

**DISPLAY BY LITTLE GREBES** — For the previous four years I have been observing the Little Grebes *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* on the dam at the Waite Institute. I have noted their arrival, nesting, rearing of chicks and their general behaviour as much as possible.

It was last October that I saw for the first time what appeared to be a courting display. The male bird, which was slightly larger than the female, held a small piece of green water-weed in its bill and swam very quickly about a metre ahead of his mate. She followed at the same speed and distance behind him as they both circled the dam about three metres in from the water's edge. They then stopped swimming and faced each other, and three times dived simultaneously staying under for about six

seconds each dive, he still holding the weed in his bill. Then the pair swam sedately side by side to the opposite bank where they remained close together to rest. The weed, however, was no longer in the male's bill, and I wondered if he had deposited it where he intended a nest should be built. Unfortunately, the water level dropped very quickly and the Grebes did not nest on the dam last season, but left two weeks later.

The above incident reminded me of Julian Huxley's description of the courting display of the Great Crested Grebe, though the latter was much more elaborate and longer lasting. —  
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Accepted January, 1977