

BIRD LIFE IN THE NORTH-WEST

On the overland trip to the North-West undertaken in August last by the Deputy Superintendent, Mr. E. J. Brownfield, and the Supervising Inspector, Mr. J. E. Branley, several interesting occurrences of fauna were noted.

Wild turkeys were seen at several points and in numbers which are heartening in view of various reports which have been received indicating that these birds are becoming less plentiful. Pastoralists met on the trip are all concerned for the preservation of this valuable bird and it would appear that this is the view generally of those persons living in the areas in which they occur. Such destruction as does occur is usually inflicted by people passing through the districts.

Brolgas, or native companions, were plentiful particularly along the 80-mile beach stretch (between Broome and Port Hedland) although one was seen as far south as the junction of the Carnarvon and Hamelin Roads. A flock of these birds performed a dance for the travellers and their antics were of very great interest indeed.

At the Sherlock River, 30 miles north of Roebourne, a pheasant cuckoo was seen.

The greatest occurrences of any one species were noted at the Minilya River Bridge and at Thangoo Station, 50 miles south of Broome. At the former place straw-necked ibis were seen in the river bed in many hundreds, and at the latter spot approximately 100 brolgas were together in one flock. A spoon-bill was also seen at the Minilya River.

An extraordinary occurrence of kangaroos was noted at False Cape, the northern arm of Lagrange Bay. The country here is fairly well wooded and literally abounds in kangaroos.

Although not seen south of Broome by the two officers, reports received indicated that the Magpie Goose has been seen as far south as Wallal and several which had alighted at one or two stations had caused much interest. In several instances they had been retained as pets. A flock of these birds was seen in Broome township itself.