

**SACRED IBIS BREEDING AT CUDLEE CREEK.** The Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica* is a common species of the southern Mount Lofty Ranges, but is not recorded as having bred there. Parker *et al.* (1979) report that the ibis breeds about Lake Alexandrina, in the South-East and on Kangaroo Island, nesting in Lignum, *Typha*, reeds and teatree swamps and willows. Blakers *et al.* (1984) report breeding only in the South-East and Murray Mallee regions of South Australia. According to Macdonald (1973), the ibis "nests in flood water areas, on any vegetation strong enough to hold nests a metre or so above water level, occasionally in trees".

On 18 September 1990 I found this species breeding about 1 km WSW of Cudlee Creek post office, on a bank of the River Torrens. At least two stick nests were visible, on top of mistletoes growing on a large River Redgum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. Three feathered young could be seen on the nests, and were heard making churring noises. Three adults attended the young and fed them.

There is no obvious attraction for ibis in this area, other than the flood flats along the river and *Typha* growing in its bed.

#### REFERENCES

- Blakers, M., Davies, S. J. F. & Reilly, P. N. 1984. **The Atlas of Australian Birds**. RAOU and Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
- Macdonald, J. D. 1973. **Birds of Australia**. Reed, Sydney.
- Parker, S. A., Eckert, H. J., Ragless, G. B., Cox, J. B. & Reid, N. C. H. 1979. **An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of South Australia, Part 1**. SAOA, Adelaide.
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- It is probable that these birds originated from the Gorge Wildlife Park, about 150 m away, where there is a free-flying Sacred Ibis colony. The proprietor, Mr C. McKecknie, reports that the colony was established about 20 years ago with six pinioned birds, and that it now numbers about 200 individuals.
- Bekle (1982. Sacred Ibis in south-western Australia. **West. Aust. Nat.** 15: 49-55) reported that dozens of Sacred Ibis were breeding in a hundred-year-old pine tree in Mill Point Road, South Perth, and stated that the colony was thought to have originated from South Perth Zoo. Similarly, colonies in urban Sydney probably resulted from introductions and releases at Taronga Zoological Gardens (1990. **Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds. Vol. 1**. Oxford University Press: Melbourne). The establishment of ibis colonies in this way may be of interest as a possible future conservation strategy. The South Perth Zoo, however, eventually had to prevent ibis breeding because the birds robbed the nests of egrets and spoonbills, gouging out the stomach contents of nestlings.
- I thank Bob Brown for this information, and David Paton for the following: During field work for the second Bird Atlas of the Adelaide Region, Sacred Ibis were recorded breeding near Clayton.