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(To be concluded.)

A Further Nesting Record of the Banded Stilt

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In the six years in which I resided at Lake Grace, from 1928 to 1934, I first saw the Banded Stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*) in 1928. During later seasons many birds were seen dead along the telegraph line on the main road from Wagin, where it crosses the lake. Lake Grace is over 20 miles long, and, as my only means of transit at the time was a bicycle, I was unable to spend as much time as I would have liked in examining it. On the east side of the lake, where Lake Grace township is situate, the country is extensively cleared for wheat-growing. The western side remains largely virgin bush, being mostly mallee, with patches of bigger timber such as salmon gum and morrel and some jam.

The season in 1930, when the first recorded nesting of the Banded Stilt took place, was a very wet one. Most lakes were in a flooded condition, though Lake Grace was only about two feet in depth, which varied, however, according to the wind. As the wind changed direction so would the water be moved about over the flat surface, the flow resembling tidal movement. The water was always highly saline, due not only to common salt, but to other minerals as well, including gypsum, which substance formed a large part of the floor on the lake. I was unaware of the nesting at the time, and when I heard of it I was unable to visit the locality. However, some two years later, in September, 1932, I acquired a motor-cycle and visited the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Cannon, which is situate about 25 miles by road from the causeway across the lake, and lies on the edge of its western side. It will be recalled that they were the original discoverers of the nesting site.

I inspected the peninsula near Cannon's homestead where the birds had nested and estimated the nesting site to cover about three-quarters of an acre, the nests being about a foot apart. Two miles to the north I discovered another nesting site of that period. It was on a small island several

hundred yards out in the lake. Though two years had elapsed I secured six eggs, all out of one nest. The shells had cracked, enabling the contents to escape, thus preventing further damage to the shells.

Just before visiting Cannon's farm, I took, in August, a trip to Lake King, which is 50 miles further east from Lake Grace. It had been my hope to obtain a further record of breeding on this lake, as I had heard a number of reports that the birds had bred there in 1930. I walked along the west shore southwards and at about four miles I came on a small flock of Banded Stilts on a low samphire-covered bank. They appeared to be busy making nests in the damp soil, but no eggs had been laid. I walked on as far as nine miles south and found evidence that the birds had nested a season or two previously, no doubt in 1930. Fragments of numerous egg-shells were scattered about on a large island about nine miles south of the road and about in the centre of the lake. The lake here was about eight or ten miles wide, and it was hard to estimate distance owing to the mirage.

These lakes, on the occasions when they contain water, are regular haunts of the Banded Stilt. The lakes can be summed up as large in expanse, shallow and usually trending north and south, and the water in them is always highly salt. There are hundreds of lakes like this in the arid country, east of Kalgoorlie and north to Cue and Day Dawn.

The 1945 Nesting.

I had kept more or less in touch with the Cannon family, and on September 14 I received the following wire from them — 'Birds have nested this year first time since you left. Nests deserted when rain flooded lake'. This was in reply to a letter of enquiry from me, and the nesting apparently started about the middle of August. I immediately prepared for a hurried trip to the area, inviting Dr. Serventy and Mr. K. Buller to accompany me, but they were prevented by other duties from coming.

I found the rookery was situated on the small island which I had previously found about two miles north of Cannon's farm. The island appeared too small to accommodate all the birds, and their bickering and screaming; so I was told, could be heard from the farm, generally first thing in the morning. Incubation had not started when further heavy rain and rough weather flooded the lake and caused the birds to abandon nesting. Most of the island was later washed away and the eggs were embedded in mud or lying under the water. When I saw the place they had all been broken and eaten by Crows.

I collected samples of the water and submitted them to the Fisheries and Game Department for chlorinity analysis

by the Government Chemical Laboratory. In the units employed by Dr. Serventy as quoted by Mr. Jones in his paper in the July, 1945, *Emu*, this proved to be 21.3 parts per thousand, thus being saltier than sea-water. The northern portion of Lake Grace — which is the one crossed by the Wagin to Lake Grace Road, by means of a causeway — proved to be even more salt, namely 29.7 parts per thousand. It is separated from the southern section of the lake by a high bank.

The Cannons told me that the brine shrimp was present in millions when the Stilts were about, but it seemed to have disappeared when I arrived on September 19, and the same applied to the Stilts. The water was much deeper than I had previously known it, the depth in the north lake being well above my knees three miles from shore. The rainfall was phenomenally heavy in the South-west during 1945, that for Perth reaching the record total of 52.67 inches, compared with an average of 34.85 inches. That for Lake Grace does not show such a disparity; the registered total for 1945 was 16.86 inches, compared with the average of 14.83 inches. The total for 1930, the year of the previous nesting, was 15.84 inches.

I was fortunate in securing a series of eggs which had been blown and kept for me by members of the Cannon family.

This part is an extra part of *The Emu* issued in order to reduce the considerable amount of material in the Editor's hands, though in fact only slightly easing the position. Donations towards the cost of publishing this additional part will be appreciated.

The legend of plate 4, fig. 8, in the July, 1946, *Emu* should refer to 'Adult and immature Black-backed Gulls'. On page 58 the symbols shown in columns 2 and 3, for *Pardalotus ornatus*, in the Table, should be shown in columns 3 and 4.

The correct name of the waterhole referred to on p. 67 as Alexandria is evidently Alexandra.

Hawk Robbing Grebe's Nest.—Many are the hazards that the wild bird has to contend with during the critical period of the hatching of its eggs and rearing of its young. A variety of ruses are adopted in an endeavour to conceal and protect the nest, eggs, or young. The habit of the Grebe in covering its eggs when leaving the nest is a case in point. In spite of this protection disaster sometimes occurs, as the following note indicates.

On October 13, 1945, when passing a lagoon near Seymour, Victoria, by car, a commotion was noticed in the water. A