

Bird Notes.

(From the McGilp Bros., Moolawatana Station.)

AUSTRALIAN DOTTEREL (*Peltohyas australis*).

On 22nd of June we were motoring on the plains east of here, and nearly ran down a dotterel. After pulling up we had no difficulty in finding the nest, which contained three eggs, quite fresh, the usual clutch. We were surprised to find the bird had made a nest, for we had never observed more than a small hole scraped out, and the eggs laid therein, and sometimes covered with earth and small twigs. On this occasion the bird had built a very artistic nest. It is well known that after water dries up on the clay pans the silt when drying curls slightly in small pieces. The bird had gone to some trouble to collect these pieces, and after scooping out the usual hole, had placed the curly pieces around, to a height of at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above ground line. Among the collected pieces were a few small twigs and a good deal of half dry grass and herbage, the whole making a beautiful nest and, the first we have seen.

On Wednesday my brother and I took a trip to the Salt Lakes to see if the swan were nesting, the lake was covered with

swan and numerous species of ducks. We found scores of swans' nests, but the blacks (half castes) had robbed nearly all of their contents only two were seen with seven eggs in each. It seems a shame that so many of these beautiful birds should have their eggs taken. The coloured people were shifted to a distant part of the run, and it is to be hoped that the swan will lay again and hatch out their young in peace.

The following notes were written by Mr. J. Neil McGilp in answer to a letter from S. A. White. Since reading your letter, re Kites, I do not think we have the Square-tailed Kite, we often get half a dozen in the fowl yard when they go after the scraps, but do not trouble the fowls; all appear to have a forked tail, but as mentioned before nearly square at times.

Yes the Little Eagle is here, not very plentiful, still one could not say rare. There is no mistaking this bird when once handled. It is an Eagle Hawk in miniature, the head especially so, and the feathers down to the feet. When seen on the wing this bird cannot be confused with others. The note is one shrill whistle, and I have only heard it used when chasing or being chased by other birds. This bird can be approached quite closely when nesting, at other times it is wary, and flies very high. Have you noticed that this bird seems to have a set on the Whistling Eagle. When the Little Eagle is about he or she will not let the Whistling Eagle alone, and swoops down on the resting bird, the latter bird often closes for a fight, but I have never seen any damage done. The Little Eagle does not appear to resent any other of the hawk family, and is often seen soaring contentedly round with Kites, Wedge-tailed Eagles, etc., but as soon as the Whistling Eagles get up, they invariably start chasing one another.

A Shell Parrot was observed to leave a White-browed Babbler's nest; upon examination three Shell Parrot's eggs were found. Such a strange nesting place is often used, for the young have been noticed twenty to forty miles from hollow trees. Have you ever noticed Rose-breasted Cockatoos breeding in old rabbit warrens? My black boy pointed out a case a couple of years ago (about 30 miles from timber) when I found 3 eggs. These Cockatoos were close at hand all the time. I understand from my stockmen that they now and then flush these Galahs from holes in the ground.

A great many Pratincoles have visited us this year, but they did not stay long, and have now gone to other parts. Bee-eaters were in thousands in the Hamilton Creek during February and March.