

The Drinking Habits of *Peltohyas Australis*
(Australian Dottrel).

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Though I have had a long acquaintance with this useful little bird, I have hitherto had no record of its watering at the stock tanks and dams during the heat of the summer. I am

glad to find that it is not quite a total abstainer, as the following interesting observation will prove. During December, 1921, my brother (Mr. L. K. McGilp) had occasion to camp for several nights in succession at a large stock tank on Moolawatana. On the second evening, just at dusk, he was surprised to see flock after flock of these Dottrels arriving from the open, dry plains in the vicinity. After alighting at the water's edge, the birds did not appear to be in any hurry to drink, but for some time ran along the bank close to the water, giving forth a barking-like call, very similar to the bark of the Avocet, but hardly so shrill. The birds left singly or in pairs, not in flocks of twenty to thirty as they arrived at the water. Though my brother was at the tank for several evenings following, no more Dottrels appeared.

From the foregoing it would seem that the Dottrel needs water occasionally during the summer, but the remarkable thing is that on a certain evening hundreds of them flock to water, yet they do not seem to water at other times. The writer has known these birds for many years, but has not seen a Dottrel at the tanks. They do drink at surface waters, such as crabholes and claypans, when available. Pratincoles, a common bird at times on Moolawatana, come in to tank waters frequently during the day.
