare-eyed Cockatoos (*K. sanguinea*) are just as big a curse as ever. The Budgerygahs (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) and Zebra Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*) seem fewer than usual, while the Crested Pigeons (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) are in greater numbers. The Crows (*Corvus ceciliae*) have also increased. The Barn-Owls (*Tyto alba*) are more numerous than usual, so I think are the Stubble (*Coturnix pectoralis*) and Button Quail (*Turnix velox*). The Flock Pigeons (*Histriophaps histrionica*) seem to have left, as I have not seen or heard of them for some time. I will be visiting the floodwaters of Goyder's Lagoon in a fortnight, and expect to see most of the water-fowl nesting.

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