

FAUNA NOTES

In a letter to Dr D.L. Serventy on January 10, the discoverer of the Noisy Scrub-bird, Mr H.O. Webster, reported that a nest of the species had been found. He wrote, "I have some interesting news for you - Eric and Lindsay Sedgwick came down on Monday and in the course of a visit to the back country at Two People Bay we decided to make our way up one of the gullies. I was trailing through the thick scrub with Lindsay following and Eric bringing up the rear. Suddenly I heard an exclamation behind me and turned to see Lindsay with a globular nest in his hands. In pushing aside the scrub and rushes, I had stepped over it but fortunately he spotted it. Of course it was a nest of Atrichornis, and a recent one - made up of dry reeds which were fairly loosely formed into a ball shape - entrance at the side, sizes - 6" x 5½" and 6½" high, and it was placed on a kind of platform made of the same material in small round rushes about 8" from the ground. The nest was actually only 80 yards from the sea".

The nest of this species was first found by Mr A.T. Hassell "in thick scrub near Albany", in October, 1897. He found the nest on the ground "alongside the root of a eucalyptus tree which was about 7" out of the ground. It was dome-shaped, constructed of grass and footlets with a few leaves and lined with a quite downy substance". Its measurements were given as 5¼" broad by 8½" high. Mr Webster has called the gully where it was found Sedgwick Gully in honour of its finder and has named another one Mees Valley in honour of Dr G.F. Mees, Curator of Vertebrates at the Western Australian Museum.

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Apropos of our previous notes on the occurrence of black swans at sea, Assistant Inspector D.H. Smith, of Albany, in reporting counts of waterfowl made around the lower foreshore at Albany, reminds us that black swans are common in those waters at various times. For example, on February 7, he estimated that there were between 400 and 500 swans there in addition to about 250 black duck and 30 grey teal.

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Another interesting note recorded by Mr Smith was the sighting of 8 grey kangaroos and 6 brush wallabies during one early morning run from Manjimup to Rocky Gully on February 4.

Mr D. Gibbs, an honorary warden of Broome, in a letter dated February 21, reported the occurrence of magpie geese on the property of a fellow-warden, Mr F. Hamlett, of Roebuck Plains Station. These birds have not been recorded as breeding south of the Fitzroy River, but odd wanderers have been found at various times all over Australia outside the arid centre. Since the turn of the century their wanderings appear to have decreased, although in the 1952 irruption a few magpie geese were reported in the south-west of this State.

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In a recent press release Mr C.J. MacIntosh, of Victoria Park, reported that the breeding of peacocks and pheasants had become more fashionable in recent times. Mr MacIntosh is vice-president of the Ornamental Pheasant Society and has been breeding the birds for about ten years. He said that there was now a good market for pheasants and peacocks in Western Australia and more and more people were rearing these exotic birds in backyard aviaries.