

- Oct. 14—Nest A completed.
- Oct. 17—Two eggs in nest A.
- Oct. 29—Nest B discovered about 50 yards from A
(2 eggs).
- Oct. 30—Nest C (2 eggs) discovered near boundary
fence. Position about 50 yards on other
side of A.
- Nov. 28—Young have vacated the three nests.
- Jan. 16, 1952.—No sign of young or old birds in nesting
territories.

An Inland Record of the Pied Cormorant

By N. J. FAVALORO, Mildura, Vic.

Any record of the Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) north of the Great Divide in Victoria or in the far west of New South Wales is worthy of note. It is apparent, from the records available, that in these two habitats the Pied Cormorant is only found in years of excessive rainfall when extensive flooding results.

In December 1931 about twenty-five pairs nested on the Wallinjo Swamp near Lake Cooper in Victoria. The nests were isolated and scattered here and there throughout the overcrowded rookeries of Black Cormorants (*P. carbo*), Little Black Cormorants (*P. sulcirostris*) and Little Pied Cormorants (*Microcarbo melanoleucus*). The site chosen was generally as high as possible in the tree selected. The lowest nest examined was about twenty feet above the water and the highest observed about fifty feet. The sitting birds were more cautious than the other species of cormorants and invariably left the nest when the intruder was some considerable distance off, but they returned within a reasonably short space of time if nothing further was done to alarm them.

Although I observed a few Pied Cormorants at Lake Moira and at Whistling Swamp near Lake Cooper, in December 1939, I did not find the species breeding again until after the recent 1950 floods when a pair was found in November 1951 nesting in company with Little Pied Cormorants and Yellow-billed Spoonbills (*Platalea flavipes*) in the remnants of the dead red gums in the north-west corner of Hird Swamp near Cohuna.

During my twenty years' residence in the Mildura district, I have only identified the Pied Cormorant twice in the field, once on the King's Billabong on February 2, 1952, and at Lake Victoria on September 16, 1951, a single bird being observed at close quarters on each occasion.

There is, in my collection, a typical set of three eggs taken locally by Dr. A. Chenery, at Lake Victoria, N.S.W., on

November 29, 1920, and Dr. W. D. K. MacGillivray records the nesting of the Pied Cormorant in considerable numbers on Lakes Menindee, Cawndilla and Teryawynia during the record floods of 1920 and 1921 (*Emu*, vol. 22, Jan. 1923, p. 164).

Since 1934, I have made regular and frequent trips up the Darling River to Menindee and less frequently as far as Wilcannia and Bourke, but I have not met with the Pied Cormorant, although the other three species have been recorded in considerable numbers on each occasion.

It is, however, quite possible that I missed them in late 1939 and 1940, as I did not locate the big rookery until May 5, 1941, when the waters had receded somewhat and nesting had finished. Judging by the number of old nests seen there must have been thousands of cormorants, herons and egrets nesting over a very wide area.

Although conditions in the far north-west corner of New South Wales in the Tibooburra sector and beyond to the Queensland border were ideal in September 1942 and good in 1946 and 1948, only a few Little Black Cormorants were encountered. It was, therefore, with considerable interest and surprise that I received the accompanying photograph of a Pied Cormorant from Mr. Hector Cope of Clifton Downs Station, some forty-five miles north-east from Tibooburra.

It appears that the bird arrived during the night, late in September 1951, and was found next morning near a shearing shed fifty yards from the homestead. Although a large dam full of water was only one hundred yards on the other side of the house, the Cormorant made no attempt to go to it. The bird became very tame and allowed Mr. Cope and his friends to catch it without making any protest. A careful examination failed to reveal any injury and the bird appeared to be in normal health and in good condition.

During the early mornings and late in the evenings it waddled around the house and followed Mr. Cope about whenever he was home. It rested during the remainder of the day near an iron fence, perched on the old box depicted in the photograph. Towards the close of the second week the bird became restless and refused to allow itself to be caught. It gradually became more alert and treated its human neighbours with increasing suspicion, until it flew away one morning a fortnight after its arrival.

How the bird came to be there at all, and why it behaved in such a peculiar manner, is indeed a mystery.

Mr. J. Neil McGilp (*Emu*, vol. 22, Jan. 1923, p. 242) records a similar experience with Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) in the summer of 1912, when a bird walked into the house on an out-station on his property at Lake Frome and remained for six months.