

BUSH STONE-CURLEWS REVISITED

Some readers may remember our article in *Western Wildlife* January 2005 about bush stone-curlews living around Bill Warren's farm sheds. A pair has been laying its eggs in different spots around the yards for as long as the now-retired Bill Warren can remember. The stone-curlews normally sit on their simple nest (next to a stick or in a depression) during harvest and pay little attention to the machinery moving around the yards.

In 2007 things became problematic when they laid their eggs in January. A phonecall to the museum confirmed that the chicks would hatch in 28 days - smack bang in the middle of shearing!

Rather than have sheep trample the nest, Bill protected it with a length of curved weldmesh and 28 days later the curlews hatched two chicks. The same day they cleaned the nest moving the egg shells 50 metres to the east to a dam bank and over three days moved the chicks 100 metres to the west to a five hectare patch of bushland.

Bill rarely sees more than the pair. Up until 2005, the male bird was easily recognised as he had a bent leg, however he died and the next year the female appeared with a different partner. In this photo, the new male who is not used to Bill is keeping him at bay. When there is little activity in the yards, the curlews are happy to raise their chicks in the area.

Avril Baxter and Bill Warren



*Above: The male showing aggression towards the photographer.
Below: Two well-camouflaged chicks in the nest. Can you spot them?*

Photos: Bill Warren

