

SOME BIRDS OF SOUTH-WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By L. S. Francis.

The following account deals with birds seen during a visit to Perth and neighboring districts from September 28 to October 26, 1939.

About 60 different native species were noted, including many western forms which were unfamiliar to us.

While travelling westward from Port Augusta in the Trans-express on September 28, three groups of Emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) were seen between Bookaloo and Wirrappa, two groups comprising five birds each, and later a pair.

On the edge of the swamps of Chittering Lakes, on October 15, two Western Swamphens (*Porphyrio bellus*), with blue front and red frontal plates and bills, were seen among the tea-tree.

The White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novaehollandiae*) was fairly common, 29 being seen, mostly in the Nannup-Balingup district.

At South Perth Zoo on October 17 it was interesting to watch several Nankeen Night Herons (*Nycticorax caledonicus*), which were flying to and from some tall Spotted Gums bordering the Zoo. It is understood that the Night Heron nests there.

Very few Black Swans (*Chenopsis atrata*) were seen during the trip. One bird was noticed on Monger's Lake on October 13, two at Chittering Lakes on the 15th, and a few, with several White Swans (*Cygnus sp.*), on the River Avon at Northam on the 24th. During April, 1940, however, it was reported that large numbers of Black Swans, Ducks, and Dabchicks were to be seen on Monger's Lake (vide "Wild Life," September, 1940).

Near Popanyinning, on October 7, a solitary Chestnut-breasted Shelduck, or Mountain Duck (*Casarca tadornoides*) was seen on the ground.

Several Brown Hawks (*Falco berigora*) were noticed from the Trans-express, sitting on the crossarms of the telegraph posts during the return trip (near Rawlinna).

While lunching by the Blackwood River at Bridgetown on October 5, we heard what was thought to be the chattering of Currawongs (*Strepera sp.*) in the Marri gums overhead, but we found subsequently that these sounds

were made by White-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus baudini*), which were feeding in the tops of these trees, some pods falling to the ground.

Subsequently eight were counted between Pemberton and Nannup, and 37 between Nannup and Balingup, the white tail patches being clearly seen while flying.

At Manjimup two Western Rosellas (*Platycercus icterotis*) were seen on telegraph posts, several later at Pemberton, one pair at Williams, and one near North Dandalup.

On October 3, two Red-capped Parrots, or King Parrots (*Purpureicephalus spurius*) were seen flying among the Jarrah trees (*Eucalyptus marginata*), near Jarrahdale. The red on the crown was clearly visible. Two others were recorded near Ravenswood on October 21.

In the thickly timbered country between Pemberton, Nannup, and Balingup, many parrots were seen (*Barnardius sp.*), presumably those known as Twenty-eights (*Barnardius semitorquatus*). Not realising that the Port Lincoln Parrot (*B. zonarius*) was also to be seen in this locality, we did not discriminate between the two. In all, 40 of the species were seen during the trip, in localities ranging from Northam, Chittering, and White Lake, to Coolgardie.

The Kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*), introduced into Western Australia from the eastern States, was frequently seen. It is understood that this bird is not popular with many people at Perth, as they are of the opinion that the Kookaburra is responsible for reducing considerably the number of small birds. However, the many small birds seen during a three weeks' stay in and around Perth did not bear out this supposed diminution of numbers.

The Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*) was frequently seen, and is apparently well distributed in the south-west, as 21 birds were recorded, many calling attention to themselves with their weird squeaky calls from topmost dead branches of gums, and sometimes perching on telegraph wires. One at Williams was seen being chased by a Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*). (To be continued.)