

FLOCK PIGEONS ON THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK

On August 24, 1966, Mary Teesdale Smith and I were travelling back from Birdsville with one of Jeff Finlay's Back of Beyond Tours. The season had been abnormally wet and there was a great deal of water lying about. At about 1630 hrs, a little north of Goyder's Lagoon, parties of a dozen or so pigeons began to flush as we drove along, and flew very fast either along our path or across it. The pigeons had distinctive markings on the face — the black crown and throat with white patches on the face were clearly visible.

A pair settled by the roadside as the vehicle approached and the driver stopped for us to get out with our binoculars. We were able to get within ten feet or so of the

pigeons. The afternoon being sunny we saw their rich colours clearly and had no difficulty on returning to the Landrover in identifying them from the description in Leach's *An Australian Bird Book* as Flock Pigeons (*Histrionyx histrionica*). Condon's *Handlist* gave Goyder's Lagoon as a possible locality. Our driver, Jeff Finlay, who also knew them as Flock Pigeons, told us that they were not often seen in those parts.

We continued to put up small parties at intervals for about half an hour. I could not guess the total numbers, but there were certainly a lot about, though they were never in dense flocks.

BARBARA WALL.