
Bird Notes.

Coombe District Notes. By Walter J. Harvey. 20/10/1932.

On 21st August I rode out to Buck's Camp, six miles south-east of Coombe, a fine surface soak of small dimensions, but a limited supply of splendid water. It is a pretty spot, rich loam growing sheoaks and huge narrow-leaved Banksias. I saw there the largest flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) I have come across with one possible exception. There were tens of thousands, without a doubt. They were a fine sight, but the noise was deafening. When first seen they were over the plains and they flew into the hills. Half an hour later we came upon them perching on anything available other than the ground, and we rode through them for miles. Usually they are wary birds, difficult to approach, but, except for those in our line of progress (they generally flew a short distance), they took no heed of us. On 26th August a Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) was taken. They are an uncommon bird here, as my observations go, but for the following fortnight or so there was quite a number about. On 4th October I saw four Cockatoo Parrots (*Leptolophus hollandicus*) feeding in a grass paddock, and I have seen them on several occasions since. This species rarely visits the district, and then do not appear before the middle of January. On 8th October I made a trip out to Mount Charles. It is a long ride, and to do a visit properly one would need to camp the night, but work was too pressing, besides which the mosquitoes are bad enough here without going to spend the night in their own country. There was not so much water

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about as I expected to see, nor were there many waders or wild-fowl, considering the area of water, but I got three new records for the district—White-headed Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*).—One pair only feeding at the edge of a salt lagoon. Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleuca*) (?).—Odd ones feeding on the mud flats. Australian Snipe (*Capella hardwicki*).—Seven in a flock feeding amongst large teatree on ground covered by about an inch of water. I shot two and found them well nourished, but not fat. I counted the tail feathers—14 in each.* Other species noted were:—White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*).—Fairly numerous, usually amongst cover. Mallee Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*).—None was seen, but a fine nest was found amongst broombush and mallee on a sandrise between two lagoons. I opened up to the egg chamber with great care and exposed two fresh eggs, but searched no further. The nest was 32 feet in circumference and about 2 feet 9 inches in height. The same nest was in use in 1921. It was the first I had seen. It is surprising to find a nest, as foxes are plentiful thereabouts. Dusky Moorhen (*Gallinula tenebrosa*).—Fairly common around the brackish swamps amongst the cutting-grass, none seen on the true salt swamps. Silver Gull (*Larus novae-hollandiae*).—Three flew up where I shot the Snipe. Black Swan (*Chenopsis atrata*).—A pair and a brood of six cygnets about the size of Pigeons were feeding on a salt lagoon. Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*).—About 40 were seen. Like the rest of the ducks they were very wild, although they had not been shot at. Mountain Duck (*Casarca tadornoides*).—About 40 in all, singly and in small flocks. Chestnut and Grey Teal (*Querquedula castanea* and *Q. gibberifrons*).—About 200 in all—a large flock, several small flocks and odd ones. Ringneck Parrots (*Barnardius barnardi*).—Were very plentiful on the samphire swamps, apparently feeding. Parrots (*Neophema* sp.).—Two were feeding in some samphire close to a swamp. White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*).—Were fairly common amongst the timber and were breeding. A lot of the country is covered with the densest scrub I have seen. In places it is impossible to get through on foot or on horseback. I tied my horse up and walked for miles and then could not find the horse until I crossed my tracks and followed them up. It was my first experience at being "bushed."

*18 feathers are usually found in the tail of this species.—Editors.