

NARACOORTE NOTES

The following notes were sent to Mr. J. N. McGilp by Mr. A. R. Attiwill, Box 66, Naracoorte, in a letter dated February 22, 1958.

Last summer was one of the driest on record and consequently the majority of birds did not nest as usual and a lot of birds which usually visit this district for the purpose of breeding did not appear. Strangely enough, the waterfowl and waders were here in hundreds and were spread all over the pastures wherever there was any water, but nesting activities were restricted. I did not see one nest of the common heron or spoon-bill and as you know they will ordinarily nest on any hole that holds water and has a couple of old red gums nearby. I found only two clutches of Mountain Duck and one each of Black Duck and Grey Teal. According to information gathered, the Black Swan did not lay eggs on any swamp in this area. In a few instances a pair started to build a nest but abandoned it within a few days.

Bool Lagoon did not fill much over the half-way mark, and although there were thousands of duck on it there was no attempt observed to lay in any of our specially-prepared nesting places. No cormorants were found breeding.

There seemed to be an unusual number of black-shouldered Kites in the district this year. Two pairs were showing signs of nesting when they were attacked by White-backed Magpies and abandoned all attempts and split up into solitary birds.

There is a move afoot to have an area of virgin scrub country set aside as a sanctuary for flora and fauna. The area consists of about 5,000 acres of the Killanoola Estate, roughly west of Bool Lagoon, and is an ideal situation, consisting of rough heath and teatree flats, stringybark ridges, stunted blue gums, yaccas and banksias, as well as two or three red gum swamps in the middle. A reserve is urgently needed here, owing to the widespread clearing and bull-doing of all timber, and we must endeavor to keep our native plant, bird and animal life secure.