



Canberra bird notes

No.3 April 1969

EDITORIAL

Better late than never, they say. We hope that the extra size of this issue, caused mainly by the Annual Bird Report, will make up for the late arrival. Part 4 will appear in June, on schedule.

The time has come once again to look ahead at our lecture programme for the coming year. The Committee already has quite a few ideas but we are sure there must be quite a bit of latent talent, not only within our ranks but outside also. How about some suggestions? Pass them on to Steve Wilson or Graeme Chapman.

We are pleased to note that the Review Committee of the RAOU has recommended that future RAOU Congresses should be modelled on the 1968 Congress held in Canberra. The 1969 Congress is scheduled to be held in Launceston over the weekend 24th to 27th October next. We wish it every success.

RAOU members are reminded that the 1969 subscription of \$6.00 is now well overdue. The last report just to hand from Melbourne revealed a rather large number of outstanding arrears, which makes the job of budgeting by honorary officers very difficult. Note the new address of the Union:

P.O., Box 5236 BB, Melbourne, Vic. 3001

SYSTEMATIC NOTES - 1st July 1967 to 30 June 1968.

The following notes have been compiled from the recorded observations of a number of people. It is not possible to acknowledge all contributions, but B.Baker, M.Clayton, J.McNaughton and A.Stokes have provided the bulk of the notes. Regular observations were also made by S.Marchant in an area to the west side of Black Mountain outside the woodland. Where appropriate, these have been included after the prefix BM to conserve space "Molonglo River Flats" has been used to indicate the general swampy area to the east of the East Basin of Lake Burley Griffin and, between the Jerrabomberra Creek and Duntroon, "The Ranges" indicates the ranges to the west and south west of Canberra chiefly the Brindabella Ranges and in particular New Chum's Road and Lee's Creek Road.

Records which, at present, must be regarded as doubtful by reason of either incompleteness or unusualness are bracketed. Brackets are also put around records of those species which probably escaped from captivity.

As these records refer solely to the twelve months period quoted above, the year is omitted throughout to save space. For the same reason common resident species, for which there are no unusual or significant records, are merely listed at the end. It may be assumed that there were no records at all during the year for other species on the ACT list which are not included in the following list.

Stubble Quail - Three 28th Aug., one 20th Jan., Molonglo River Flats.

Painted Quail - One 11th Sept., two groups of one female and two males 12th Sep. Belconnen. One 18th Nov., Gudgenby, BM Regular in March, few later. Two nests, Nov-Dec.

Common Bronzewing - Regular in small numbers about Black Mtn. Single birds in the Ranges 1st & 15th Jan. and 12th Feb. BM - up to 3 pairs regular in late Jan. - one nest in November.

Brush Bronzewing - One New Chum's Road and one Lee's Creek both on 23 September.

Crested Pigeon - Two 2nd Dec., Ginninderra, one 10th Feb., Gungahlin. These were not escapees from Gungahlin. One unconfirmed report of a nest at Ginninderra Dec/Jan.

Wonga Pigeon - Regularly in small numbers in the Ranges.

Lewin Water-Rail - One 2nd Feb., Gudgenby.

Spotted Crake - One 14th Jan., four 28th Jan., 'Molonglo River Flats.

Marsh Crake - One 8th Oct., one 2nd Dec., one 20th Jan. Molonglo River Flats. One 26th Dec., Woden Creek.

Spotless Crake - Three 8th Oct., Molonglo River Flats.

Dusky Moorhen - Regularly reported above the lake on the Molonglo River. Numbers probably increasing.

Eastern Swamphen - Small numbers regularly along Molonglo River Flats. Highest reported number 7.

Coot - Fluctuating numbers along Molonglo River Flats. Usually present but not always. Highest reported number 90.

Crested Grebe - Ten, 30th July, Lake George.

Little Grebe - Regularly Molonglo River Flats throughout year.

Hoary-headed Grebe - Regular Molonglo River Flats throughout year. Smaller numbers than Little Grebe.

Little Black Cormorant - Regular. Highest number 20, Molonglo River Flats.

Pied Cormorant - One 17th Dec., one 14th Feb. one 23rd March, one 20th Apr., two 4th May, Molonglo River Flats.

Little Pied Cormorant - Common Molonglo River Flats. Highest number 70.

Darter - Eight reports of single birds between 17th Aug. and 12th April.

Pelican - Regular Molonglo River Flats and occasional on the lake below Black Mtn. until the lake level dropped. Absent after March. Highest number reported 125 on 8th November.

*Red-kneed Dotterel - One Lake George 29th Oct. Six 20th Jan. Molonglo River

(First ACT record). Regularly reported then until 23 March. Highest number 8.

Spur-winged Plover - Common. Nested Parkes Way and in Govt. triangle.

Banded Plover - Two 29th Aug., Wells Stn. One 5th May, Cooma Road.

Red-capped Dotterel - One 1st October, Lake Bathurst.

Black-fronted Dotterel - Regular Molonglo River Flats and Lake Bathurst.

White-headed Stilt - Two 1st Oct., two 4th Nov. Lake Bathurst.

*Red-necked Avocet - One 2nd Dec., Molonglo River Flats (First ACT record), one 14th Jan., 28th Jan. and 7th Feb., Molonglo River.

Common Sandpiper - One 28th Aug., Molonglo River Flats, one Black Mtn. Peninsula, 23 March.

*Greenshank - One 8th Oct., Molonglo River Flats (First ACT record).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - 25 28th Aug., nine 20th Sep., 21 8th Oct., Molonglo River Flats.

Japanese Snipe - One 20th Oct., one 31st Oct., 30 9th Dec., three 7th Jan., Molonglo River Flats.

Southern Stone Curlew - One 9th July Weetangera Lane.

White Ibis - Regular 15th Nov., to 9th June, Molonglo River Flats.

Straw-necked Ibis - Regular Molonglo River Flats. Highest number 65.

Royal Spoonbill - Three 8th Oct., one 4th Feb., Molonglo River Flats.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - Regular reports between 8th August and 23 March, Molonglo River Flats.

Little Egret - One 1st Nov. one 27th Nov. Molonglo R Flats.

Plumed Egret - Five records between 1st Oct. & 7th Feb., Molonglo River Flats. Highest number is 6.

White Egret - Regular in small numbers Molonglo River Flats. Highest number is 6.

White-faced Heron - Regular in small numbers. Highest number 30 on 28th Jan., Molonglo River Flats.

White-necked Heron - One Lyneham High School 24th July, four 8th Oct., Molonglo River Flats.

Nankeen Night Heron - Five 8th Oct., 30 31st Oct., 30 20th Jan., one 27th Jan., one 7th Feb.

*Little Bittern - (One Molonglo River Flats, 6th Jan. First ACT and district record).

Wood Duck - Common. Highest number 200+ 2nd Mar., Molonglo River Flats, BM-regular till 11th Nov., breeding; none then until 26th May; later common.

Black Swan - Common on lakes. Regular in small numbers on Molonglo River Flats and East Basin. Highest number 40 1st Jun.

Mountain Duck - Ten reports throughout year from Molonglo River Flats.

Chestnut Teal - Two 28th Aug. Regular reports from 25th May to 30th Jun., Molonglo River Flats. Highest number 27.

Grey Teal - Regular Molonglo River Flats.

Blue-winged Shoveller - Ten reports spaced throughout year. Molonglo River Flats. Highest number 40+.

Freckled Duck - 20 30th July, Molonglo River Flats.

White-eyed Duck - Regular in small numbers on Lake Burley Griffin.

Musk Duck - Regular in small numbers on Lake Burley Griffin.

Swamp Harrier - One Lake Bathurst 1st Oct. One 17th Oct., 8th Oct., 27th Nov. & 24th Feb., all Molonglo River Flats.

Australian Goshawk - Regular, generally singly, about Canberra. BM - regular, unsuccessful nest end Oct.

(Collared Sparrowhawk) - BM - probable female 16 Dec. and 17th Feb.

Wedge-tailed Eagle - One 1st Aug., Lee's Creek Road. BM - one 10 Dec.

Little Eagle - One 20th Jan. Lake Burley Griffin. BM - nil, so presumably did not breed.

White-breasted Sea-Eagle - Two reports of a single bird over Lake Burley Griffin on 5th Nov. Nested Lake Bathurst Sep/Oct.

Whistling Kite - Regular at Lake Bathurst and Lake George.

Black Kite - One 7th Jan., Gudgenby.

*(Square-tailed Kite - Three 26th Dec., Scrivenor Dam, soaring at a great height. First ACT record).

Black-shouldered Kite - Regular in small numbers.

*(Letter-winged Kite - One 23rd Dec., Deakin. First ACT record).

Little Falcon - Regular in small numbers about Canberra. BM - Pair regular from 17th Sep., to 17th Feb., successfully bred.

Peregrine Falcon - Regular reports of one or two birds Lake George and in the ACT.

Black Falcon - One, 28th Jan., Fyshwick.

Brown Falcon - Regular in small numbers.

Boobook Owl - Regular Deakin throughout year. Regular in Ranges 1st Aug. to 9th March.

(Rainbow Lorikeet - Repeated sightings of one bird 24th Feb. to 26th May, Deakin. May be an escape.

Little Lorikeet - Two 31st Oct., O'Connor. Three 12th Nov., and three 5th Jan., Narrabundah.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo - Eight reports from the Ranges between 10th Feb. and 8th June. Highest number ten.

Gang Gang Cockatoo - Common about Canberra until 11th Nov., and after 4th Apr. Odd reports over summer. Common in ranges in summer. BM - regular till 15th Oct; up to ten on 11/12th Nov., 3,10 Dec., 23 Feb., again after 8th June.

White Cockatoo - Widespread in small numbers in the Ranges over summer. Flocks in open country regularly at all seasons. BM - regular, bred; parties of 12 till 25th Nov., and of up to 20 from 16 Mar.

Cockatiel - One pair 23 October, Lyneham).

King Parrot - Regular reports in July and again 16th March. Highest number 42.

Red-backed Grass Parrot - Regular reports but winter appeared of smaller numbers. One report of a flock of 20. In earlier years flocks of up to 50 have been noted.

(Blue-bonnet Parrot - One Campbell 2nd Sep. One was in this area in Nov/Dec 1966).

Neophema Parrots - One 23rd Oct., Federal Golf Club, (identified as Blue-winged or Elegant). One 4th Feb., Weetangera Lane (identified as probably a Blue-winged).

Budgerygah - Unconfirmed reports of flocks near Lake George and near Bundaroo over summer months.

Tawny Frogmouth - One Lee's Creek Road, 3rd Dec., one adult and two young, 28th Nov., Russell Hill. One Uriarra, 17th Feb., and one Lee's Creek Rd, 16th March.

Owlet Nightjar - One 11th Nov., Black Mtn. BM - one probably regular from Nov., to Jan.

Dollar-bird - Frequently reported between 7th Nov., and 5th Feb. BM - 28th Oct. to 2nd March.

Sacred Kingfisher - One New Chum's Rd. 27th Jan. Regular reports 7th Oct. to 12th March about Canberra. BM - regular 8th Oct., to 2nd March.

Rainbow-bird - Regular reports between 20th Nov., and 3rd April. BM - first noted 3 Nov; Bred.

Spine-tailed Swift - Three occurrences between 27th Jan. and 10th March.

Pallid Cuckoo - Regular reports from 5th Sep. to 5th Dec. One juvenile 23rd Mar. BM - Reg. 16th Sep. to 17th Dec.

Fantailed Cuckoo - Three Lake George 19th Aug. Regular in Ranges from 15th Sep. to 10th April. BM - Regular 16th Sep. to 25th Nov.

Brush Cuckoo - One 2nd Dec., Gudgenby and one 1st Jan., Botanic Gardens. BM - calls fairly regularly from 16 Sep. to 2 Jan.

Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo - Three reports from 29th Aug., to 1st Oct. BM - Regular, 26 Aug. to 3 Dec., chiefly parasitizing Blue Wrens.

Golden Bronze-Cuckoo - Regular in the Ranges from 1st Oct. to 28th Feb. BM - Certainly present Oct/Nov, parasitizing Yellow-tailed Thornbill.

Superb Lyrebird - Numbers appear lower at Lee's Creek and New Chum's Rd.

Tree Martin - First reported 12th Aug.

Fairy Martin - First report 29th July.

Grey Fantail - An unusual report of two at Lee's Creek Rd. on 16th July. BM Well established on 16th Sep., last 25th April. Marked passage 30th March.

Rufous Fantail - First record 10th Nov., Last 15th Feb.

Willie Wagtail - Common. BM - Only single 21/28 Oct; three 6th April.

Leaden Flycatcher - First record 11th Oct. (a little earlier than usual). Last record 28th Feb. BM - 14th Oct., to 2nd Mar; Breeding.

Satin Flycatcher - Recorded from the Ranges between 15th Dec., and 10th Feb.

Jacky Winter - Four 5th July and eight 22nd July, Federal Golf Course. Two 18th June and one 19th June, Deakin.

Scarlet Robin - One Lee's Creek Rd, 10th Mar. BM - one or two pairs regular, but marked influx from 23rd Mar., to 4th May.

Red-capped Robin - Recorded from New Chum's Rd. from 3rd Dec, to 10th Feb. and at Lee's Creek Rd. on 10th Dec. BM - Pair 11th Nov., to 16th March, bred successfully.

Flame Robin - A female plumaged bird was noted at Narrabundah regularly until 20th Nov. Regular in the Ranges over summer. BM - two "brown" birds 16th Sep., one 7th October.

Pink Robin - Recorded at New Chum's Road and Lee's Creek Rd. from 6th Apr. to 29th June.

Rose Robin - One bird was banded at Lee's Creek Rd. On 15th July; an unusual winter record.

Hooded Robin - Two Tidbinbilla, 9th June. BM - 3/4 pairs regular, breeding.

Southern Yellow Robin - Regularly reported. BM - heard in woodland 26th Aug. to 18th Nov. Appeared in area outside woodland from 23 March to 30 June.

Golden Whistler - Common in Ranges over summer. BM - Female 16th Sep., Male 23rd Sep; regular, mostly females or juveniles from 16 March.

Rufous Whistler - Common over summer. BM - common, breeding from 23 Sep. to 30th March.

Olive Whistler - Two New Chum's Rd. 17th Sep. One Lee's Creek Road, 23rd March.

Magpie Lark - Again bred on Commonwealth Ave. Bridge and on jib of mobile crane used to build new Motor Registration Centre at Dickson.

Eastern Shrike Tit - Regularly recorded in the Ranges in all months. One 22nd July, Federal Golf Course. BM - Two 26th Aug., One 16th Sept., one 25th Apr.

Eastern Whipbird - Regularly recorded in Ranges all months.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike - Common in summer. Four 9th July, Weetangera Lane and two 22nd July Federal Golf Course. BM - Regular from 16th Sep. to 23 Mar.

Cicada Bird - Recorded from New Chum's Rd. and Lee Creek Rd. 17th Feb.

White-winged Triller - Regularly reported from 22nd Sept. to 31st Jan. BM - one possibly on 16th Sep. regular but much less common than other years from 8th Oct., to 10th Dec., one 11th Feb.

Grey-crowned Babbler - Three 17th Aug & 2nd Dec. Ginninderra.

Australian Ground Thrush - Regular reports throughout year from Ranges. Very common in open areas outside thickets at Lee's Ck. 10 Feb. when drought was severe.

White-fronted Chat - Two 24th Jul., Molonglo River Flats, one 17th Aug. Belconnen, ten 24th Feb. And five 23rd Mar, Molonglo River Flats. Bred in sapling pines along Parkes Way.

White-throated Warbler - First report 22nd July, last 15th April, BM - 26th Aug. to 30 Mar.

Western Warbler - First report 18th Aug. last 25th Mar., BM - 16th Sep. to 25th April.

Brown Weebill - Common about Canberra, BM - as many as six pairs breeding & later in parties, regular, much more common than previous years.

Eastern Whiteface - Over 20 recorded in Belconnen area on 26 Aug. BM - one or two pairs throughout years but not seen regularly. Bred.

Brown Thornbill - Common.

Buff-tailed Thornbill - Regularly reported about Canberra.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill - Common.

Speckled Warbler - Four 12th April, Russell Hill. BM - Regular, Breeding, parties of up to 20 from 25th April.

Pilot-bird - Reported regularly from Ranges.

Brown Songlark - One 2nd Dec. Ginninderra and three Lake Burley Griffin, 20th Jan.

Rufous Songlark - Regular reports in summer.

Little Grass-bird - Five 29th Jul., one 28th Aug., one 8th Oct. and two 7th Jan., Molonglo River Flats.

Reed Warbler - First record 10th Sept. and common from 15th Sep. along Molonglo at Duntroon.

Cisticola - One 8th Oct., & three 28th Jan., Molonglo River Flats.

Masked Wood-swallow - Two reports of single birds with flocks of White-browed Wood-swallows both on 25th Oct. Rifle Range & Federal Golf Course

White-browed Wood-swallow - Flocks of up to 100 observed 25th Oct., to 31st Dec.

Dusky Wood-swallow - Six 25th Aug. Belconnen. BM - regular, 2 pairs breeding from 16th Sep.

Orange-winged Sitella - Regular reports. Largest number 20. BM-Regular from 16 Sep. in parties to 21 Oct. Two groups bred; parties less regularly seen from 23rd March.

Brown Treecreeper - Locally resident in limited areas. BM - Regular, breeding, up to 12 birds.

Red-browed Treecreeper - Regular in Ranges all months in small numbers.

Mistletoe-bird - Regular reports in summer. BM - Regular but few 8th Oct. to 17th Dec.

Yellow-tipped Pardalote - Two 8th June, Mt. Pleasant. BM - Pardalotes generally very rare after breeding, no flocks as noted.

Striated Pardalote - One 7th April, Botanic Gardens.

Eastern Silvereye - Common. BM - - NW passage on 8th otherwise only 6 on 24th Sep. & 2 on 29th Oct.

White-naped Honeyeater - Common at Lee's Creek 15th July. BM - 12 passed south eastwards 17th Sept. Six westwards, on 6th April.

Brown-headed Honeyeater - Regular reports of small flocks. BM - 12/20 between 23rd Feb., and 16th March.

Regent Honeyeater - "Small flock" 25/26th Jan., Downer.

Fuscous Honeyeater - Common during the winter months and during autumn and spring migrations of other species. Notes of soft part colours are needed as there are unresolved problems here. Many birds have yellow bills and eye rings; others have brown. The significance is not yet known but it is not a juvenile character. BM - Two & one, 3 & 11 Feb. respectively, one 25 Apr. No spectacular spring passage as in 1966.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater - Large spring & autumn migrations rioted. BM - a few pairs regular breeding, 15/16 March - large numbers on N & E passage on 23 March, and 6 April.

White-eared Honeyeater - Fairly common in Ranges. Noted around Canberra from 1st April. BM - Last bird on 26th Aug., first 17th Feb., and then regular in small numbers.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater - Noted on 9th Mar., New Chum's Rd. and about Canberra from 12th April to 12th June. A small flock near Gudgenby 22nd November.

White-plumed Honeyeater - Locally common, particularly about the suburbs in winter. BM - 1/2 regular after 2nd March.

Crescent Honeyeater - Regularly reported in Range.

Yellow-winged Honeyeater - Recorded from 20th Aug., to 25th Sep. in Botanic Gardens.

Noisy Miner - Locally common.

Little Wattlebird - Three 25th Oct. Botanic Gardens, one 24th Dec., Cotter; one Gudgenby, 28th Sept., and one Cotter 7th January.

Red Wattlebird - Fairly common, but BM very rarely seen. Seven on 2nd April.

Noisy Friarbird - Occasional records throughout winter in 1967. Common in summer. BM - NW passage 16-23 Sept., one or two pairs regular to 3rd Feb., last record, 20th April.

*Little Friarbird - One juvenile, Downer, 15th Jan. First ACT record.

Diamond Firetail - 20 Corin Dam Rd. 7th Jan. BM - 4-5 pairs regular to 30 Mar, none later.

Zebra Finch - Three 9th Nov. Wakefield Gardens, seven 14th Jan. & 20, 7th June, Molonglo River Flats. Regular group at Regatta Pt.

Double-bar Finch - Regularly reported about Canberra. Very local in distribution, Largest number 42, 7th Apr., Botanic Gardens. BM - 2-3 pairs reg. from 3 Nov. to 25 Apr.

Red-browed Finch - Regular reports throughout the year but numbers very small. Largest number 10. BM - one pair regular from 29th Oct., to 10th Dec., two on 16th March.

Olive-backed Oriole - Two 25th Sep. Wells Stn., one Russell Hill, 23rd Oct. BM - One 11 Nov.

Pied Currawong - Bred Telopea Park.

Grey Currawong - Regular reports of one or two birds in all months, about Canberra & in Ranges. BM - One pair regular but not always seen.

Grey Butcher-bird - Two 17th Feb. Lee's Creek Road.

White-backed Magpie - Occasional reports (possibly hybrids). Black-backed X white-backed pair bred on Black Mtn. Peninsula.

INTRODUCTIONS

Indian Turtle-dove - Nil. One calling in Collins Park, Forrest in Nov. but date not recorded.

Blackbird - Common and increasing.

Skylark - Regular reports Molonglo River Flats.

Starling - Extremely large flocks flying daily along Lake west & roosting on City Hill. Noted from May to September.

House Sparrow - Common.

Pheasant - One bird (Ring-necked?) at Yarralumla in late January.

*Mallard - One 26th Dec. and one 7th April, Lake Burley Griffin. First ACT record,

Goldfinch - BM - One or two irregularly throughout year in contrast to numbers in previous years. Decidedly less common.

COMMON RESIDENT SPECIES

Black Cormorant, Silver Gull, Black Duck, Nankeen Kestrel, Galah, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Kookaburra, Welcome Swallow, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Shrike Thrush, Striated Thornbill, White-browed Scrub-wren, Superb Blue-wren, White-throated Treecreeper, Spotted Pardalote, Eastern Striated Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill, Pipit, Satin Bowerbird, Raven, White-winged Chough, Black-backed Magpie.

AUSTRALIAN PELICANS FAIL AGAIN TO BREED AT LAKE GEORGE

By G.F. van Tets and W.J.M. Vestjens

The only recorded breeding attempt by the Aust. Pelican, *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, at Lake George, NSW. was November 1963, and it failed for unknown reasons.

From October to December 1968 about 400-500 pairs of pelicans tried to nest on a small sandbar at the south end of Lake George. On 13 December a dead male pelican and tracks of a large dog were found at the colony. Skid marks on the mud and sand indicated that there must have been a spectacular fight between them. At least one other pelican was wounded. Pelicans returned to the nests which were not destroyed by the fight. On 18 December the colony was deserted and fresh dog tracks were found. A female pelican died on the water and drifted ashore with no visible injuries. None of the pelican eggs had hatched.

The two dead pelicans were picked up and their skins are now in the research collection of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research. The stomach of the male contained carp and redfin, and that of the female was empty.

The sandbars in Lake George are only very marginally suitable for pelicans to nest on. During storms, the lower nests were washed by waves and when the lake level dropped the nests became accessible to stray dogs.

At nearby Lake Burley Griffin, pelicans are the largest of the many spectacular waterbirds which add beauty to the capital city and are a pleasure to watch. It would help to preserve the continued presence of pelicans in the ACT area and be a great tourist attraction if a suitable nesting island could be provided for them at the east end of Lake Burley Griffin.

SIGHT RECOGNITION OF EGRETS

G.F. van Tets

Four species of egrets have been seen this summer in the ACT. They are the White Egret, *Egretta alba*, the Plumed Egret, *E. intermedia*, the Little Egret, *E. garzetta* and the Cattle Egret, *Ardeola ibis*. These egrets are white herons and are called "white cranes" by some. They are not easy to identify to species in the field and outlined below are some helpful and some not so helpful clues.

Shape: The *Egretta* egrets are long and thin with long G shaped necks, whereas the *Ardeola* egrets are short and squat with short "S" shaped necks. In this respect the Cattle Egret somewhat resembles the Nankeen Night-*Nycticorax caledonicus*.

Size: The White is large, the Plumed is intermediate, and the Little and Cattle Egrets are small.

Nuptial Plumages: When present the nuptial plumes are orange-buff in the Cattle Egret and white in the other three egrets. All the egrets may have back plumes. Only the White Egret never has breast plumes. Only the Little Egret may have two long plumes on the back of the head. White and Plumed Egrets never have plumes their heads.

Bill Shape: The bill is very stout in Plumed and Cattle Egret, stout in White and slender in Little Egret.

Face Shape: The naked face of the White Egret differs from that of the other egrets in extending, below and behind the eye, back to the gape or corner of the mouth.

Bill & Face Colour: In the Little Egret, there is in all seasons a sharp contrast between the black bill and the yellow face. Breeding White Egrets also have a black bill but a blue-green face. Breeding Plumed Egrets have a red bill and a green face and breeding Cattle Egrets have a red bill with a yellow tip and with a red face. Non-breeding White, Plumed and Cattle Egrets have yellow bills and dull variable facial colours.

Leg & Foot Colours: Legs and feet of all four egrets may appear all dark, or a mixture of dark and light brown. Legs may be all red, orange or yellow in only the Cattle Egret. The upper leg only may be all red flesh colour in only the Plumed Egret. The sole only of the foot may be bright yellow in only the Little Egret. Outside Australasia the entire foot and part of the lower leg is yellow in the Little Egret.

RECENT MEETINGSNovember 13th

Mr. S. Marchant spoke on "Breeding Seasons at Canberra". An area of approximately 100 hectares on the west side of Black Mt. and essentially covering the eastern side of the valley of the creek which flows into Acacia Inlet has been searched regularly for four years (1964-1967 incl.) for nests. About 350 nests were recorded, which could be related to the date of laying, and represented forty species. Peak laying dates of all species varied from the last half of Oct. 1966 and 1967 to mid-Dec 1965. Each year a subsidiary peak occurred in early Sept. and was caused by the early breeding of a few species such as Wood Duck, Robin spp., Thornbills, Chough and Magpie. Numbers of nests, and so presumably the frequency of species varied greatly from year to year.

February 12th

Mr. Graeme Chapman showed a series of colour slides depicting birds from both Round Hill, NSW the site of the 1968 Campout, and also around Canberra.

March 12th

In the absence of the scheduled speaker, Dr. Gerry van Tets kindly assisted with an account of his recent visit to Lord Howe Island. Of particular interest were his discussion and slides of the nesting behaviour of the Masked Booby, *Sula dactylatra*. Dr. van Tets' slides showed that the depredations of feral pigs and goats are causing considerable denudation of vegetation and some erosion on the island and it is obvious that control measures are needed against these pests.

COMING MEETINGS

To be held at 8.00 p.m., CSIRO Lecture Theatre, Black Mountain, unless advised otherwise.

Wednesday 9th April - Dr. Peter Fullagar will speak on "New Zealand Birds".

Wednesday, 14th May - "The 1968 Round Hill Campout" - a resume by P. Fullagar and G. Chapman.

Wednesday, 11th June - Annual Meeting, election of officers and annual "Brains Trust" evening. The Brains Trust is being repeated this year because of the outstanding success the trial meeting held last June.

NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS

Broad-billed Sandpiper - a new ACT record. On 2nd Feb. J. McNaughton recorded a single Broad-billed Sandpiper along the muddy edges of Jerrabomberra Ck. He was able to compare it there with a Black-fronted Dotterel & later, with the aid of his notes & photographs, identification was put beyond doubt. The following day, M. Clayton saw what were probably two of the same species in that same area. They have not been there since.

Red-backed Kingfisher - Graeme & Nicola Clarke has good views of a single bird at the Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve on 22 Dec. 1968. The only other record of this species for the Canberra area is a single bird in Sep. 1962.

Grey Falcon - A single individual of the rare species was seen on 27 Jan. on the Ginninderra-Gundaroo Rd. by Graham & Nicola Clarke.

Two Records of Frigatebirds for Southern NSW - In Dec., 1968, Mrs B. Holt reported a lone female frigatebird floating over the jetty at Eden. It was not identified to species. On Comarong Island at the mouth of the Shoalhaven Rvr, Graeme Chapman also saw a female frigatebird (species uncertain), flying about 100 ft. overhead, following the shoreline in a northerly direction.

Channel-billed Cuckoo - A single juvenile was seen on 17 Feb. near CSIRO Land Research Bldg., Black Mtn., by Henry Nix. It was being harassed by magpies. This is only the second ACT record.

EDITORS: G. Chapman & D. Purchase, C/- CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research, Box 109, P.O. Canberra City. Published by the ACT Branch of the R.A.O.U.