

AN IRRUPTION OF BLUE-WINGED PARROTS

The Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*) seems to be nomadic and, in part, migratory in its movements. It is more frequently seen in dry inland localities than its congener the Elegant Parrot (*N. elegans*), and its occurrence in favoured haunts is sufficiently regular to indicate migratory habits. Single birds or pairs appear in any season of the year on the Mount Mary Plains, S.A., but there is a concentration of the birds in a few places early in October of most years. The birds do not remain long even in the favoured spots, and their presence usually coincides with the ripening of certain seeds (*Cruciferae* and *Compositae*).

In a few years the birds have gathered to form a flock of up to 20 individuals, as mentioned in my paper on the parrots and cockatoos of the region (*Emu*, 59, 83-87, 1959). An exceptionally large gathering of the species occurred during October, 1964, when upwards of 50 birds were observed on a number of days. Four individuals were trapped and banded by the writer.

E. E. BOEHM.

NEST PREDATION BY BOOBOOK OWL

In Vol. 24, p. 51, of this journal, D. B. Mack noted the Boobook Owl (*Ninox novae-seelandiae*) occupying what was once the nest of a Galah (*Cacatua roseicapilla*). On November 14, 1958, I found a nest of the Boobook Owl, with two newly hatched young in a Galah's nest which still contained three Galah eggs. I checked this nest each week until the young owls left, which was on December 24. The three Galah eggs were still there. In this case the owls had taken over after occupation by the Galahs, which had nested in this tree for several years previously.

LIONEL SCHULZE,
Warrambo, Eyre Pen.

RAT AS BIRD PREDATOR

On October 31, 1964, at Cavan, a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was seen to fly into a clump of wild artichokes growing on the roadside embankment. The artichokes formed a rough circle with 2-3 feet of bare ground in the centre. Almost immediately I could hear the bird's distress call and on going to the scene found that the bird had been seized by a large rat. The animal had taken the bird across the neck just in front of the wings, which were flapping loosely. The rat then moved under cover of the artichokes.

G. CLARKE.

MAGPIE ATTACKING PARROT

At Eden Valley on January 23, 1965, a male White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) was perched about 30 feet from the ground on an upper branch of a red gum. This particular tree is a favoured gathering place for Red-rumped Parrots (*Psephotus haematonotus*), about 15 of which were perched amongst the lower branches at this time.

A male parrot perched about 2 feet below the magpie took flight and was immediately seized and carried off by the magpie, apparently in its claws. I saw no blow struck by the beak. My observation point was approximately 30 yards from the tree.

The magpie was lost to view when it flew behind a haystack some six or seven hundred yards away and I was unable to follow the outcome.

ROSEMARY DALEY.

LITTLE WOOD-SWALLOW AT LAKE MERRETI

Dr. Alan Lendon has reported that he and his son saw a single Little Wood-Swallow (*Artamus minor*) at Lake Merreti on January 1, 1966. Both observers are familiar with this species from elsewhere in Australia. The Little Wood-Swallow has not previously been recorded for South Australia, although occurring as it does in the vicinity of Alice Springs it could be expected to occur in the far-northern parts of this State.

B.G.

BURDEKIN DUCK—REPORT FROM SOUTH-EAST

In a letter to Mr. R. F. Brown, dated September 2, 1964, Peter R. Penney, of Mt. Gambier, reported seeing two ducks which he considered to be Burdekin Ducks (*Tadorna radjah*) on a large swamp alongside the track leading to Nigretta Falls, near Hamilton, Victoria, on August 16, 1964. The field description supplied supports his identification.

His companion at the time was Geoffrey Aslin, who saw a bird identical with those above near Glencoe East, in the south-east of S.A. on August 21, 1964. Both observers spent the following day unsuccessfully searching for this bird.

With records such as this one cannot discount the possibility of the birds having escaped from captivity, yet they are too interesting not to be reported.

B.G.

BURDEKIN DUCK IN NORTHERN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

On the early morning of March 14, 1966, I was travelling south by train from Alice Springs. There were numerous large pools of water remaining from the recent heavy rains, and on one of these in the vicinity of Coward Springs, 123 miles south of Oodnadatta, and about 50 yards from the line I saw seven Burdekin Duck (*Tadorna radjah*). As I watched they took off and flew a further 30 yards to another pool, so that I had an excellent view of them. The train was travelling slowly.

At the time I did not attach any great importance to the record, not being aware that this species had not been previously recorded in South Australia, but having seen so many Burdekin Duck in the Northern Territory, both before and after the above recording, I am convinced that there is no possibility of any mistake.

R. J. GOODFELLOW.