

Falla (1942) divides the species *Pt. hypoleuca* into three subspecies: *hypoleuca*, *axillaris* and *nigripennis*; all possess short, stout bills and stout feet coloured flesh and black. Recorded breeding ranges of these subspecies are Bonin and western Hawaiian Islands; Chatham Islands; and Kermadecs, Three Kings and Austral Islands respectively. Specimens of *nigripennis* have been collected from Lord Howe Island (McKean and Hindwood 1964), but the Heron Island sighting is the first recorded occurrence of *Pt. hypoleuca* in the Australian coastal region.

I here acknowledge the interest and help of Mr Roy Wheeler, Mr Pat Bourke, and Mr John McKean in tracking down an otherwise sleeping record.

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Eastern Swamphe takes a downy from a pair of Chestnut Teal.—While studying the problem of birds frequenting Kingsford Smith Aerodrome at Mascot, Sydney, at 18.30 hrs on February 11, 1964, a pair of Chestnut Teal, *Anas castanea*, was seen leading a brood of four downies on the Radar Pond in the centre of the airfield. The pond, which is part of the drainage system, was almost dry and the ducks were feeding on a 30-ft wide mud flat between the water and the reeds that surround the pond.

The lengths of the ducklings were between one fifth and one quarter of that of the adults, and therefore about one to two weeks old. At 18.40 hrs. the brood size was noticed to have been reduced to three. At 18.45 hrs. an Eastern Swamphe, *Porphyrio melanotus*, was seen walking from the water's edge to the reeds with one of the ducklings in its beak. A few seconds later a male and a female Chestnut Teal ran, flapping their wings after the Swamphe and disappeared with it out of sight into the vegetation. About five minutes later both ducks flew back to the water.

It should be noted that apart from the Eastern Swamphe being a not suspected predator on avian prey, it is uncommon among dabbling ducks for the male to assist the female in the leading and defending of the brood.

In conclusion the co-operation and hospitality of the D.C.A. personnel at Kingsford Smith Aerodrome is gratefully acknowledged.—GERARD F. VAN TETS, CSIRO, Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra, A.C.T.