

Avifauna of Toolbin Lake 1964-1968

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1964

Egrets	60 pairs in all stages.	
Cormerants	Large Blacks	6 nests
	Little Blacks	15 nests
	Little Pied	30 nests
White Necked Herons		8 nests
Night Herons		10 nests
Darter		1 nest
Crested Grebe		5 nests
Little Grebe		20 nests

White Eye Duck sitting on eggs the Saturday before the opening of the duck shoot.

A Whistling Eagle was occupying a nest in the middle of the colony; these must account for quite a number of young.

Records show that in our area (Woodanilling) Whistling Eagles do prey on young White Fronted Herons.

1965

The lake was very low following a very dry winter, and Birdlife seems quiet. Not a good season, by February the lake was dry.

Egrets with young and eggs.

White Necked Herons with eggs, some very large young in another section of the lake.

Cormerants with young (most had left).

Yellow Billed Spoonbill nest 4 eggs.

Night Herons and Grebes very scarce on this first trip (November). No nests recorded.

By middle Novem~~ber~~ber nests were found of both Crested and Little Grebes.

December 19. Birds still nesting. White Necked Herons 5 nests (all eggs). White Eye Duck, Darter.

Some Carp were seen dead. Good shoals of Callop were sighted. Dead and dying ducks were seen; possibly due to Botulism and gunshot wounds. Botulism was evident this year.

This season we photographed Spoonbill, Crested Grebes, Little Grebes, White Eye Duck and Egrets. All nests were successful and came through.

On the Sunday of the Duckshoot I arrived at the lake at 9PM. to find all of the Herons etc. flying at great heights over the colony, and shooting going on all over the lake. At 10am. I went out to the colony to find all White Necked Heron nests deserted. (eggs were cold). Duckshooters were everywhere and spent shells floating on the water, pads waded through the rushes were clear evidence that the duckshooters had been in and around the colony^s. Coming back to the colony we found a fully grown young Egret riddle with shot and dying. Just before this a shooter had waded through the colony shooting (10 shots). We caught up with him and asked about the Egret, he had no ducks; (10 shots). Crested Grebes were seen in flight, very few have ever seen this.

The loss of one Egret is not a significant loss, but the constant barrage of gunfire frightens so many away.

1966

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The lake filled up this year.

As the lake dried up during the summer most of the life died in the lake and little life could be seen.

Egrets 14 pairs.

Crested Grebes nests (most only had one egg).

No Spoonbill nests, some Night Herons nests, Black Swan nest (3eggs) in Dec.
Musk Duck (3eggs).

This season photographed Nankeen Night Herons (successful).

On the Saturday night before the duckshoot we camped on the shores of the lake with the idea of going out into the lake to ask the shooters to keep away from the colonies which were still nesting.

However, this was not to be as we were stopped by a ranger and warned not to take our dingy out onto the lake. At 4.10 am Sunday morning the barrage of gunfire started and continued unceasingly for 2 hours. It was noted that most of the cars were from the Metropolitan area.

We were informed that licenced egg collectors were active at Toolibin this year and were also mainly from the metropolitan area.

The lake is full again and this is the first year that I had opportunity to move all over the lake. Previous to this we had restricted our movements not to interfere with the nesting birds unduly.

21 November

Egrets 20 nests in all stages.
Night Herons 40 nests.
Cormerants 50 nests, mainly Little Pied and Little Black, Large Blacks had finished.
Crested Grebes 20 nests.
Little Grebes 6 nests.
White Necked Herons (a few nests only, one nest with a large young).
Yellow Billed Spoonbill 2 nests, some young flying and 4 young in another nest ready to leave.
Pink Eared Duck with 3 small young.
Sacred Kingfisher with large young.
Saw at least six different Crested Grebes carrying young on their backs.
Numerous other small birds also were nesting such as Black-Capped Sittellers, Restless Flycatcher, Tree Martins, Willy Wag Tail, Red Capped Robins, Singing Honeyeaters, Wood Swallows, Rainbow Birds, Yellow Rumped Thornbills, Brown Thornbills. Coots nests were everywhere at all times.
Took photographs of White Egret on outskirts of colony which was successful.
Put a hide up near a Night Herons nest with small young on 21st of November.
On Saturday December 2nd., the young were still in the nest, but on December 9th. they had gone. I feel sure that a predator had something to do with this.
Ravens were flying around in large groups, obviously they were feeding on something within the lake.
White Eye Ducks were numerous. (The dominant resident species at Toolibn).
Black Duck, Grey Teal, Maned Geese, Musk Duck, Pink Eared Duck, Blue Billed Duck.

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TOOLIBIN LAKE FEBRUARY 1968

Toolibin Lake is situated North of and at the beginning of a chain of salt lakes 23 miles East of Narrogin, and in the Wickipin Shire.

The water which varies from the rushy shallows to about 4-5 feet in the centre is quite fresh, and supports a variety of fish. The most obvious being the introduced Callop and Golden Carp.

We have observed young Egrets being fed on small fish.

Although some areas of the lake are reasonably clear the majority is covered with growing trees (Swamp Oak and Flooded Gums). It is these trees plus the presence of fresh water which make conditions so ideal for the birds to breed here. Also the lake is not readily accessible to all.

The nesting colonies are situated almost dead centre of the lake in the dense clumps of tree.

In 1964 (November) I first went to Toolibin Lake after Mr T. Riggert of the Fisheries and Fauna Department had inspected the colonies of nesting birds. Others had been there before I went there.

Of all nests listed all are only approximate as it is not possible to accurately count every nest, here I estimated fairly accurately.

All food is not obtained at Toolibin, we have observed birds flying in with food from the south where there are other lakes, mainly Taarblin and Nomans Lakes.

Birds, especially water birds will not tolerate much interference and only careful persons who are experienced should be encouraged to go near the colonies. Cormorants are the worst, the young will plop out of the nest and possibly drown if extreme care is not taken. There were young floating dead on the water on my first visit.

When the lake is full most of the dead limbs and such are covered over and there is little to perch on should they leave the nest immature. Nevertheless they appear to hold their own and as my records show they are not decreasing in numbers.

Bird-banders! Well I have not had any first hand experienced with this, to me no banding should be done with the young, or if they feel they must then only experienced bird-banders should operate.