

BIRD NOTES

GULLS EATING LEUCOPOGON BERRIES

— On 28 December 1978, whilst camping in Little Dip Conservation Park, c. 15 km south of Robe, I noticed a flock of about 40 Silver Gulls *Larus novaehollandiae* alight noisily on top of the thick, low scrub covering the sand dunes. Later on the same day I saw what I took to be the same group of gulls alight near my tent. This time I could clearly see that the birds were picking and eating the small, white fruit of the shrub, identified later as *Leucopogon parviflorus*. This shrub is very common in the area. It grows to a height of about one and a half m; and on measuring the fruit I found it to be c. five mm in diameter.

The following day I visited a nearby islet where I knew Silver Gulls had bred the previous month (November, 1978) and found numerous pellets, containing the hard, indigestible centre of the fruit, scattered throughout the rocky surface of the islet. The number of seeds in an average sized pellet was about one hundred, which seems to indicate that, at certain times of the year at least, the fruit of *Leucopogon parviflorus* is a significant part of the gulls' diet. — JOHN BRANSBURY.

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