

USE OF ANIMATE PERCHES BY SILVER GULL

The only two birds well-known for using animate perches in South Australia are the Willie Wagtail and Starling. Therefore the following records of Silver Gulls using Pelicans as mobile resting places may be of interest.

On June 10, 1965 on Lake Albert at Meningie, seven Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) were feeding in 'formation.' A Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*) was seen to be riding on the back of one of them. On July 7, 1966 at the same spot, two Silver Gulls were on the back of a lone Pelican. In neither case did the larger bird show any sign of annoyance, nor even any indication that it knew it had hitch-hikers on board.

On May 5, 1967 there was considerable activity amongst a large number of Pelicans, Silver Gulls and Fairy Terns well out on one of the larger I.C.I. Saltpans north of Saint Kilda. My companion E. A. Smith pointed out that many of the 90 or so Pelicans had gulls on their backs. On several later occasions we have witnessed the same phenomenon on the same saltpan. One imagines that the Silver Gull, a born opportunist, would use the broad back of the Pelican as a convenient site from which to snap up any items of food dropped by the larger bird.

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