



Alfred Cove foreshore, a new 7 ha nature reserve on the Swan river.

BIRD COMMITTEE FIELD TRIP – 1978

On October 11 and 12, 1978, members of the bird committee of the Western Australian Wildlife Authority and their guests took part in a field excursion. The purpose of the excursion was to inspect a number of wetland areas in the south-west, with emphasis on the Coomelberrup area.

Members of the party were:—

Mr. D. W. Arnold (Chairman, Bird Committee), Drs. Serventy and Davies, Messrs Beeck, Hall, Aitken, Spence and Masters. From the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife were Messrs Carmichael, Marshall, Lane, Munro, Jennings, Allen, Piggott and Lambert.

The first rendezvous was for lunch which was enjoyed on the banks of Lake Coomelberrup. Following the lunch, a canoe inspection of the lake was made with interest mainly being centred on the nesting thickets on the northern shoreline. Bleak weather conditions did not affect the excursion greatly though a disappointingly low number of bird species were observed.



A mountain Duck stands watch at Coomelberrup.

Particular interest was aroused by the locating of Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*) nests and Coot (*Fulica atra*) nests, some containing eggs, some containing young birds.



Pink-eared duck nest at Coomelberrup. This one contained five eggs.

From Coomelberrup the party travelled to Walbyring (Mud Hut) to inspect a White-necked Heron (*Ardea pacifica*) nesting site. A number of nests containing eggs were observed. This lake was carrying heavy populations of ducks and it was gratifying to see that White Egrets (*Egretta alba*) were still in the area. Sightings of White Egret nests were made during the Toolibin excursion in 1975.

The party then moved to Narrogin and spent the evening in discussion on the future study and use of the wetland systems in Western Australia.

The following morning, with the courtesy and cooperation of Henry Hall, an inspection was made of the Yenyening Lakes commencing at Qualandry Pool. Mr. Hall had provided a number of power boats and vehicles to assist in the inspection. This particular lake system owes much of its existence to a low weir constructed at Qualandry. The water has been able to back up



A White-necked Heron near the nest site at Walbyring



One of the many swans' nests on a Narrow Island in the Yeneyening Lakes



White-necked Herons nest, containing 3 eggs.

approximately 28 kilometres since the installation of this weir. An immense body of water had accumulated during the good rains of 1978 and waterfowl were breeding on many areas of this lake system.

Particularly noticeable was a high number of Black Swans (*Cygnus atratus*), some with cygnets. On one small island visited, a number of swans' nests were observed, all containing eggs.



Messrs Aitken and Allen on the weir at Qualandry pool.

From Yeneyening the party moved to Lake Mears to inspect a recently installed diversion system which will allow Lake Mears to hold good quantities of water for a considerable length of time. The depth of the water at the time of inspection was approximately two metres in the deepest part.

Following the inspection of Lake Mears, the party moved to the Avon River to inspect areas where siltation appeared to be posing a serious problem.

Inspection was then made of Mr. J. Masters' property where Mr. Masters explained a water catchment and storage system which he had installed a number of years ago to allow virtually fresh water to be kept on hand at all times.

In a family environment where salt has caused many problems, this system had proved to be of considerable value.

One dam (of approximately two ha) on his property contained fresh water and had proved to be a haven for a considerable number of waterfowl.



Inspecting one of the storage dams on J. Masters (4th from left) property.

Following this inspection, the party broke up and headed home.

Appreciation is expressed to Mr. Hall and Mr. Masters for their valuable assistance in the excursion, and also to the others who worked together to make this exercise so worthwhile.