

ter were found beside the Wollongong to Port Kembla Road, the victims of night traffic.

Crakes and rails were particularly plentiful, and the Spotless Crake (*Porzana plumbea*) and the Little or Marsh Crake (*Porzana pusilla*) were often the victims of marauding domestic cats.

A Brolga (*Grus rubicundus*) was seen on paddocks behind an ocean beach a few miles north of Wollongong on May 8, and again on July 11. Another observation just south of Wollongong on June 3, was presumably of the same bird. To see this stately species so far south and on the coast was indeed unexpected and exciting.

The Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) became so abundant on tidal Lake Illawarra during November and December, that fishermen advocated, in both Sydney and local press, an open season so that their numbers could be considerably reduced. It was argued that the birds were eating certain weeds in the shallows that are required for many species of spawning fish. As the area is wholly contained within a sanctuary, an open season did not eventuate, but despite the efforts of rangers and members of local conservation bodies, numbers of these majestic birds were shot. During this period small groups of Swans were often seen on the water off the ocean beaches. The Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*) was also seen upon the open sea on two occasions.

An influx of birds of prey was evident towards the end of the year. The Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus notatus*) and Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*), two species seldom seen in this district, were relatively common.

Drought-breaking rain during January and early February, 1958, was possibly the major contributing factor to a gradual dispersal which took place during this period, and the bird population of the Illawarra District was practically normal again by late summer.

Thanks are accorded to Mr. J. Devitt of Wollongong for information and field observations incorporated herein.

The Whistle of the Musk Duck.—A bird-call always difficult to reconcile with its producer is the powerful shrill whistle of the Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*). There has been conjecture as to its significance in the scheme of things concerning Musk Ducks. I have recorded the whistle in every month of the year and during most hours of the day and night. The opinion has often been expressed that the call is associated with courtship behaviour. Surely this bird is not so amorous as my records above would suggest.

An acquaintance told me of how, once, he noticed a Musk Duck several times emitting the whistle whilst cocking a wary eye skywards at a hawk soaring above, and that during the episode there was no splashing of water by the duck.—V. T. LOWE, Mystic Park, Vic., 31/7/58.