

SEA-EAGLE AT ROTTNEST

Honorary Warden W. A. Farmer of Rottnest Island has sent us the following interesting report:—

“The din and commotion among the lesser predators as a sea-eagle flew over Rottnest from east to west has probably never been exceeded on the island. The settlement’s several hundred ravens were the first to spot the stranger. Shrieking their warning call they took off *en masse* and, near the main lighthouse in the centre of the island, Rottnest’s ten resident ospreys joined the attack. But the great eagle soared effortlessly in vast circles which always had the attackers flying in the wrong direction.

“No matter how vigorously they flapped their wings the ravens could not exceed above 1,500 ft., and, above them whistling madly, the ospreys reached an altitude limit of some 2,000 ft., still 1,000 ft. below the sea eagle.

“Over Vlaming Point (West End) the eagle changed the direction of its reconnaissance flight towards Garden Island and only then did Rottnest’s avian defence force break off the pursuit and return wearily to their foraging grounds.

“The island’s ravens have had only one previous experience of high altitude flying when, many years ago, the Perth Gun Club members were invited to thin out the ravens. Local residents expected the birds to leave the settlement after the first shotgun blasts, but instead they went straight upwards until they ‘ran out of gas’ and finally flopped back, not into the trees, but to the actual earth; they were completely exhausted.”

(This eagle would be a White-breasted Sea Eagle. These are more commonly seen along the coast further north but are found around the whole coastline—Editor.)
