

NOTES ON BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG
SPUR WINGED PLOVERS AND
YOUNG TEAL

A nest containing 4 eggs was located on a small island in the River Murray at Boggy Flat (via Taylorville). The island is only 50 feet long and 10' wide at widest point and only about 2' above water. It is bare of vegetation except short grass. It is 12' to the "mainland" at nearest spot and about 25' at farthest point, with depth about 5'.

Our interest was aroused as to the behaviour of chicks when confronted with this water barrier, as it is common for young Plover to move off soon after hatching.

On September 1, 1962, all 4 eggs were chipped—3 eggs hatched on evening of 5th and other chick could be heard "chirping" in the shell. These 3 young were banded. Fourth chick hatched morning of the 6th and a visit in the evening disclosed no chicks on the island. A thorough search of the "mainland" on the September 9 located 2 chicks, but others could have easily been overlooked. Bands on chicks were identification of same birds as seen on the island. Method of crossing water was not determined.

At same spot as above at 1.30 p.m., September 2, 1962; Teal nestlings were noted falling from a hollow dead gum tree. Height of hollow to ground 36 feet.

The landing point was about 4' from water's edge, soil very dry hard irregular clay with broken limbs of trees on the ground.

No parent birds in sight, when the first "plop" drew our attention. This little one scrambled quickly to the water and was immediately followed in rapid succession by 8 more ducklings. All 9 survived the "crash landing" apparently unharmed and took to the water quickly in a scrambling run. All landings (or launchings) occurred within a space of 3 to 4 minutes. One little one landed on a hard log without effect.

On reaching the water they quickly gobbled up any suspended matter in the water, including large quantities of "duck weed" (an aquatic fern). We were amazed at the activity of the little birds—eating, drinking, preening and scratching. No sign of parents seen all afternoon.

Two days later, old birds were seen but then all the little ones kept right out of sight—very different to previous time.

D. B. MACK.