

In: ACT Branch
RAOU, Second
Annual Bird
Report 1965-66

REPORT ON BIRD SURVEY OF THE MOLONGLO RIVER FLATS

11.

(East end of Lake Burley Griffin)

by

R. Brown and R. Gibson

INTRODUCTION

From November 1965 to June 1966 inclusive we made twenty bird censuses at the east end of Lake Burley Griffin. We tried to survey the area at least once a fortnight, but have not always succeeded.

Our chief object was to count all species of water birds but we also noted other species present though we did not always count them.

Before regular counts began, on 21 Nov, we visited the area often from 24 May 1965 onwards. Notes made on these visits are included below.

The area covered is bounded on the north by the Molonglo River from just below Duntroon bridge; on the west by the lake itself; on the southwest by Jerrabomberra Creek; and on the east by the Duntroon-Fyshwick road.

The same route was walked on each visit, viz. from the Duntroon-Fyshwick road along the left bank of the Molonglo to the lake, then along the lake edge and back along the west side of the Jerrabomberra backwaters, across to the Molonglo and back to the road: a short walk down on the west of the road by the farm about half way from the railway to the Duntroon bridge: a visit to the small swamp between the railway and Canberra Ave. on the west of the road.

SYSTEMATIC NOTES

Dusky Moorhen: Present in decreasing numbers from 24 May to 13 Nov; then none noted till 19 Dec when one present. Numbers remained low (max. 7) till 12 May when 22 were counted, but fell off again to 10 on 19 June.

Eastern Swamphen. Occasional in small numbers from 24 May 1965. Highest number (7-8) present in June 1966.

Coot. Present from 24 May to 13 Nov; then none noted until 12 Dec. when one observed. Small number (6 or less) till early April and then a sharp increase from 12 May to maximum numbers of about 30 at the end of June. The increase noted in this species and in the Dusky Moorhen early in May coincided with a fall in water level at this time.

Little Grebe. One 9 Nov., three 26 Feb., four 26 March; sharp increase to 28 on 12 May (max. 36); then numbers remained between 20 and 25 till end of June.

Hoary-headed Grebe. Only noted three times: present 25 Sept., two 26 Feb., and two 3 April.

Great Crested Grebe. Seen once 12 June 1965.

them flying,
on 21 Nov.
Otherwise
numbers
varied from 2
to 50

Black Cormorant. Present on all visits. On 21 Nov. 250 flew west overhead: but generally numbers varied from 2 to about 50, usually about 20.

Little Black Cormorant. Present on all visits. 75, many of

Pied Cormorant. One on 21 Nov., one 27 Nov., and one 4 Feb.

Little Pied Cormorant. Present on all visits (about 5) from 24 May to December, gradually increasing to 24 in January, and afterwards generally between 15 and 30.

Darter. First recorded for A.C.T. on 24 May 1965: one to seven present almost regularly until 13 Nov.

Pelican. Occasional as single birds throughout the period.

Marsh Tern. 2 on 25 Sept., present 6 Nov., 5 on 13 Nov., one 27 Nov.

Silver Gull. Present nearly always on the lake and in the marshes. From Nov. to early Jan. considerable fluctuations, but max. 49: then numbers much lower (6 or less) till end May. 22 noted on 19 June.

Spur-winged Plover. Present on all visits. From late Nov. to end June numbers probably much increased 20-90 seen regularly except during Jan. when less than 10.

Banded Plover. Four on 21 Nov. and four 12 May, 1966.

Eastern Golden Plover. One on 13 Nov. (first record for A.C.T.)

Red-capped Dotterel. Two on 16 Dec: appears an unusual and unsuitable habitat for this species. First record for A.C.T.

Black-fronted Dotterel. Irregular throughout, usually in pairs or threes, but six or seven in Dec.

White-headed Stilt. Only singly or in pairs, during Sept. to Nov.

Wood Sand-piper. One on 21 and one 27 Nov. (First records for A.C.T.).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Present from 25 Sept. to Nov. (15 on 21 Nov). Also one 26 Feb., one 20 March.

Japanese Snipe. Present from 6 Nov. to 2 Jan. Maximum 9 on 6 Nov.

Glossy Ibis. Present in flocks of 5 to 37 from 30 Oct. to 2 Jan. One on 20 Jan., one 4 Feb.

White Ibis. Irregular in small numbers until Nov. After 13 Nov. present on nearly every visit: numbers fluctuated: 40 noted 2 Jan; 25-30 on four other visits in Nov., Dec., March, May: lesser numbers (about 10) at other times.

Straw-necked Ibis. Recorded on nearly all visits till Nov. 24-48 seen almost regularly from 27 Nov. to 20 Jan., after which irregular in much smaller numbers (1-5).

Royal Spoonbill. A single bird on 19 Dec. and again on 2 Jan.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill. Small numbers fairly regular till 4 Nov. apparently more (up to 18) from 13 Nov. to 19 Dec., thereafter four or less seen irregularly.

White Egret. Noted on most visits from 25 Sept. onwards in

White-faced Heron. Recorded on all visits; probably a resident population of 4 - 6. Possibly bred, as juveniles seen in Jan. and Feb.

White-necked Heron. Seen on 12 June 1965 and a single bird present in mid-December.

Nankeen Night Heron. Small numbers (1-3) present from 24 May to 4 Feb. None seen afterwards. Not recorded regularly but very likely overlooked.

Cattle Egret. A single bird on 9 and 13 Nov.

Wood Duck. Present in large numbers from 24 May to July 1965; then decreased and was absent from 6 to 27 Nov when 7 were counted. Numbers then increased and remained high with fluctuations (20-95) till end June.

Black Swan. Present on most visits from 8 July to 12 Dec. (max. 9). Irregular till 26 Feb., none noted then till 6 June when 20 counted and 28 on 19 June.

Mountain Duck. Irregular in small numbers (1-5) from 21 Nov., to 19 May.

Black Duck. The commonest duck, present on all visits. From 21 Nov. to 4 Feb. numbers fluctuated from 47 to 311 (max. 19 Dec.); then they increased and remained steady above 300 till 19 May when 513 counted; 399 on 5 June and 499 on 19 June.

Grey Teal. Present on all visits. In Nov. numbers were about 100 but during Dec. and Jan. they decreased to about 20, and even 5 on 19 Dec. Since February numbers have increased until May and June when numbers have stayed between 100 and 200.

Blue-Winged Shoveller. Two on 21 Nov. (one a flapper), another even smaller young on 27 Nov., 10 on 12 Dec., 6 on 16 Dec., one female 19 Dec., and another on 4 Feb.

White-eyed Duck. Irregular in small numbers (1-9), but it is interesting that larger numbers occur in the western part of the lake, beyond Black Mt. Peninsula.

Musk Duck. A male on Molonglo River, on 19 June 1966.

Swamp Harrier. Singly or in pairs from Nov. to Feb.

Brown Goshawk. Singly in Nov., Jan and April.

Whistling Kite. One pair usually present.

Black-shouldered Kite. Two pairs present regularly.

Little Falcon. One pair seen during the summer.

Nankeen Kestrel. Seen August.

Boobook Owl. One dead on the road in June 1966.

Barn Owl. One dead in March.

Pallid Cuckoo. Seen 6 Nov.

Welcome Swallow. Irregular in flocks.

Fairy Martin. Irregular in flocks.

Tree Martin. Irregular in flocks
Grey Fantail. Regular along rivers

Willy Wagtail. Regular and common, breeds.

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Scarlet Robin. Seen July.

Flame Robin. Small parties seen in winter.

Golden Whistler. Seen May 1965.

Rufous Whistler. Seen 3 April.

Magpie Lark. Regular and common. Breeds.

Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike. Occasional in summer

White-fronted Chat. Seen July and Nov.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill. Seen May to July 1965, breeds.

Brown Song Lark. 2 on 21 Nov., also seen 27 Nov. First record in A.C.T. in recent years.

Little Grassbird. Regular from Nov.

Reed Warbler. Regular from Sept. to Feb.

Cisticola. Regular from Nov to Feb.

Superb Blue Wren. Regular but uncommon.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater. Seen 3 April.

Noisy Friar bird. Seen 6 Nov.

Australian Pipit. Regular and common.

Zebra finch. Seen Nov.

Raven. Regular, common.

Black-backed Magpie. Regular, common.

Blackbird. Regular along river.

House Sparrow. Seen around farm.

Goldfinch. Regular, common - breeds.

Skylark. Regular, common.

Starling. Regular, common - breeds.

DAILY BIRD-COUNTS IN DOWNER.

by

D. Judge

From March to July 1966 inclusive bird counts were made in and around my garden in Padbury St., Downer, between 0700 and 0830 hrs., usually starting at 0730. Counts were made on 7 days in March, 14 in April, 10 in May, 22 in June and 29 in July.

The area (east half of both Padbury and Legg Streets) was recently built-up, most houses being occupied by February 1966. At first all the gardens were sunbaked expanses of clay. In my own garden the soil was turned in March, grass seed was