

SILVEREYE TRAPPED BY SEED HEAD OF LOVE GRASS

J. B. PATON

Received 13 April 1981; accepted 28 April 1981

On 30 January 1980 when watering my garden at Beaumont in outer eastern suburban Adelaide, I noticed a movement in the wet grass under the hose. On inspection I found a rather wet Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* which was unable to spread its wings because a single head of grass seed with fine prickly hairs had fallen across the primaries of both wings and the base of the tail, firmly anchoring them together.

The bird was caught and with considerable difficulty I removed much of the adhering seed from the wing feathers so that each feather could be separated. I was unable to remove all the seed without seriously damaging the feathers. I therefore released the bird and hoped that

judicious preening would be more effective. The bird was an adult that had been banded the previous day at this locality. When released it flew, rather erratically, out of reach, still wet and obviously distressed.

The grass in question, Love Grass or Whirled Pigeon-grass *Setaria verticulata* (L.) Beauv., has appeared in my garden only in the last few years and its seedheads have caused me considerable annoyance by attaching themselves to my clothes, puckering them together and adhering to them with remarkable tenacity. Presumably Love Grass is widespread in gardens in suburban Adelaide but I know of no other cases in which it has managed to 'capture' a bird.

1 Dashwood Road, Beaumont, S.A. 5066.