

## THE INTRODUCED GRENADIER WEAVER OR RED BISHOP-BIRD

(*Pyromelana orix*)

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### (COVER PICTURE)

This aggressive and dangerous introduction to South Australia is a native of South Africa, where according to Roberts, it is looked upon as a great pest in the grain-growing districts of the Cape Province and Transvaal. In its native land considerable expense is incurred annually in an endeavor to keep the flocks away from the ripening grain. It is highly gregarious, but seems to prefer districts where reedbeds afford cover for its breeding activities.

The nests are woven of grass or reed blades, slung between upright reeds, and with a side entrance. Eggs are usually four in number and uniform pale greenish-blue in color.

For about three months before the breeding season the polygamous males are almost indistinguishable from the hens, being plain-colored and "sparrow-like"; at all times the hens of the "harem" are very inconspicuous. In the breeding plumage the cocks present a vivid picture, but sentiment and all other considerations should be set aside and every effort made to exterminate this potential pest. Fortunately, regulations, both in South Africa and Australia now prevent any further importations.

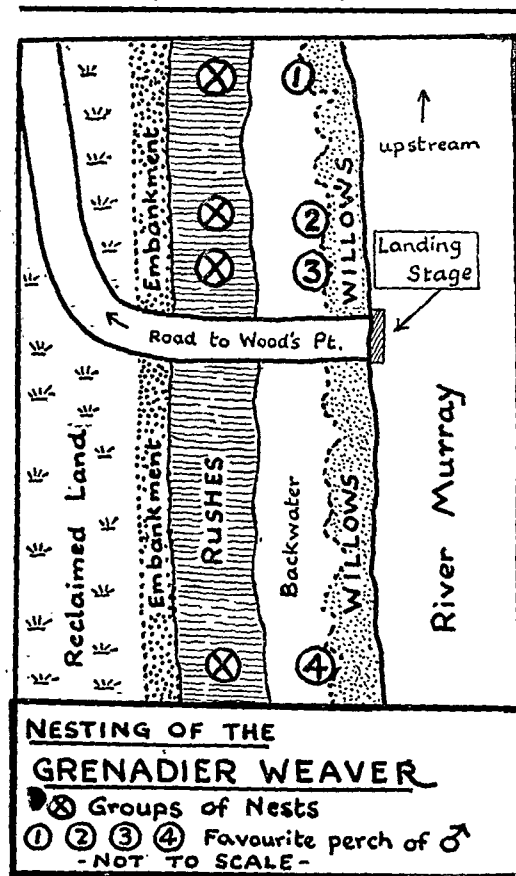
Following its discovery at Wood's Point, near Murray Bridge in 1929, it has since been reported from the following districts:—

- (1) Nesting at Hope Valley Reservoir outlet, Paradise—November, 1932 (J. Sutton).
- (2) McLaren Flat, 27 miles south of Adelaide—a male in breeding plumage found dead under a tree by Mrs. Maidment on March 11, 1933.
- (3) Murray Bridge, January, 1936 (Mr. Johnson).
- (4) Noarlunga—nest in almond tree. George Malpas, January 16, 1936.
- (5) Finnis—S. A. White. (No birds seen on a visit in April, 1936).

- (6) Reedbeds, about 1926—nest taken, birds destroyed (S. A. White).
- (7) In numbers at Berri, R. Murray, July 1941.
- (8) Nesting at Wood's Point, 1947 (H. Morton).

### REFERENCES:

- 1933—Morgan, A. M., *S.A. Orn.*, 12, 31.  
1933—Sutton, J., *ibid.*, 12, 74.  
1942—Roberts, Dr. Austin, "The Birds of South Africa," p. 345.



(Fig. 1)