

REPORT OF WARDEN OF LAKE WANNAMAL

An inspection by Mr L.J. Silvester, Fauna Warden, on February 2, 1970, revealed that there was no water nor were any water birds present.

A patrol of this lake situated in the Gingin Shire by Departmental wardens was conducted in November, 1969. At that time the water level was extremely low, and sections of wetland areas usually under water, were already dry. Honorary Warden Mr C. Wedge informed the inspecting officers at the time, that the water level was the lowest he could recall for possibly 35 years. During his inspection in November, Warden A.R. Marshall and Cadet Warden R.I. Gardiner sighted the following water birds: 1,000 Grey Teal, 200 Black Duck, 35 Blue-winged Shoveler, 500 Mountain Duck, 4 Musk Duck, 35 Black Cormorant, 19 Coot, 3 Little Grebe, 7 White-faced Heron, 5 Straw-necked Ibis, 300 White-headed Stilt, 1 Yellow-billed Spoonbill and 73 Black Swan.

A second inspection of this lake on December 10, 1969, by Warden Silvester revealed that there were about 7,000 water birds on it, mainly Grey Teal, and some Mountain Duck, Black Duck, Blue-billed Duck, 50 Black Swan, 8 Pelican, some White-faced Heron, White-headed Stilt Straw-necked Ibis, Black Cormorant and White Egret. This build up of water birds towards the end of December was most probably due to the fact that the surrounding smaller swamps were drying out.

In order to obtain a clear picture of how the prevailing drought conditions were affecting waterfowl habitat, periodic inspections were made of Lake Wannamal.

Mr Silvester conducted a further patrol on January 4 and found the water level barely high enough to allow the birds to float. At the time of inspection 120 Grey Teal, 9 Mountain Duck and 3 White-headed Stilt were present. A follow-up patrol on February 9 revealed that Lake Wannamal was dry and no water birds were present.

