

Mr. J. W. Mellor reports, from Lockleys, on the Adelaide plains—

July 1.—White-fronted Herons returned to Lockleys, and took up their abode in the large red gums, where they have bred each year for a considerable time past, owing to the protection given them. Within a day or two the birds paired off, and kept to themselves. If another bird came near, harsh, discordant notes were given out, seemingly in protest of such encroachment. Nesting started soon after the arrival of the birds, which selected the topmost limbs and branches of the high gum trees, out of ordinary harm's way, but I am afraid that later in the month the birds had been disturbed by guns being fired in the vicinity one night, presumably by someone after opossums, as these animals were also present. The next night the herons had shifted their quarters to some smaller gum trees close to my house, but here it is not so suitable for nesting, being too near the main road; but it is to be hoped that the scaring of the birds is only temporary, as the spot where they have formerly built and reared their young is ideal. During the night in their new quarters the birds were very agitated, and on one coming near another, sharp snapping of bills could be heard, with the usual angry "kop, kop, kop," and harsh grunting noise made in the throat. During the daytime the herons are numerous in the swamps at the Reedbeds, just east of Henley Beach, where they wade about in the shallow water up to their knees, ever and anon probing their bills into the mud and grass weed to secure some aquatic insect or a frog.

Birds have started to nest early at Lockleys. Noted a Magpie (white-backed) carrying hair to line its nest on July 10. All the month a pair has been particularly pugnacious, swooping down on anything and everything crossing the paddock, the flock of tame turkeys getting their share of the battle, and each time the birds come at them the gobblers all join in an angry chorus, and keep it up for a considerable time, getting more and more agitated each time, and louder in their indignation at being attacked.

On July 17, noted a White-plumed Honey-eater carrying web and bits of fine grass, etc., to construct its nest in a lemon-scented pine near the back door. The nest was well on its way to completion by the end of the month.

The Noisy Minahs are also pairing, and are very noisy and quarrelsome with each other, also with any other bird that comes near them. A pair of them is nesting in a high red

gum. I noted them first carrying nesting material on July 17, and the nest was well on towards completion by July 30.

On July 21, noted a Whistling Eagle at Fulham, flying about the large gum trees.

The Fantail Cuckoo was calling in various localities all the month, and was being chased by smaller birds.

Boobook Owls have been calling at Lockleys, also the Delicate Owls have been very vigorous in their "screeching" in the gums at night.

Noted the Little Falcon about, flying swiftly.

Quite a number of Black Ducks are about the shallow swamps at the Reedbeds, since the 1st of the month, when close season started, and the birds seem to know that they are protected, as they are to be seen quite near the Henley Beach road, sporting in the water, or basking in the sunshine on the edge of the large pools, where food is abundant at this time of the season. They are mating up now, and are often seen in pairs, preparing for nesting.

A few pairs of sordid Wood-swallow are still to be seen at Fulham, they having been about all the season, and apparently intend to prolong their stay for nesting this year.

Zebra Finches are still about at Lockleys and Fulham, feeding in small flocks on the seed of weeds in the gardens.

Noted a Nankeen Kestrel hovering near an old hollow tree at Lockleys on July 29, where it usually lays its eggs and rears its young each season; judging by the actions of the bird it seemed to be looking up its old nesting haunt again.