

Platalea regia. Royal Spoonbill.

A single bird was seen at Coolbellup (North) Lake on August 15, 1954, a single bird was seen flying over Coolbellup Lake on October 28, 1954, and two birds were seen on several occasions at Coolbellup and Bibra Lakes during February 1955.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus. Pink-eared Duck.

D. L. Serventy (*W. A. Naturalist*, vol. 3, p. 187) refers to several records of the Pink-eared Duck in the south-west of Western Australia which were apparently a result of the 1952 irruption of northern birds, but unfortunately these records are too scanty and I believe that they are not indicative of the numbers that participated. H. Atkinson, W. C. Ford and I recorded about 150 Pink-eared Ducks on Coolbellup Lake, and W. C. Ford and I saw about 100 on Cooloongup Lake in January and February 1955. The following summer this species was again seen in unusual numbers; W. C. Ford and I saw about 54 Pink-eared Ducks at the Lagoon, Hamilton Hill on December 25, 1955, 74 at Coolbellup Lake during the January-April period, and a flock of 23 at Cooloongup Lake in April.

The Gosling of the Magpie Goose

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Mathews (1914) has described, and Delacour and Scott (1954) have described and figured, a downy gosling which they attribute to the Magpie Goose, *Anseranas semipalmata* (Latham). Subsequently Magpie Geese have been reared at the Wildfowl Trust, Gloucestershire, England, and the downy young described by Johnstone (1957).

During investigations by the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., of the Magpie Goose at Humpty Doo, Northern Territory, Australia, goslings up to three weeks old were examined in large numbers, being both hand-reared and wild-caught birds. These observations showed that the descriptions of Mathews, and of Delacour and Scott, were not those of Magpie Goose goslings, while that of Johnstone was accurate for only one stage in the gosling's development. It seems, therefore, that further description is warranted.

On hatching the down feathers covering the gosling are still partly enclosed in their sheaths, which are rapidly shed during the first day. The head, except the lores which are bare, and neck are cinnamon red, paler and extending farther posteriorly below than above. Beginning about half-way down the upper neck a dark grey stripe passes backwards, expanding as it does so and fusing with the dark grey down which covers the back and sides of the gosling to the level of the wings anteriorly and of the legs and cloaca posteriorly. The dark grey pales rapidly to white underparts below this level, while the cinnamon red forms a moderately sharp demarcation line with the white anteriorly. The undertail and underwing are pale grey. The dark grey down extends along both sides of the leg to the limit of feathering, a little above the tibio-tarsal joint.

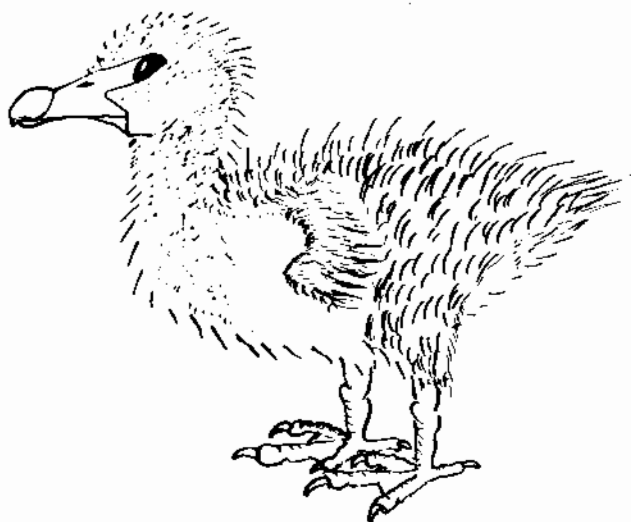
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The plumage pattern of the gosling is shown in the figure below.

The soft parts of the day-old gosling are all dull claret coloured, and the egg tooth prominent. After 3-5 days the soft parts fade to yellow, the egg tooth disappears, and scraggy tail feathers appear, which remain about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long for a week or more.

Between one and two weeks of age grey begins to show on the legs, particularly on the anterior tarsal surface and the dorsal side of the toes. A grey band also appears on the bill just behind the nail, and spreads posteriorly until the whole bill is grey at about three weeks old. The nail, never as bright a yellow as the rest of the bill, is by then also grey.

The toes are always strongly clawed and semi-palmated, as is characteristic of the adult.



The Plumage Pattern of the Gosling of the
Magpie Goose—1-2 days old.

The gosling bears no resemblance in colour pattern to any other described gosling, and gives no indication of the relationships of the species.

REFERENCES

- Delacour, J., and Scott, P. (1954). *Waterfowl of the World*, 1, 21-25 (Country Life Ltd., London).
Johnstone, S. T. (1957). 'First breeding of the Magpie Goose', *Wild-fowl Trust, 8th Annual Report*, 38-9.
Mathews, G. M. (1914). *The Birds of Australia*, 4, 25-31 (Witherby & Co., London).