

# Obituary

## J.N. HOBBS

John Hobbs died from a heart attack whilst birding near Dareton, N.S.W., on 31 October 1990. Born in London in 1923 he developed an early interest in birds which he pursued as a gunner on tankers in the Atlantic during the 1939-45 war — hardly a sinecure for ornithologists! After a spell in the Metropolitan Police Force John emigrated to Australia joining the NSW Police Force in 1952, largely prompted by the opportunity to extend his birding.

Early appointments in the Riverina developed into a lifelong interest in the birds of that part of the world, to many publications about them and ultimately to his retirement to Dareton and several years of happy birding without the distractions of police work. Inevitably during his career John was transferred around the State (Finley, Dungog, Kyogle, Katoomba, Ivanhoe, Nowra and Narranderra) but he managed to avoid city postings so that he could continue his wide interests in ornithology. With the advent of the Nest Record Scheme John became one of its most devoted contributors and I would be surprised if anyone else has submitted more data.

Wherever he was stationed John generously shared his local knowledge with visitors and I well remember his introducing me (and Graeme Chapman) to Little Crows nesting near Buronga. As it was very hot he hospitably (and with a laugh) allowed Graeme and me to cool off in the police cells whilst he finished his shift! A few weeks before he died he wrote me a long letter commiserating with my recent coronary problems (he had had a bypass a few years earlier) and relating such fascinating *Corcorax* observations that he almost made me wish that I was still in the eastern states.

A prolific writer, John has published in *Australian Birds* (see obituary by Allen Keast, Vol. 24), *Australian Bird Watcher*, *British Birds*, and *Corella* besides 34 pieces in *Emu* which are listed below. These constitute a very worthwhile epitaph to a first-rate field ornithologist who will be sadly missed by his many friends; we extend our sympathy to his widow Shirley and their four sons.

### Publications by J.N. Hobbs in *Emu*:

- Ground Thrush inland at Deniliquin. 54, 278.
- Superb Parrot in southern New South Wales. 55, 157.
- House Sparrow breeding away from man. 55, 302.
- Wrens in south-western New South Wales. 56, 147-148.
- A flood year in the Riverina. 56, 349-352.
- Tree Sparrow in the Riverina. 56, 434.
- Tree Sparrow in the Riverina. 57, 200.
- Notes on the Pink-eared Duck. 57, 265-268.
- Tree Sparrow in New South Wales. 57, 337.
- The Pectoral Sandpiper and other northern waders in south-western New South Wales. 58, 56-58.
- Association between the Black Honeyeater and the emu bush. 58, 127-129.
- Some notes on grebes. 58, 129-132.
- Common Sandpiper inland in New South Wales. 58, 287.
- A further record of the Pectoral Sandpiper in south-western New South Wales and some wader notes. 58, 412-414.
- Hybrid between Yellow and Crimson Rosellas. 58, 418.
- House Sparrow breeding away from man. 48, 422-423.
- Migratory movements of the Swamp Harrier. 59, 87-88.
- An unusual display of the Pink-eared Duck. 59, 164.
- Pectoral Sandpiper in New South Wales. 59, 210.
- The birds of south-west New South Wales. 61, 21-55.
- Spine-tailed Swift. 61, 251.
- Notes on the birds of the Central Coast Area of New South Wales. 61, 295-300.
- Defence of the nest by the Little Crow. 62, 172-173.
- Food of the Wedge-tailed Eagle. 62, 180.
- Nesting of the Reed-warbler and the Little Grassbird. 62, 194.
- Whistling Kites taking a Kookaburra. 66, 46.
- Kestrel attempting to take Stubble Quail. 66, 57.
- Nocturnal feeding by Welcome Swallow. 66, 116.
- Distraction display by two species of crakes. 66, 299-300.
- Honeyeaters and emu bush, *Eremophila*. 66, 386-388.
- Southern Emu-wren at high altitude. 70, 142.
- Use of tools by White-winged Choughs. 71, 84-85.
- Breeding of Red-capped Dotterel at Fletcher's Lake, Dareton, New South Wales. 72, 121-125.
- Nest construction by the Pink-eared Duck. 75, 226-227.
- Birds feeding on house mice. 76, 219-220.

Ian Rowley.