

evolve? It must be emphasized that these notes refer to birds nesting under somewhat artificial conditions. In particular, the problem of ants associated with scale insects would be of minor importance in more natural nesting habitats of the Red-browed Finch.

Food of the Wedge-tailed Eagle.—In September 1961 a Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) was found sitting on two fresh eggs in a nest at a height of 12 feet in a belar tree near Fletcher's Lake, Dareton, New South Wales. Until both young left the nest in late December, weekly visits were made to the nest to examine the food brought to the sitting bird and the young.

When first found, 12 rabbits were placed around the rim of the nest, and throughout the incubation and fledging periods rabbits were the sole item of food found at the nest. It was possible to estimate accurately the total number of rabbits brought to the nest as about 120. Not all of these were consumed; many became sun-dried, and additionally the requirements of a very large colony of meat ants had to be met. A continuous stream of these ants climbed the belar trunk and hundreds of them swarmed over the nest platform. The eyasses apparently ignored the ants even when they crawled over them. On occasions I saw as many as 12 ants clinging around the eyes of the young eagles, presumably absorbing the liquids of the eye-ball. Despite this attention the birds progressed well and left the nest in good condition. Rabbits were in abundance in the vicinity of the nest.

In December 1961 I made a short visit to Bundyulumbalah Station, Wanganella, New South Wales, a property managed by a fellow member, B. Keays. This property of over 40,000 acres is, to the credit of Keays, completely free of rabbits, yet it supports at least ten pairs of Wedge-tailed Eagles. I considered it of great interest to ascertain the food of the eagles in a rabbit-free area, but unfortunately none of the eyries found was occupied. However, one had been recently vacated, the young bird, barely able to fly, being found perched in an adjacent tree. I examined the food remains around this nest and found evidence of three foxes, four hares, two small kangaroos, one goanna, and a very large number of Galahs; the birds appeared to be the main item of food.

The areas in which both nests were situated are devoted to sheep raising, yet no evidence was found of this animal being a source of food. Young lambs would have been available during the earlier part of incubation at Dareton but there were no lambs in the vicinity of the Bundyulumbalah nest at the time I examined it.—J. N. HOBBS, Buronga, N.S.W., 15/2/62.