

BIRDS OBSERVED AT CARRIEWERLOO

by MARK BONNIN

Carriewerloo is a sheep station of six hundred square miles situated due west of Port Augusta. The homestead, nearer the eastern boundary, is thirty miles from Port Augusta. The country is flat or very slightly undulating but with a range of hills running along the northern part. The land is covered with mulga, mallee scrub, saltbush and blue-bush. Bigger eucalypts line the dry water-courses in the hills whilst small areas of the flat land are virtually devoid of growth and are called gibber plains.

Heavy rains in the preceding few months had filled all water tanks and swamps on the station. The manager, Mr. John Edkins, had noted an unusual number of birds breeding in the swamps and because of this invited Mr. Alan Lendon and myself to spend a weekend there. We left Adelaide on the afternoon of September 21, 1963, and arrived at the homestead at dusk. On September 22 we were guided over the property by an Aboriginal station hand whilst on the following morning Mr. Edkins took us to the hilly country to the north. The weather was fine and sunny.

The following notes were made during approximately twelve hours' observing: thus the list cannot be regarded as near complete for the area. Identification of species was made by both observers.

Species of special interest or about which notes are included:—

Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*)—Said to be numerous in the area but only two were seen. (Only four kangaroos were seen yet 4,000 are shot on the property each year).

Little Grebe (*Podiceps novaehollandiae*)—One seen on a dam.

Hoary-headed Grebe (*Podiceps poliocephalus*)—Six seen as solitary birds or pairs.

Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*)—In small numbers in swamps. In a newly constructed dam on Knucklekidney Creek eight recently hatched young were swimming. After several minutes the parent birds flushed from the side of the pool a few yards from us.

Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*)—Numerous on Little Hills Swamp. Several families of young seen.

White-eyed Duck (*Aythya australis*)—20 on Black Swamp.

Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*)—One nesting pair. Beneath the nest were the remains of one rabbit and two Pink-eared Ducks, recently dead.

Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*)—The only three birds seen were dead. These birds are poisoned prior to the lambing season each year.

Black-tailed Native Hen (*Tribonyx ventralis*)—Numerous in Little Hills Swamp.

Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*)—Considerably more numerous than the Spur-winged Plover. Frequently observed in groups of 5 or 6, including adults and almost mature young.

[Australian Dotterel (*Peltohyas australis*)—One pair of birds seen to fly from roadside in gibber country at dusk. Identification uncertain but this species is well-known in the area].

White-headed Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)—Several pairs with young.

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)—One pair.

Galah (*Cacatua roseicapilla*)—Many thousands. This species appeared to have occupied every available nesting site in the bigger eucalypts, possibly to the exclusion of the Pink Cockatoo.

Pink Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*)—Two seen.

Little Corella (*Cacatua sanguinea*)—Two at Courting Road Dam.

Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)—Several flocks of ca. 30 and many family groups of 5 or 6.

Budgerigah (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)—Many thousands—in large flocks and breeding pairs throughout.

Black-eared Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx osculans*)—One almost mature bird being fostered by a Rufous Songlark.

Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygia*)—Mostly seen near nesting holes on Knucklekidney Creek.

White-winged Triller (*Lalage suerii*)—Numerous throughout the scrub.

Crimson Chat (*Ephthianura tricolor*)—