

very large number of ducks and of Black Swan, *Cygnus atratus* (Latham). The ducks were of three species, namely Black Duck, *Anas superciliosa* Gmelin, White-eyed Duck, *Aythya australis* (Eyton), and Chestnut Teal, *Anas castanea* (Eyton). The number of birds was impossible to count but was estimated at several hundred thousand. All the other water-holes and lagoons in the Flinders area were dry and the importance of Burnett's Lagoon as a drought refuge cannot be underemphasized. The northern shores of Vansittart Island were also being used by Swans as a drought refuge.

SUMMARY

The numbers of Cape Barren Geese counted during the annual aerial survey in 1958, 1959 and 1960 are 1226, 1259 and 943 respectively. The total is steadily declining and gives rise to much concern. The hunting pressure is not excessive and illegal activities may be the major factor in the decline.

The 1960 survey revealed the importance of Burnett's Lagoon as a drought refuge for duck and swan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

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Beach Curlew in New South Wales.—On December 27, 1959, a party of four observers decided on a "beach patrol" from The Entrance to Norah Head, mid-coastal New South Wales. During the walk a large bird was noted silhouetted against bare sand. Although obviously aware of our presence, it remained stationary for several minutes. A copy of the *Field Guide to the Waders* (Condon & McGill) was consulted while the bird was under observation, and a slow approach was made while it moved, in an unhurried walk, from place to place on the dune. Finally it was watched, while it remained in a stationary posture, from a distance of about 35 yards. The bird was then flushed to note flight-features and it flew off to the south with slowly-beating wings which were prominently marked with white. It did

not call while it was being watched, a period of about fifteen minutes.

No member of our party was familiar with the bird, but it tallied in all respects with Condon & McGill's description and illustration of *Orthorhamphus magnirostris*, the Beach Curlew. This species apparently has not been recorded in New South Wales, though it does occur in southern coastal Queensland. Mr. McGill informed me that he had examined an egg of the species said to have been collected many years ago near the mouth of the Tweed River, New South Wales, close to the Queensland border.

I have recently inspected a skin of the Beach Curlew in the National Museum, Melbourne, and am able to confirm our identification of the bird seen near The Entrance. This note, therefore, is submitted as a sight record of that species on the central coast of New South Wales.—BRENDAN WILSON, Canberra, A.C.T. 28/5/1960.

Nesting of the Short-tailed Shearwater on the Five Islands, N.S.W.

By S. G. LANE, Lane Cove, N.S.W.

A visit was made to the Five Islands, off Port Kembla, 50 miles south of Sydney, on November 1-2, 1958, for the purpose of banding Silver Gulls (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) and Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*). On the night of November 1, some 40 shearwaters were caught above ground on No. 1 Island and brought to a central spot for banding under the light of a pressure lantern. It was noticed that one of the birds captured was a Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), the remainder being Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (*P. pacificus*). The latter species was known to breed in numbers on the Five Islands and on the mainland opposite at Red Point. However, there was no previous record of the presence of living Short-tailed Shearwaters on the group, though dead birds had frequently been noted washed up on the shoreline of No. 1 Island by observers in past years.

The egg-laying period of the shearwaters normally commences towards the end of November, so it was assumed that the single bird found on the island early in November 1958, was a straggler from the vast numbers that migrate down the coast of New South Wales at that time of the year to their main breeding grounds in Bass Strait.

I was not then aware that the species had been found breeding on the Tollgates Islands, 150 miles to the south (Davies, 1959). The recent discovery (in December 1959) of numbers of nesting birds on Broughton Island, 155 miles north of the Five Islands, indicated the distinct possibility that the species also bred on other islands along the coast of New South Wales. Furthermore, the earlier finding