

148

150

29

30



Treasures Of The Gwydir

Diana Wilson



INTRODUCTION

In *The Treasures of the Gwydir*, the author has given us an insight into the personal history of the Morse family's origins in England. Emigrating to Australia on the *Lady Raffles* in 1839, Rev John Morse and his family set up residence at Scone, NSW, where he was the rector of St Luke's Anglican Church. The book then proceeds to detail the Morse family history from when they purchased *Balala*, at Uralla, NSW, in the 1840s. The Morse brothers (Henry and George) subsequently went on to purchase nearby *Abington* in 1852.

From chapter four the author moves on to discuss the general background of early collecting by naturalists in Australia. However, the main purpose of this publication is to pay tribute to George Phillips and Mary Morse's second child, Frederick Charles Morse (1874-1924). He began farming in his own right on *Coocalla*, ca.48km northwest of Moree, NSW. It was here that Frederick began his lifelong love of the Gwydir River wetlands, and his vision to have these wetlands turned into a faunal reserve. He was to write many articles in the ornithological journal, *The Emu*. One of the more well-known articles was *Birds of the Watercourse* (Moree). The book also discusses his oological collection, photography and observations, which extended over a period of thirteen years, during which time he noted 216 species. The book lists in detail Frederick Morse's bird observations, depicts many examples of his photography and records the details of the egg clutches in his oological collection which are now in the Museum of Victoria, Melbourne.

In the latter half of the book, from chapter sixteen, the author discusses life after Frederick Morse, and her grandmother's (Laura Olive Morse) influence on the families' properties, the dispersal of these properties amongst the Morse clan, detailed information of *Banarway* and her memories of life on the properties.

But one can detect that there is an unconscious aim of the book: that is, to outline the plight of this once vast wetland and the loss of breeding waterbird habitat and refugia that once existed and the author's concern of the devastation and habitat loss and disappearing wildlife from this immense and once diverse continent. She devotes the last couple of chapters to discussing the predicament of the Gwydir wetlands and the Murray-Darling basin.

The following quotes from this book summarises the author's plight:

"Records have been taken over many years by different individuals, who have historically charted the course of the Gwydir Wetlands and their bird counts show significant declines in populations. The first were those observations made by F.C. Morse."

"The question is can we look forward to a flourishing watercourse full of the natural wonders my grandfather appreciated and loved or are we destined to turn it into a desert. We have the choice; we can make a difference - or will greed and need be the dictators of our future?"

Ian J. Mason

Honorary Fellow (ornithology)
Australian National Wildlife Collection
National Research Collections Australia
CSIRO National Facilities and Collections

*Dedicated to my father Henry Tourle Morse (1912 - 2010)
and his father F C Morse (1874 - 1924)*

FOREWORD

I write these notes for Diana's family (Morse) history, *Treasures of the Gwydir*, with great appreciation of her family's contribution in raising the awareness of the internationally significant Gwydir Wetlands, west of Moree NSW. Her grandfather, Frederick Charles Morse born 1874, was a man with a great love of nature and a passion for collecting birds' eggs and bird photography. Frederick was one of the first to document the massive bird-breeding colonies in the Gwydir Wetlands in 1922. His contributions to *The Emu* and other bird journals have added considerably to the knowledge of Australian Ornithology.

It comes as no surprise that his granddaughter Diana, has also had a long interest in the environment, most recently (2016) writing the book *Heather Feather*, a children's educational text, with the core message of *Be Aware and Take Care of our Environment*. Diana previously spent 14 years with the Blackmores company, in the role of Environment Manager, instilling environmental awareness by organising Clean Up Australia Campaigns and sponsorship of the Manly Environment Centre to name a few. Whilst studying for her BA at the University of New England Armidale she made a commitment to write her Morse family history, in particular of her grandfather, capturing his exploits, his love of birds, for family, society and future generations.

In 1912, Frederick and wife Laura moved to 'Coocalla Station', at Garah west of Moree, where he made regular sojourns into the wilds of the nearby Big Leather and Gingham Watercourses, now known collectively as the Gwydir Wetlands. Frederick's passion for photography, his egg collection, (now stored in the Victorian Museum) along with his collectors letters and his recorded observations for the Emu magazine, now Birds Australia, form the basis for this book *Treasures of the Gwydir*.

In the early 1920s Diana's grandfather floated the idea of turning his beloved wetlands into a sanctuary. After one hundred years, river regulation, floodplain development and farming from the late 1970s, drove a reduction of wetlands area down to 15% of its former extent. Thankfully, the remaining core area has now been secured for society and future generations, through the purchase and creation of the NSW Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area. Both NSW and the Commonwealth governments have also secured 'water for the environment' and with good management of both land and water, these wetlands are today thriving, serving as key breeding grounds for waterbird populations across the Murray Darling Basin.

The story of Frederick C. Morse who died 1924, is an important chapter in the history of Australian Ornithology and the Gwydir Wetlands. I thank Diana for capturing the contributions made by her grandfather and the opportunity for others to know of his efforts.

Daryl Albertson
Senior Wetlands and Rivers Conservation Officer

Biodiversity and Conservation Division | Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
T 02 6773 7004 | M 0407 071 985 | E Daryl.Albertson@environment.nsw.gov.au
85 Faulkner Street (Po Box 494) ARMIDALE NSW 2350
www.dpie.nsw.gov.au



Planning,
Industry &
Environment

INDEX

		Pages
Chapter 1	Morse Beginnings	1-14
Chapter 2	<i>Balala – Uralla NSW</i>	15-21
Chapter 3	<i>Abington – Uralla NSW</i>	22-28
Chapter 4	<i>Coocalla Moree NSW</i>	29-37
Chapter 5	Birds, Eggs and Collecting	38-43
Chapter 6	Frederick Charles Morse	44-47
Chapter 7	Birds of the Moree District	48-72
Chapter 8	<i>The Emu Contributions</i>	73-78
Chapter 9	Collectors Letters	79-110
Chapter 10	The Emu Contributions	111-128
Chapter 11	F G. Morse's Log	129-150
Chapter 12	Obituary (<i>The Emu</i>)	151
Chapter 13	The Morse Egg Collection	152-165
Chapter 14	The Later Years	166-174
Chapter 15	The Gwydir Wetlands – Waterways – Wastelands	175-176
Chapter 16	Harold Blackburn's Diary's	177-219
Chapter 17	The Legacy continues	220-223



CHAPTER 1

MORSE BEGINNINGS

The huge scroll depicting generations of the Morse family tree has a griffin as its centrepiece. Griffins are mythical creatures that are portrayed as half eagle and half lion and were represented in Greek mythology as wise, strong and intelligent. In Egyptian hieroglyphics griffins were depicted as the guardians of treasures and the Heraldry Society of England states that the griffin represents valour and bravery. The significance of the griffin on the Morse Coat of Arms is unknown. On the top of the scroll on either side of the griffin are the words:

The Pedigree of Morse of Newent and Ann Gloucester 1648.
There is in Newent UK churchyard a tombstone inscribed thereon:
Abraham Morse Sen. who died 1673 aged 50 yrs., born 1623.

The author of the first four generations of the family tree is unknown. However, Pamela Morse, compiled the remaining entries from Rev John Morse to the present. There are many entries over generations showing births, deaths, marriages and tragedies (such as three sons from one family all killed in World War II).

The early English generations of the Morse family lived and died in Newent, Gloucestershire, a very old town established during the Anglo-Saxon period. After the Norman Conquest, the Manor of Newent was divided into lots. Morses were the owners of the Manor estate called *Bredow*.

There is a long line of clergymen in the Morse family with many generations represented as churchmen. From Abraham Morse born in 1673, the line continues for 145 years after that first entry down to John and Martha Morse who had eight children.

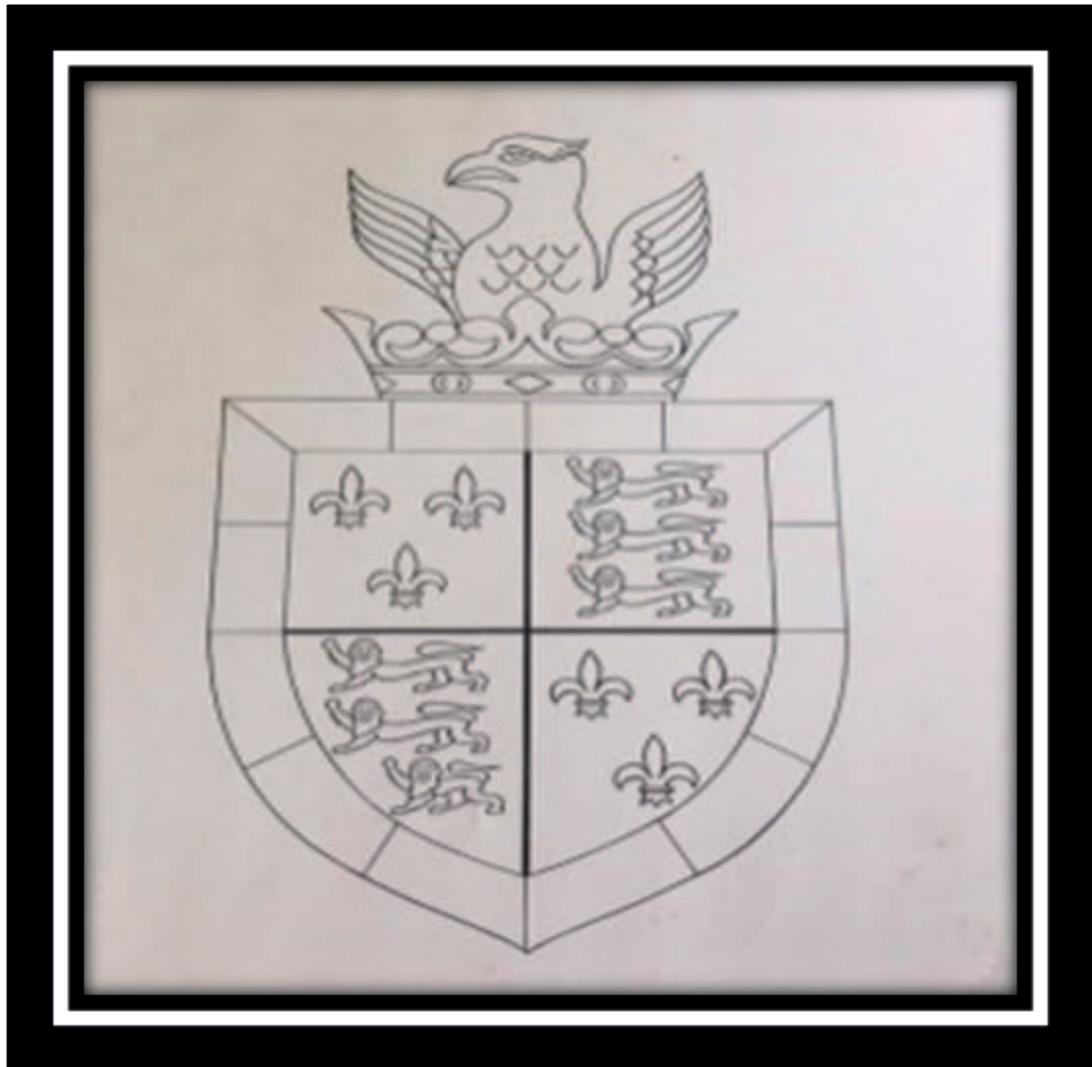
John	Born 1786	Died 1852	Buried Newcastle, NSW
Thomas	Born 1793	Died 1852	Buried Newent, England (a bachelor)
Edward	Born 1796	Died 1825	Buried Huntley, England (surgeon)
Henry	Born 1797	Died 1820	Buried Huntley, England (a bachelor)
William	Born 1798	Died 1857	Buried Gloucester, England
George	Born 1803	Died 1864	Buried Gloucester, England
Charles	Born 1805	Died 1828	Buried Huntley, England (doctor)
Eleanor	Born unknown	Died 1854	Married Thomas Hawkins



*Rev John Morse, MA, Pembroke College Oxford
Rector of Huntley and Vicar of Oxenhall*



St John's Church Huntley



Morse 'Coat of Arms'

According to the *British History Online*:

The rectors between 1688 and 1797 represented three generations of the Morse family. Abraham Morse, rector 1688-1726, built a new rectory house and lived in it in the early 18th century. Richard Jackman Morse, rector 1727-65, lived at Awre, where he was a vicar and employed as a curate at Huntley, including on occasions, one or other of his sons. The curate provided one Sunday service, alternately in the morning and afternoon, and in 1759 the rector led a perambulation of the parish bounds. John Morse, rector 1765-97, held Blaisdon rectory from 1778 and employed a curate at least in his later years. John Morse (1817-39), the last of his family to be rector, was also vicar of Oxenhall from 1824. At Huntley, a Sunday school was taught in his house and in 1825 the Sunday service, alternating between the morning and the afternoon, was said to attract a congregation of over 100, particularly in the afternoon when the church, with most of its seating free, was filled to capacity.¹

Rev John Morse was educated at Oxford University achieving a Master of Arts degree; he then became the rector of Huntley and vicar of Oxenhall before he immigrated with his family to Australia. And so began the Morse family heritage in Australia.

Between 1830 and 1850, assisted immigration was introduced to allow British families to come to Australia. The Government's idea was to remove the 'convict' notion of the colony and to introduce commerce, trade and a better class of people. Unemployment was high in England, prisons were overcrowded, sanitation poor and prospects few. In Australia, there was a scarcity of labour other than convicts. Therefore, the Government paid for passages in order to attract new people to New South Wales. About one third of the arrivals paid their own passage. Advertisements were placed in British newspapers extolling the virtues of life in Australia. Many immigrants went to America with its cheaper fares and shorter travelling time of only three months, whereas a trip to Australia was six months on board ship. The duration of the trip plus the poor accommodation, food and unsanitary conditions would have been very trying. Arrival in this harsh country would have been a shock to those leaving the green lands of England.

The Australian Chronicle, 17th September, 1837 printed the following, less-than-attractive article, headlined "Bounty Immigrants of the *Lady Raffles*":

The immigrants by the *Lady Raffles*, which arrived on Thursday night, are on board alongside Walker's wharf there being no provision for the accommodation of bounty Immigrants at the Government Buildings. They have arrived in good health, and only one death - that of an infant, occurred during the voyage. To cleanliness, and to attention to the habits of the immigrants on board by the Surgeon Superintendent, may be attributed the healthy state in which the bounty immigrants generally arrive; and which has gained for that system the superiority over the Government system.

¹ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

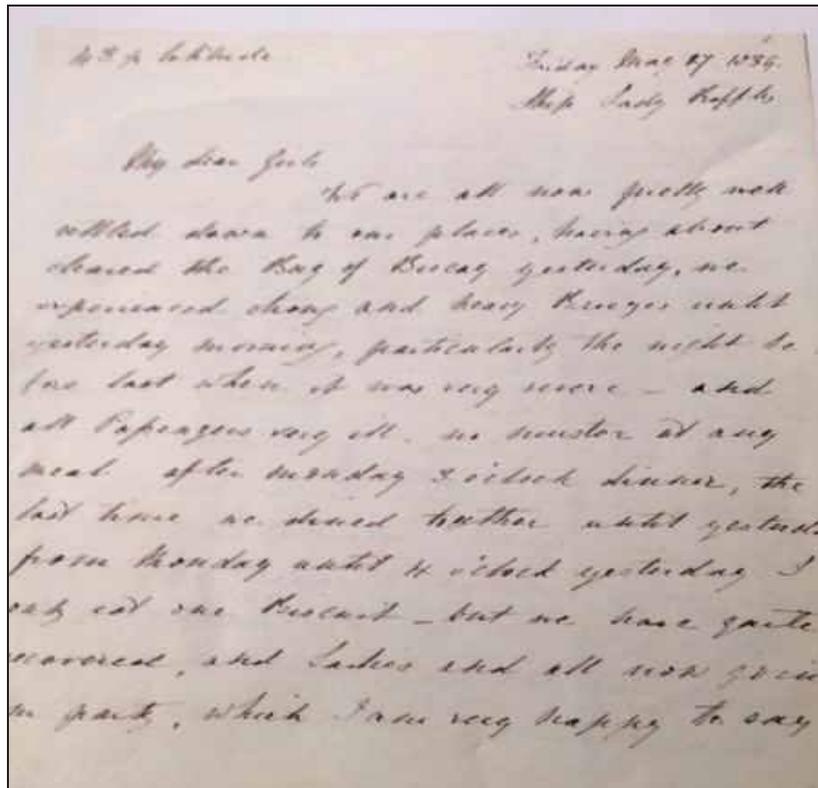
Yet, there being no rendezvous or asylum provided for the bounty immigrants, as for those imported by the Government, they must wander about in search of employment without money or friends, in a strange country, often in utter destitution, and hopeless - hopeless, misery, without a shelter or a home, for months together, cursing the duplicity of those by whom they were enticed from their happy homes and connections, to emigrate to an imaginary Eldorado, where upon their arrival, they find the first theme of comfortless reflection - the irreparable destruction of their fondly-cherished but fallacious hopes. Thus are they driven by despair to intemperance and dishonesty? ²

On the other hand, the Government immigrants, on their landing, are comfortably lodged at the public expense, and provisioned from the stores, until suitably provided for; and after rejecting one place after another – so fastidious are they in the choice of employment, and after the lapse of several months, they grow weary of an idle life; their funds diminished by dissipation, and their morals tainted by association with the tap-room frequenters of Botany Bay; and they, at length, overcome by ennui, accept a place! The hardship and injustice of this distribution will, we fear, be painfully illustrated in the present instance, after so many fresh importations to the manifest prejudice of the immigrants by the *Lady Raffles*, who are principally useful agricultural servants, husbandmen, and mechanics; and it reflects no slight discredit upon the Government and supporters of so partial and cruel a system, that it exists at all. *Correspondent*.



Advertisement encouraging immigration to Australia

² *Australian Chronicle* 17th September 1839



3

Thomas Tourle wrote many letters to his family in England. All are held in the Archives of University of New England Armidale or the National Library. The letter above was written on Friday, 17th May 1839, on board the ship *Lady Raffles*.⁴ The Morse family association with the Hon Mr Thomas Tourle, who has travelled out from England with them, was continued, through partnership and marriage, to this very day, with my father's name being Henry Tourle.

It seems ironical that the great naturalist Charles Darwin arrived in Sydney on 12th January 1836, just three years and six months prior to the arrival of the Morse family from England. Darwin gives a very mixed report on his impression of Sydney, in part writing that he was "full of admiration at the whole scene" and it is a "most magnificent testimony to the power of the British nation ... my feeling is to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman." However, his less-than-glowing final report about Australia in general was that "nothing but rather sharp necessity should complete me to emigrate."⁵ The *Lady Raffles* carried more than 400 people, many of whom were convicts.

Contrary to Darwin's opinion and the above article, the arrival of the *Lady Raffles* on 13th September 1839, appears to be less hazardous and arduous for the Morse family who presumably had a one-way ticket. The *Sydney Herald* recorded the arrival from England of The Rev J Morse, lady and three daughters, Mr Morse Jnr and the Hon Mr Tourle.

Another son apparently arrived later to join the family. The Rev J Morse, MA Oxford, had been Rector of Huntley and Vicar of Oxenhall before deciding to bring his family to Australia.

There is a notation in *Free Settler or Felon* history database which states:

'Tourle, Thomas Lady Raffle's 1839 Shipboard nickname of 'King Pickle' or 'Old Sober Sides' on the voyage to Australia. Found the ladies 'agreeable enough though no beauties.'

³ Australian National Library

⁴ University of New England

⁵ *Voyage of the Beagle* Charles Darwin

The Morse family's passage may well have been paid by the Church as he appeared to go directly from the ship to Scone to take up his role as the rector of St Luke's Anglican Church in Scone, New South Wales. The change of scenery from the picturesque village of Huntley, England to the Hunter Valley hills would have been dramatic, especially the size of the parish area from a few acres in England to hundreds of miles in Australia. Rev John Morse had left Huntley as a very popular vicar who had great numbers attend his services. When he first arrived in Scone the population was only 63, however, he was also responsible for the wider regions of Denman and Murrurundi. He came to Australia with his wife and children, the shock of their new surroundings would have been dramatic, however they were on an evangelical mission so perhaps accepted their fate without question.

It could be assumed that Bishop William Broughton's return to England to recruit ministers may well have influenced Rev John Morse to bring his family to Australia.



St Luke's Anglican Church, Scone, NSW



Stained glass window at St Luke's Church, Scone, NSW

In 1843, the Church of England's first and last Bishop of Australia, William Grant Broughton, visited Scone as part of a tour of his diocese and was "mortified" by the attitudes of local residents to religion.

The churchyard of St Luke's had been used as a non-denominational cemetery since the beginning of settlement; it had not been consecrated. The first St Luke's church was still under construction when Bishop Broughton arrived on 13th July 1843.

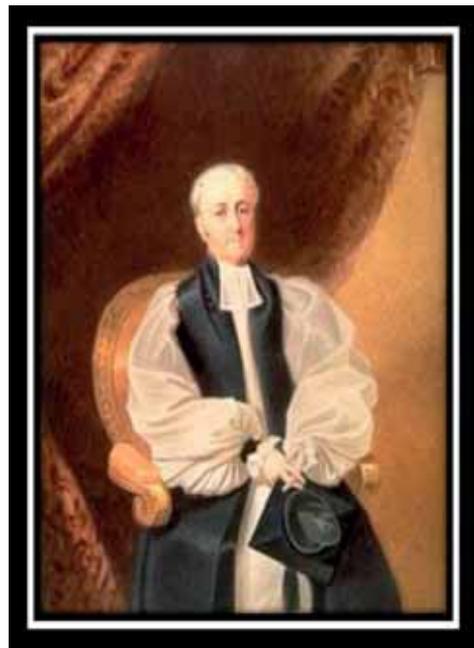
On 14th July, Bishop Broughton wrote in his journal that he and Reverend Morse visited each individual hut in the village to “awaken the people to ... their religious duties.”¹

To Bishop Broughton’s disappointment, the early settlers did not seem very interested. He described the results of their visits as “great insensibility prevailing, and little apparent impression produced on any.”

The next day his disappointment in the local villagers grew to what he described as “mortifying”:

“The consecration was attended by the principal families in the neighbourhood, forming but a small congregation. From the village not a single individual came, though many of them have relatives interred in the ground. A mortifying proof of the discouragements which here attend the efforts of the Clergy, and of the insensibility to which their long unacquaintance with religious ordinances has reduced too many of that class to which the individuals in question had belonged.”⁶

The Bishop had been so distressed about the lack of social and religious discipline in New South Wales (NSW) that he returned to England and garnered Church hierarchical assistance to bring qualified ministers to Australia to spread out into regional areas. To all intents and purposes, they were really bringing the gospel to far lands as missionaries. Clearly, Bishop Broughton (portrait left) felt the current population of NSW were heathens who lacked all social graces and had no religious leanings. This is reinforced by the fact that Scone had one church and many hotels. One can imagine the difficulties Rev John had in taming this crowd of reprobates and bringing them back into the fold. Fortunately, at the time, there were some substantial pastoral properties already established, including the historic *Belltrees*, founded by the White family in 1831. The landed gentry may have brought a bit of civility which Broughton found did not exist amongst the population of Scone.



It has been reported that there was a small population of aboriginals living in the area at the time of the Morse family’s residency in Scone and they seemed to have been quite passive and friendly. one of Morse’s staff apparently reported hearing the aboriginals chanting at night.

Rev John Morse’s appointment as Rector to the parish of Scone was made on the 19th September 1839 ‘to reside in the Parsonage house there’ with an area which extended from Merton (now Denman) to Murrurundi. Prior to 1839, Scone had been visited by the Colonial Chaplain at Newcastle, Rev C.P.N. Wilton, the chaplain at Maitland, the Rev G.K. Rusden and, for a brief period, by Rev W. Stack of West Maitland. The parsonage and church were completed in 1840.⁷

Sixteen years earlier, in 1823, Allen Cunningham had been the first European to travel into the Scone area after leaving Bathurst to journey to the Hunter River and then on to the Liverpool Ranges. Bathurst was the first inland township to be established and was renowned as a pastoral area, where sheep and cattle were predominant. The Scone area had been first visited by Henry Dangar who surveyed the area in 1824 on his way to the Liverpool Ranges. However, he retreated when he was attacked by Aboriginals just west of Murrurundi.

⁶ <https://www.scone.com.au/history/historicalevents/consecrationofstlukeschurchyard/>

The St Aubin's Arms and store were built next to the road in 1836 and formed the birthplace of the current township of Scone. The St Aubin's Arms still stands in the township today and is a private residence. In 1840, when the first Anglican Church was built, the population was only 63. By 1881, when the railway came to Scone, the population had grown to 214 and, in 1888, Scone was declared a municipality.⁸

The centenary publication of *St Luke's Parish of Scone 1840-1940* contains an excellent photographic reproduction 'of what must have been a thoroughly comfortable country home'.

The Rev John must have arrived in Australia with a considerable sum of money as within three months of his arrival he made a significant purchase. Records show that in December 1839, Rev John purchased for 1,000 pounds sterling a property in Sydney town on Hunter Street, bordering Castlereagh Street.

⁸ <https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/scone-nsw#>.

There are many newspaper references to Rev John Morse which range from being a strong disciplinarian who punished a servant, to a white haired feisty and portly old gentleman.

An article in *The Scone Advocate*, November 1932, reads:

John Morse, the first incumbent of the parish, who later also visited Murrurundi, went into occupation of the parsonage in 1840, and it was in the same year that the construction of the original St. Luke's Church was completed.

Of the Rev Morse the late Judge Docker, a native of Thornthwaite, in the course of an interesting article 'contributed to the Advocate' in November, 1920, commented: 'I was too young to be present at the consecration of the original St Luke's Church; in fact, my clear recollections start from the year 1846, when I was four years old; but I well remember many who were present on that occasion. I still recall the Rev Morse as a portly, fine-looking, elderly man.

In those days we used to drive nearly every Sunday the eleven miles from Thornthwaite to the church in a heavy barouche, which my father had brought over with him from England, drawn by a pair of horses. It had no brake and, the descent with (sic) many steep hills, the hind wheels had to be locked with a steel block.

After the morning service we used to stay for dinner at the parsonage before returning home. I can still picture Mr Morse in his white surplice reading the service and retiring to the vestry and re-appearing in a black gown to preach his sermon. I remember once him reproving me for talking in the church. He said I must not talk, but that I might sing when other people did. The musical instrument was a seraphine, an ancient variety of the modern ware harmonium. It was played by one of Mr Morse's daughters, who afterwards became Mrs Coles-Child, the later incumbent. Mr Morse had two sons, George and Henry, who had station properties in the New England district, and three daughters.

Rev John Morse lived in a period of disciplinarians, when, the exigencies demanded men of stern characters and actions. Perusing records of the period, by way of exemplifying this statement, we find that on one occasion the Rev Gentleman found it necessary to reprimand one of his servants for some misdemeanour or other, and eventually had him brought before the local magistracy who saw fit to impose a salutary sentence. Some days later, the border police, a unit largely 'comprising ticket-of-leave men who had found favour with the authorities because of their good conduct', brought a prisoner to Scone from the Liverpool Plains country. During their short stay in the village they were apprised of the Rev Morse's action. Calling at the parsonage, they interviewed the minister, who admitted having had one of the servant's punished. The visitors thereupon set up a Court of themselves, and immediately sentenced John Morse to receive the same measure of punishment, which they administered personally without any further argument. Such were the happenings in the dim and distant past of Scone.⁹

⁹ Trove *The Scone Advocate* (NSW: 1887-1954) Tue 1 November 1932, Page 1 - Rev. John Morse

Rev John would have had to be strong and dominant in order to control this unruly population. He was possibly quite a gutsy and spirited chap because, in 1841, he is known to have protested against the establishment of a Catholic church in Scone. During his time in Scone, Rev John purchased the property *Balala*, in the New England area, for his son George. He may well have sold the property in Sydney in order to release funds to purchase *Balala*.

An inscription on the memorial brass in St Luke's Parish Church Scone reads: "Thanks offering to God for a brother's deliverance from shipwreck 26th October, 1859." The identity of the brother was a mystery, which went unsolved for many years, until the *Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society Journal* published this article in 1961. The story went like this:

On Friday, 16th August 1859, the ship *Royal Charter* left Hobson's Bay Victoria for Liverpool with 388 passengers, a crew of 100 and a cargo of more than £700,000 of gold. Captain Taylor had made very good time on the way out and the voyage home was uneventful until after the ship left Queenstown, Ireland where 13 passengers were landed. On 28th October, a fierce storm blew up and after passing Holyhead the weather grew worse and Capt. and crew realised the position was dangerous as night fell, for the storm increased in fury and the coast of Wales provided no safe shelter. Both anchors were dropped and both ropes broke in the gale, which battered the *Royal Charter*.

Mountainous seas tossed her closer to shore. The ship's guns were fired and the awakened village people who gathered on the sandy beach of Moolfra (sic) Bay. The lifeboat house, a mile away, could send no boat out on such a night. The boatswain's mate of the *Royal Charter*, a Maltese, jumped overboard with a rope in an attempt to reach the shore but had to be hauled back on board – then another named Rogers made three attempts and succeeded – village people made the rope fast, a hauser chair was rigged with 16 members of crew who came ashore to work it and get the passengers off. But to no avail against the sea and storm. The ship grounded and broke in half.

Of the three saloon passengers (in the early hours of 16th October 1859) one who survived the wreck was William Henry Morse, brother of Mrs C. Child and son of Rev J. Morse. He said at the inquest that he had gone up on deck at the first shock and had dived overboard as the ship sank – he swam towards the shore and was washed up high on the beach by the waves. William Henry was a magistrate returning to England after a family visit in Australia.

The Times of London, 1st November 1859¹⁰, published a full account but, as the ship's papers were lost, there was no list of passengers' names given. Not until Saturday, 7th January 1860, did the people of Sydney receive the news of the wreck and the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a full report and the *Maitland Mercury* a few days later (obtained from records held by the Mitchell Library Sydney). Of the 500 people on board only 41 survived. This tragedy was so immense and had such a profound effect on people that Charles Dickens wrote of it his book *The Uncommercial Traveller*.¹¹

This terrible disaster was one of many during the Force-12 cyclone which swept the English coast in October, 1859.

The night of 25th October 1859 ranks as one of the most devastating in maritime history, a story¹² forgotten in Australia. The west coast of Britain was struck with a Force-12 hurricane of such ferocity that 133 ships were sunk, another 90 badly damaged and at least 800 lives lost. 4th November 2009.¹³

¹⁰ *The Times*, London 1859

¹¹ *Uncommercial Traveller* C. Dickens

¹² *The Australian Newspaper* 2009

¹³ Royal Storm https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Charter_Storm

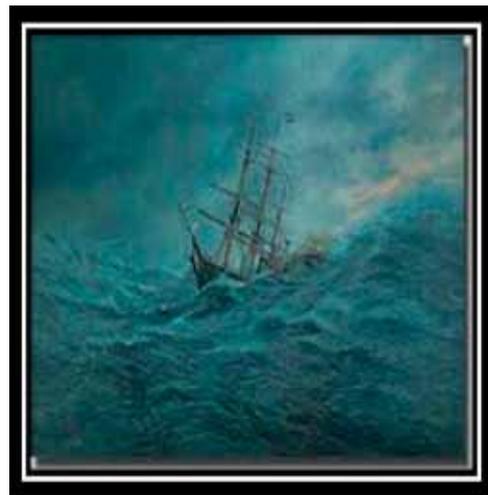
News of the Royal Charter's sinking took a long time to reach Australia – one Melbourne paper recorded the ship's safe arrival, possibly based on news that it had reached Ireland – and was greeted with shock and disbelief when a later mail ship brought the truth. There was more drama to come. The English press accused the Welsh villagers of stealing the gold, ignoring the fact most of the bullion was recovered. Folksinger Russell recalls that it was a beautiful barmaid named Nikki, married to the Moelfre ironmonger, who told him of Lewis's fate. As the gale raged, Lewis waited his turn to take the hawser to shore. He could see his father standing on a rock. The old man recognised him. They shouted out to each other but their words were whipped away by the wind. Newspaper accounts report that the young sailor cried out: "Oh, I am come home to die."¹⁴

Another witness said Lewis made it to the shore, only to be swept away by another wave before his father could reach him. His body washed ashore the next day, not far from his father's house¹⁵

The mystery of the dedication on the stained-glass window in St Luke's Church Scone was finally revealed to be to William brother of Rev John Morse. The amazing story of survival finally reached Australian shores many months after the tragic event. More than 133 ships were sunk during that storm and another 90 badly damaged with the number of deaths estimated at over 800. The chances of survival were remote, it is no wonder Rev John considered his brother's survival as a miracle and deserving of a stained-glass window in his honour.



The Royal Charter - artist unknown



The Royal Charter - artist unknown

¹⁴ *The Australian Newspaper* 2009

¹⁵ <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/on-a-fatal-voyage/>

The path which has known the feet of worshippers for 120 years curves to the right near the belfry door of St. Luke's. Here in the shelter of the church is the grave of Elizabeth Helen Mary, wife of its first clergyman who died 17th January 1851 at the age of 61 years. Her husband did not stay long after her death. In February of the following year he retired from his charge and on 11th April 1852 he died and was buried at Christ Church Newcastle.¹⁶



Helen Elizabeth Mary Morse
Birth – unknown
Death – 27 January 1851
Burial – St Luke's Anglican Churchyard Scone

¹⁶ Scone Historical Society



CHAPTER 2

BALALA STATION, URALLA, NSW

The New England property *Balala* of 9,600 acres was taken up by George Morse and Thomas Tourle in the early 1840s. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 7th July 1846 records the marriage of Thomas Tourle Esq of *Balala*, New England, late of Landport, Sussex to Helen Martha Emma, eldest daughter of the Rev John Morse of Scone – late of Huntley, Gloucester.

Thomas Tourle travelled to Bathurst which was the centre of the agricultural industry at the time. Here he set about getting a ‘thorough knowledge of Sheep Farming and Shearing’.¹⁷ Satisfied, he had acquired sufficient information, he purchased 850 sheep. He then travelled up to the New England region where George Morse was running the property *Balala*. Keen to set up in this area with George Morse he returned to Bathurst and set upon going back to *Balala* with an entourage which included ‘1,218 sheep, 11 dogs, 13 bullocks, 2 drays, 7 men, 3 women and 1 child.’¹⁸ It must have been a tedious and exhausting trip, taking almost seven weeks to complete. Thomas Tourle’s diaries record this journey as pleasant - sleeping under the stars with possum fur covering them at night. The article goes on to describe the journey Thomas Tourle took, via Wellington, to bring his stock back to *Balala*. Many of the names he mentioned in his notes are a mystery because he used words like ‘Breza’ instead of Breeza, ‘Weeres Creek’ as Werris Creek and ‘Corobolba’ as Currabubula.

The success of their enterprise was most likely due to the gold mines being opened at Rocky River and the pastoralists supplying the miners with meat and other provisions. “The Rocky River goldfield became the richest field in NSW, producing over 30,000 ounces of gold in 1863. But a series of wet years from 1863 through to 1865, followed by drought in 1866-67, led to some claims being abandoned, with small groups the most vulnerable.”¹⁹ Uralla was also famous for the local bushranger (Thunderbolt), who reportedly stole horses from the Morses. In addition, on 9th November 1863, two men bailed up stockmen employed by Messrs Morse and Tourle of *Balala*.²⁰



Thunderbolts Rock Uralla

¹⁷ *Historic Homesteads* – page 156

¹⁸ *Historic Homesteads* – page 156

¹⁹ <http://www.uralla.nsw.gov.au/>

²⁰ <http://www.thunderboltbushranger.com.au/timeline-1835-1863>

According to Uralla Heritage Inventory, *Balala* is historically linked to early New England pioneers George Morse and Thomas Tourle. It goes on to state that “the complex is an example of a head station with its group of buildings that was the centre of the pastoral station.”²¹

There are four buildings constructed around a central courtyard:

1. Original stringy bark slab building, about 40 feet by 24 feet with verandahs bringing dimensions to about 52 feet by 38 feet. The linings are lath and plaster, pressed metal ceilings and boarded ceilings which have replaced the original calico; hipped roof of shingles in position under galvanised iron of 1904 and there is a cellar beneath the hallway.
2. Uncoursed stone building, possibly 1850-1860, basalt and granite, 21 feet by 29 feet contains a bedroom, dressing room and bathroom. The verandahs bring the dimensions to about 33 feet by 42 feet; situated off the north-eastern corner.
3. Kitchen wing. Weatherboards replaced an earlier slab and bark kitchen in the 1890s; situated on the north western corner.
4. Schoolroom built of slabs with a large classroom plus two smaller rooms for the governess. The building measures 30 feet by 24 feet with verandahs bringing the dimensions to about 42 feet by 30 feet. This building is situated across the courtyard opposite the rear of the building. On the granite rise behind the homestead are various outbuildings, some constructed of stringybark nearly 8 feet long, 12 inches wide and 2 or 3 inches thick. They include a granary with loft, a blacksmith's shop, and a building containing a butcher's shop, storeroom and storekeeper's quarters. Towards the top of the slope is the shearing shed. A private cemetery is located nearby. The track between the granary and the homestead still marks the line of the old Uralla-Kingstown-Bundarra coachroad.²²

George Morse and Thomas Tourle had the original homestead of just four rooms built by splitters and fencers, eventually adding many sheds and other buildings including the shearing shed.

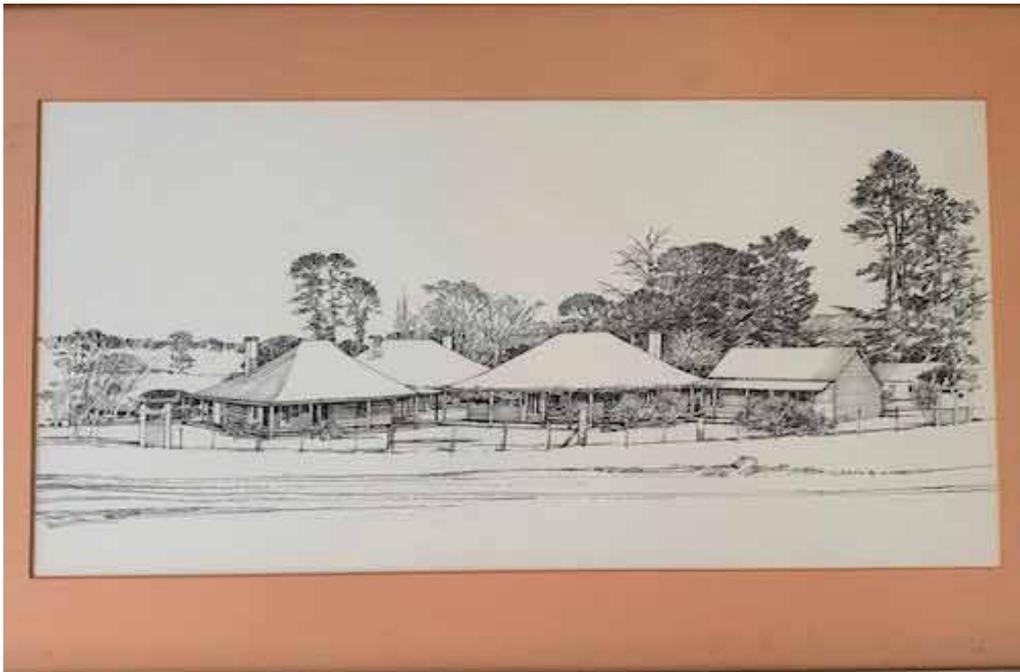
It seems that May, George's wife, and her daughters were admired and respected for their interests in teaching young aboriginal girls to cook and sew.

The homestead was overlooking Roumalla Creek and “was the setting of lawns, garden plots, pines, poplars and elms. Willows line the nearby creek with evidence of wisteria, grape vines, ivy and Virginia creeper on the various verandahs.”²³ Undoubtedly this English family were determined to bring England to the New England and planted English gardens, imported dogs and game birds to remind them of home.

²¹ Uralla Heritage Inventory 2013

²² <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails>

²³ Uralla Heritage Inventory 2015

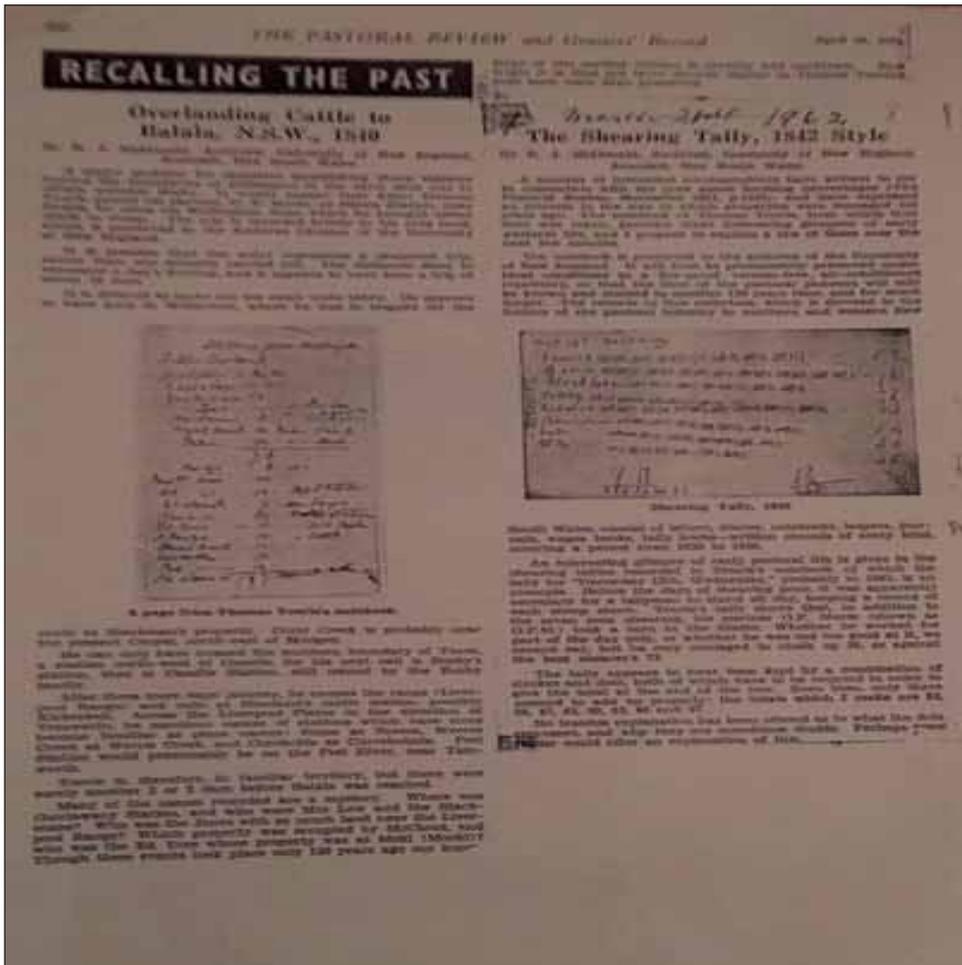


Drawing and painting by Ron Davis – *Balala* circa 1800s



The Morse/Tourle partnership had done well *Balala*, expanding to a staggering amount of land and number of sheep, with 99,000 acres and shearing 44,000 sheep. Wool prices were soaring in Britain with the importation of Australian wool which could be grown all year round. It is no wonder that Morse and Tourle did well with these high wool prices: the figures skyrocketed to 175,000 pounds (79,450 kilograms) in 1821, 400,000 pounds (181,600 kilograms) in 1823, 1,100,000 pounds (499,400 kilograms) in 1830 (after the reduction in duties), 3,693,000 pounds (1,676,220 kilograms) in 1836.²⁴

There is another article in *The Pastoral Review* of April 1962, which describes the shearing tallies recorded at *Balala* in 1842, which were hard to decipher. Apparently, George Morse was not an expert with the blades and had a very low number of sheep shorn. According to Thomas Tourle's notebook George either didn't shear for the whole day or he was so inexperienced that he couldn't keep up. The notes show that George had shorn only 36 whilst one of the other shearers had shorn 73.



There are many diaries, articles and anecdotes which survive, all stored in the University of New England archives which refer to the early lives in the New England of the Morse and Tourle families. *Balala* was eventually sold to Richard Hudson in 1880, whose family held the property for four generations. Much reduced in size it was sold 130 years later.

²⁴ <https://www.woolwise.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/01.4-Australian-Wool-Industry-Overview-Notes.pdf>



Balala - 1800s



Balala - 2010



Balala 2020 lovingly restored by Richard & Sarah Daugherty

Balala is heritage listed with the National Trust and is also listed on the Uralla Councils local environmental plan.²⁵

More recently Richard and Sarah Daugherty purchased *Balala*. *The Land* newspaper headlines their achievements by stating “resurrecting historic *Balala* station involves effort above and below”.²⁶ The article went on to say that “*Balala* station is yielding interesting results regarding livestock production.”

It is a tribute to a younger generation like Richard and Sarah who with a great vision have embarked on an enterprise that completely turns around how the property was managed in the past. Turning vast paddocks into smaller rotational paddocks and concentrating on soil management and water sustainability has seen *Balala* now producing record prices for their wool and transforming *Balala*'s heritage wool brand as “MT” over diamond ‘which is meaningful as ‘MT’ stands for Morse and Tourle who first established *Balala* in 1839.

After 180 years (1839 – 2020) *Balala* and Morse and Tourle live on in the New England area of NSW.

27

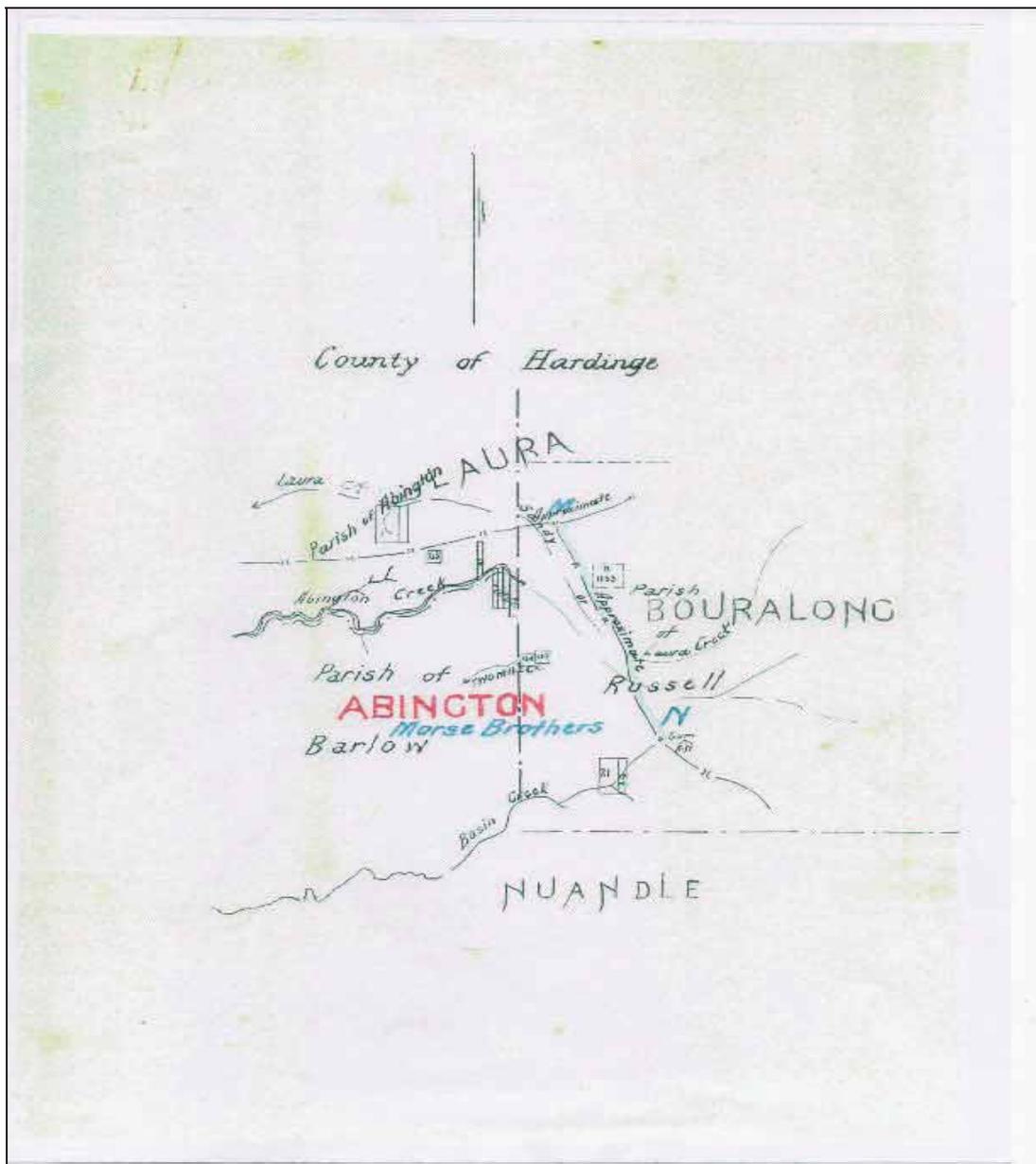


²⁵ The Land – Domain Rural April 8 2010

²⁶ The Land – 10 Sept 2018

²⁷ Photographs by Erica Townsend

After making such a success at *Balala*, the Morse brothers Henry and George purchased nearby *Abington Station*.



Abington land boundaries – supplied by University of New England, Armidale



CHAPTER 3

ABINGTON STATION, BUNDARRA, NSW

Ann Harris records in her book *Old Stations on the Gwydir*:

Morse and Tourle must have done well at *Balala* when the depression ended because on 7th May 1852 George and Henry Morse, trading as Morse Bros, were able to buy *Abington* from Alex Barlow. According to William Gardner, the purchase price was £1,200 and no stock was included in the deal.

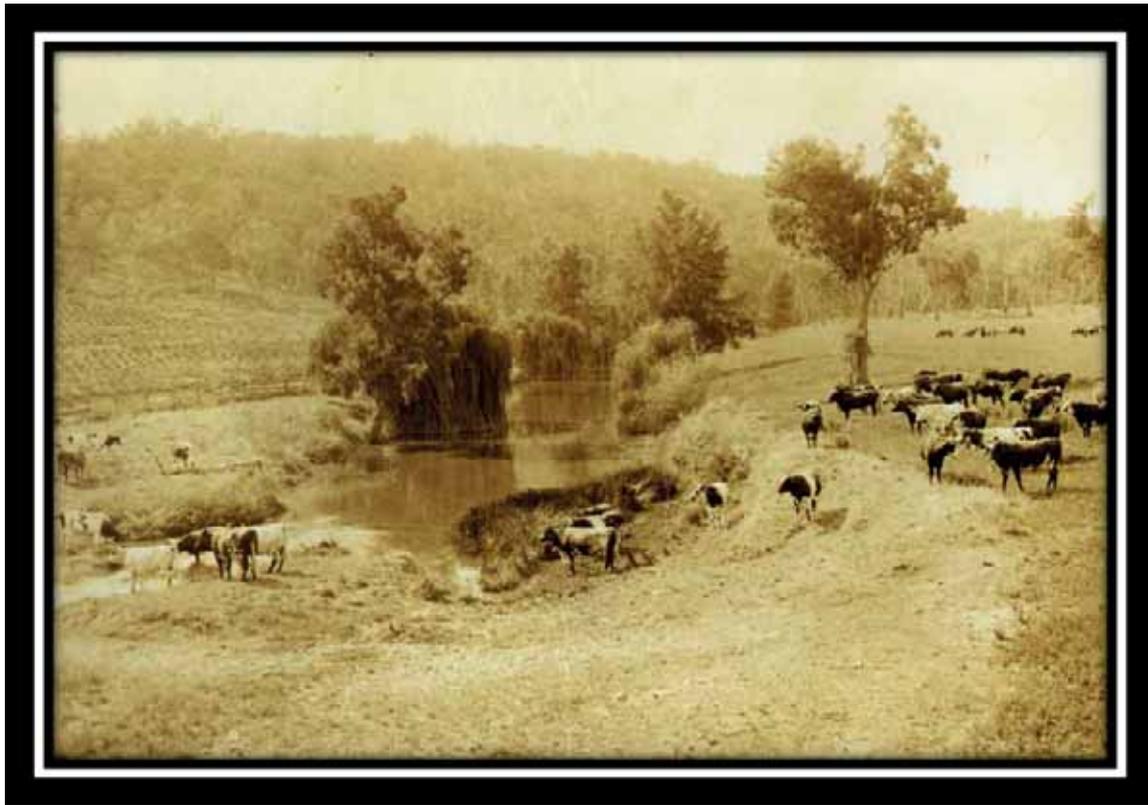
The area of *Abington*, at that time was about 53,000 acres and the Morses' only title to the land was an Occupation Licence, for which they paid (in 1854 and 1855) £30 a year. They also paid a poll tax on their stock; in 1856 the place was carrying 14,500 sheep, 400 head of cattle and 15 horses.

The brothers moved into the original owner's (Barlow) old homestead. They brought with them hares and pheasants, which they intended to breed so they could have some sport with their friends. They planted hawthorn hedges on the flats below the homestead and put up paling fences along Abington Creek to keep their game birds safe.

A vineyard was planted across the creek from the homestead and later more vines were put in on the eastern slope of a hill further up the creek. The shadows of the old terraces where the vines grew can still be seen along the hillside.

In about 1855, a man called Dezius, born in Frankfurt in the Rheine district of Germany, immigrated to Australia with his wife and, on arrival, seems to have travelled directly to the Morses at *Abington*.

He was experienced in vineyard work and, although he left *Abington* after only a few years to go to the Rocky River diggings, it does seem likely that he may have had an expert hand in the planting of the vines and setting up the gear needed for wine-making.



*Abington showing the creek and vineyards*²⁸



George Morse

From this time on George Morse always made his own wine and, in 1876, the Agricultural Society of New South Wales awarded a handsome bronze medal to “Messrs Morse Bros of Uralla for wine sent to be judged in Sydney.”

George Morse’s wife May did not take kindly to the country life and she moved to their other homestead in Armidale, a beautiful home called *Esrom* – Morse spelt backwards. Nearby was another cottage owned by the Morses referred to as the ‘hen house’ where the Morse girls lived, played, attended dances and were a part of the society of Armidale.

²⁸ Photograph supplied by Wendy Peters, whose great grandparents worked on *Abington*

The Morses who resided at *Abington* and *Esrom* would have enjoyed the grand lifestyle which applied to the landed gentry. Staff would have taken care of cooking and laundry in the households and farm labourers would have assisted on the land. At 53,000 acres it would have taken a lot of farm hands to manage the stock. Shepherds were used as it would have been impossible to fence these vast areas. From the original homestead, the buildings and cottages spread, including a shearing shed built in 1850s, a granary and workmen's accommodation. There was a time when there were over 100 people living at *Abington*. Land was cleared and trees felled, and their massive slabs were used to construct some of the many buildings around the property.

This quote comes from the *Unlocking Regional Memory* online research archive:

By 1856, the number of cattle on the property had been reduced to 400, while the number of sheep had increased to 14,500. After George was married to May Sperling in 1872, a new brick building with a corrugated iron roof and shingled verandah was erected nearby. It was surrounded by nearly an acre of gardens replete with a stream, rustic bridges and fruit trees. Behind the homestead were the station's work buildings: stables with cobbled floors, a coach house, smithy, granary, pigeon house and stores. There was also a wine cellar, stockyards, a footbridge and further up the hill, the woolshed.²⁹

According to *Farm*, November 1985 issue:

It wasn't until 1850, when George Morse and his family arrived; an area on Abington Creek close to the existing homestead was selected for a house. It was at this time, too, the farm played host to one of its more infamous visitors. Thunderbolt (the bushranger), is said to have called in and borrowed a few horses from the stables down near the creek. Eventually the Morses also moved on.³⁰

It is interesting to note that George and his family living in Uralla and Armidale were a sophisticated and prosperous family. They appear in photographs very well dressed, stylish and urbane. It is known that when the gold rush started labourers abandoned the pastoral properties for the gold fields, making it difficult for pastoralists to manage their land. May had long held that she preferred living in Amridale rather than on the property.

An article in *Unlocking Regional Memory* indicates the following:

In 1852, there were only a thousand head of cattle on *Abington* but more than 10,000 sheep. That same year, Barlow, keen to focus on a nearby property, sold *Abington* for the handsome sum of £1,200 to William Henry and George Phillips Morse. The Morse brothers, trading under that name, took the same approach as Barlow and developed *Abington* as a sheep station. By 1856, the number of cattle on the property had been reduced to 400, while the number of sheep had increased to 14,500.

They at first lived in Barlow's old homestead, but after George was married Mary Sperling on 1 March 1872, a new brick building with a corrugated iron roof and shingled verandah was erected nearby. It was surrounded by nearly an acre of gardens replete with a stream, rustic bridges and fruit trees. Behind the homestead were the station's work buildings: stables with cobbled floors, a coach house, smithy, granary, pigeon house and stores. There was also a wine cellar, stockyards, a footbridge and further up the hill the woolshed. The Morses were keen viticulturalists and a vineyard was planted across the creek from the homestead. From that time on, George Morse always bottled his own wine and in 1876 the Agricultural Society of New South Wales awarded the brothers a handsome broze medal for the product developed on

²⁹ <http://www.nswera.net.au/biogs/UNE0590b.htm>

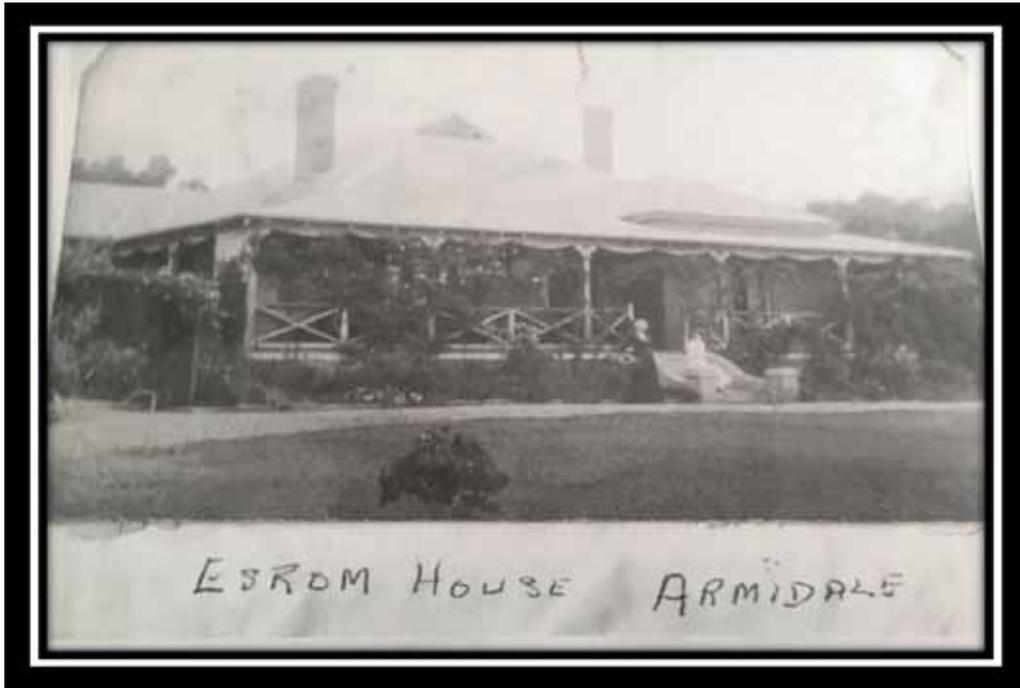
³⁰ *Farm* November 1985

Abington. After the passage of the Robertson Land Acts in 1861, George and Henry Morse bought small areas of freehold land around the homestead but for the most part continued the practice of leasing Crown land. Their failure to invest in the run resulted in parts of the property being selected during the 1870s and 1880s. The uncertainty created by these circumstances, Henry's death in 1885, and, most importantly, the worsening economic crisis, convinced George and May Morse that they should sell up. By chance, F.R. White of *Boooloominbah*, Armidale, was dining with the family in 1891 and during the course of the meal asked, 'Would you sell this place, Mr Morse?' Before George could answer, Mary replied from the other end of the table, 'Yes we would, Mr White, do you want to buy it?'

Thus, in 1891, F.R. White purchased *Abington* at a cost of £11,000. George and May Morse, with their eight children, left shortly thereafter and built a house in Armidale.³¹ Approximately \$2m AUD in today's values.

They built a house called Esrom which was a beautiful elegant home with coach house and maid's quarters, it still stands today. In addition, the Morse's owned another property which was nickname the 'hen house' this is where the Morse 'girls' resided.

³¹ <http://www.nswera.net.au/biogs/UNE0590b.htm>



George and Mary Morse had eight children (standing: left to right): Ella, Frederick, May, Alice; (seated) Edith, George, and May holding Basil, Mrs Sperling (Mary's mother); (front) Ivan and Henry.

At the same time, George and Henry owned *Abington*, the Morse and Tourle Partnership held *Wolla Wolla* (Coonamble) between 1873 and 1884 but neither lived on the property because they had the two other properties in the New England district. They put in many improvements including the original homestead built in the mid-1870s, which had a slab-sided underground tank and a dam also was built. The run was subdivided into four paddocks with six wire and pine post fences. It had been a cattle-run but as their interest was purely wool, they ran sheep.



Wolla Wolla ³²

In July 1888, Morse & Tourle were awarded silver medals for “Best 2 strong combing ewes 1 and under 2 years” by the Coonamble P & A Association (see photo below).



³² Wolla Wolla – Coonamble Historical Society

Morse, Frederick Charles (1874–1924)

Frederick Charles Morse: born at 'Balala', ca.30km southwest of Armidale, NSW, on 10 July 1874; died at Collaroy, near Sydney, NSW, on 26 January 1924.

Parents

George Phillips Morse: born at Blakeney, Gloucester, England, on 22 September 1822; emigrated to Australia, departing from Plymouth, England on 13 May 1839 with his parents on the *Lady Raffles*, arriving at Botany Bay (Sydney) on 12 September 1839; died at Armidale, NSW, on 11 December 1908.

Mary Morse [*née* Sperling]: born at Saint Peter, Bedford, England, on 17 August 1846; emigrated to Australia, departing from Plymouth, England on 1 September 1869 on the *Parramatta*, arriving at Sydney, on 27 November 1869; married at St Lukes, (Waratah) Newcastle, NSW, on 1 March 1872; died at Armidale, NSW, on 22 August 1928.

Children

Ella Valentine Rickman [*née* Morse] (born 14 February 1873, died 6 October 1958)

Frederick Charles Morse (born 10 July 1874, died 26 January 1924)

Marion May Hays [*née* Morse] (born 30 March 1876; died 7 August 1910)

Alice Maud Lawrance [*née* Morse] (born 18 July 1878; died 27 May 1956)

Edith Madeline Hays [*née* Morse] (born 12 June 1880; died 11 December 1972)

Henry Jakeman Morse (born 8 April 1882; died 23 November 1961)

John Nourse Morse (born 17 April 1885; died 11 June 1959)

Basil Sterling Morse (born 3 April 1889; died 23 October 1962)

Frederick Charles Morse

Wife

Laura Olive Morse [*née* Tourle]: born at 'Balala', ca.30km southwest of Armidale, NSW, on 14 March 1877; married at St Peter's Anglican Cathedral, Armidale, NSW, on 9 May 1906; died at Mogil Mogil, NSW, on 14 August 1953.

Children

Sidney George Morse (born 23 January 1908; died 9 August 1990)

Frederick Bruce Morse (born 21 January 1910; died 12 September 1969)

Olive Kathleen May Wood [*née* Morse] (born 19 September 1911; died 8 August 1985)

Henry Tourle Morse (born 14 August 1914; died 8 August 2010)



CHAPTER 4

COOCALLA STATION, GARAH, NSW

On leaving school Frederick Charles Morse (1874-1924: second child of George Phillips and Mary Morse) worked on the land and for many years managing *Bundy*, the well-known family property, some 30km northwest of Coonamble.

The Morse/Tourle partnership was to continue, when Frederick married Laura Olive Tourle on 9 May 1906 in a ceremony at St Peter's Anglican Cathedral, Armidale. This marriage consolidated the continuing of the Morse/Tourle partnership which had started on the trip from England in 1839. *The Armidale Chronicle* gave a glowing report of the joining together of these two families in marriage.

On Wednesday evening last, St Peter's Anglican Cathedral was the scene of a very pretty wedding, which occasioned a considerable amount of local interest when Mr Frederick Charles Morse, eldest son of Mr and Mrs G.P. Morse and Miss Laura Olive Tourle, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Sidney Tourle, knelt at the hymnal alter and were joined in the bonds of holy wedlock by the Ven Archdeacon Lewis. It may be incidentally mentioned that the bride and bridegroom are the direct descendants of the original holders of the New England pastoral properties, *Balala* and *Abington*, as well as *Bundy Station* in the west, which they still own and which is under the present management of Mr F.C. Morse. In the early days, the title of 'Morse and Tourle' was of household usage, as numerous readers will remember. The bride was attired in a charming costume of ivory, mescaline silk with lace yolk. She also wore a Limerick lace veil (which has been in the possession of the Tourle family for 200 years, a marvel of artistic design and durability) and a necklace of pearls and emeralds (a gift from the bridegroom) and a resplendent shower bouquet.³³

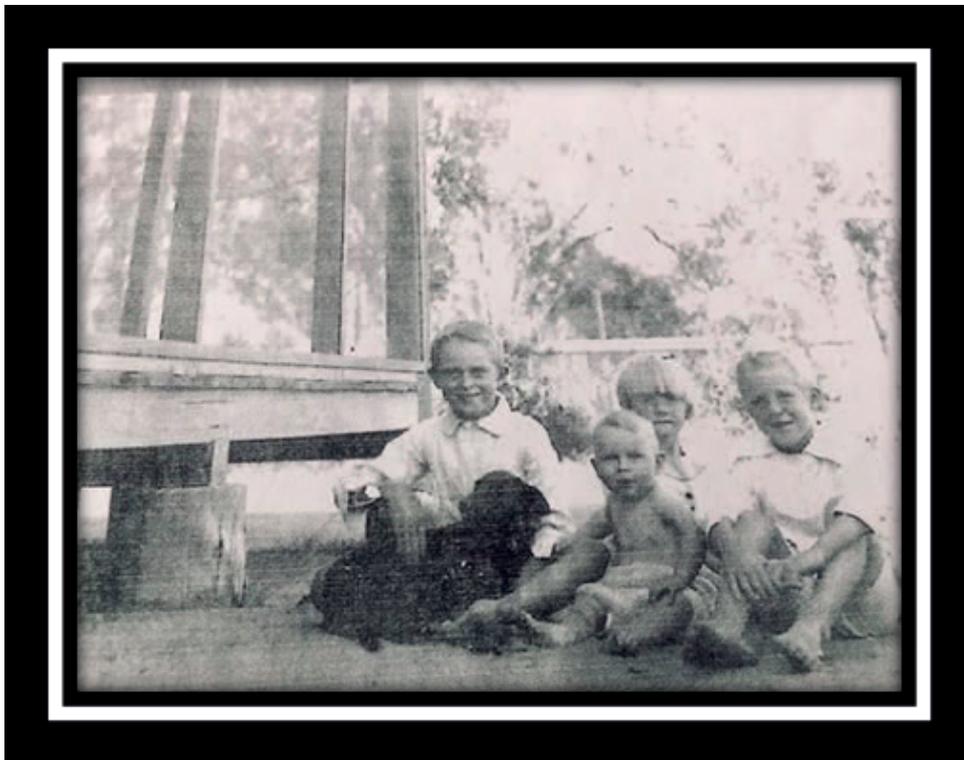
The article goes on to describe the bridesmaids' becoming dresses, the wedding breakfast, what the ladies of note wore and then went on to list the names of the guests and the wedding gifts given by them. After their wedding Frederick and Laura went to live on *Bundy*, Coonamble.

³³ Armidale Chronicle 1906

In 1912, Frederick Morse bought the property *Coocalla*, which was located 35 miles west of Moree at Garah. It is in this area that he really launches into a very avid collection spree. It is where Frederick Morse devoted much of his time, collecting eggs and photographing birds in the wetlands or the watercourse, as it is known. *Coocalla* remains much the same today as it was all those years ago. There has been little development or farming so the trees and shrubs on the property would probably be the same now as they were in Fredrick's time.

Frederick and Laura had four children, Sydney George (1908), Frederick Bruce (1910), Olive Kathleen (1911) and Henry Tourle (1914), the last three being born at *Coocalla*. It appears they had an idyllic childhood, following their father on his bird-watching and egg-collecting expeditions, as well as learning the art of blowing eggs. At the appropriate age they went to boarding school at Glen Innes SCEGS, as it was then known.

Consequently, this family of children grew up knowing, loving and engaging in the activities surrounding their father's interest in birds, eggs and nature. In many instances, Frederick was reported as being a loving family man and, in his own diaries he records many outings with his family.



Frederick and Laura's children (left to right): Sydney, Olive, Henry and Bruce, and the family dog.



Buildings at *Coocalla* - photographs by the author in 2009



The Morse kids at *Coocalla* (left to right) Henry, Bruce, Sydney and Olive.

Comparing the children's attire (above) to the photograph of Frederick's family (page 24), it is clear that their parent's financial circumstances was clearly not as prosperous. Perhaps Frederick spent so much time pursuing his interests as a naturalist there was no time left to run the property.

Fredrick Morse was an excellent photographer; the many beautiful photographs which have appeared in *The Emu* (the official organ of the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union) indicate his skill in that discipline. His observations on the *Birds of the Watercourse* (Moree) and other articles were written under the nom-de-plume *Licacole* which means 'any of numerous wading birds that frequent mostly seashores and estuaries'. It is derived from the Late Latin word 'micola' and means living in mud.

To understand and appreciate his photography is to comprehend that he would have had to climb trees, sit under cover for hours and wait for the appropriate picture subject to appear before him. His young sons, Sydney and Bruce, would have been expert at shinning up trees to find the nests of particular birds and to be placed in a position to either gather clutches of eggs or take photographs. Egg collectors had to be fearless climbers and used ropes, ladders, and other devices to obtain their prize clutch.

Frederick recalls a time after photographing all day in the swamp land he dropped his camera into the water! All those photographs were lost. It was not only the time taken in photographing birds; it was also the process of development. Fred most likely had his own 'dark room' and all the equipment necessary to develop his films. One of his contemporaries was Sydney W. Jackson who described the art of climbing as being dangerous when using ropes, poles and climbing spurs. They also cut into trees with tomahawks to form steps and often used a boson's chair. They first fired a small rope with a lead weight at one end and pulled it down to the ground; they then attached a larger, thicker rope and hauled it up to the desired branch of the tree. Searching for hawks' and eagles' nests was hazardous due to the height of the trees they nested in.

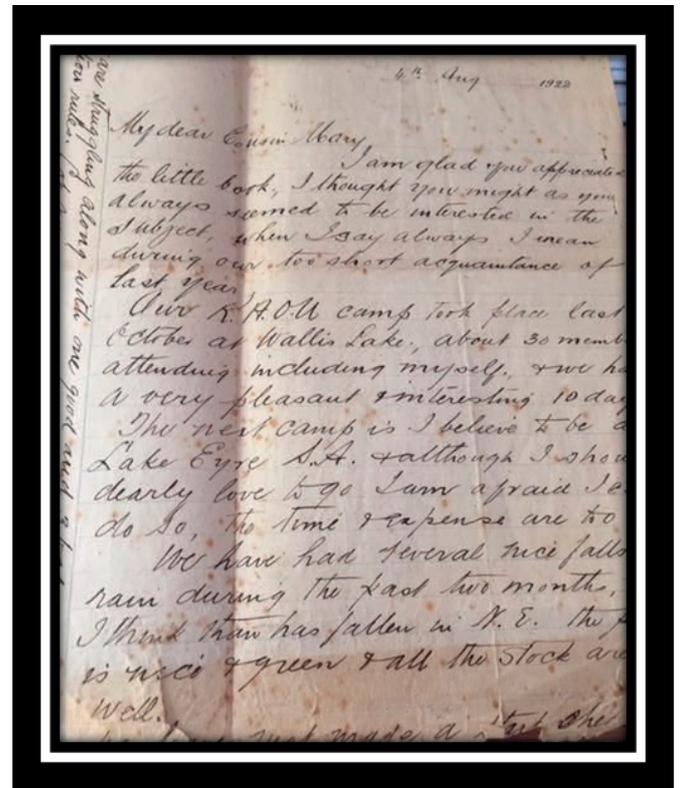
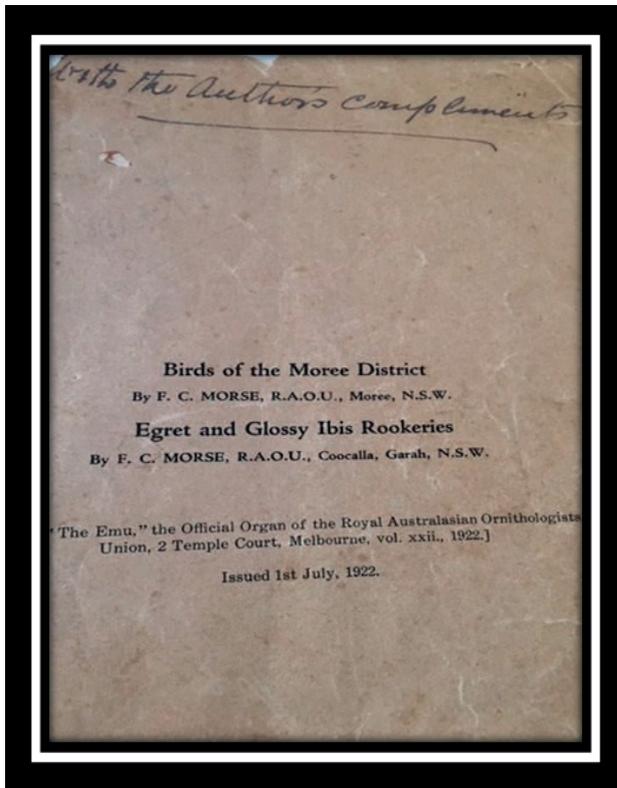


Wedge-tailed Eagle's eyrie

In 1922, Frederick wrote to his cousin Mary [after sending her a copy of his little book *Birds of the Moree District* by F.C. Morse, RAOU Moree, NSW. He explains to her his trip to the Wallis Lakes with 30 members attending including 'myself'. He then mentions the next excursion for an RAOU member was to Lake Eyre, South Australia and wrote 'although I would dearly love to go I am afraid I can't do so, the time and expense is too great'.

Not far from *Coocalla Station* lies the Gwydir wetlands which were an immense expanse of swamps inundated with *Polygonum* bushes, bulrushes and swamp grasses. It would have been easy to get lost in these vast expanses. In the early 1900s, there would have been no telephoto lenses, so the photographs would have been taken very close to the subject. This would have amounted to hours in camouflage so eventually the birds would have become used to his proximity. It would also have entailed climbing many trees to reach good vantage points. In those days the vegetation was quite different to what it is today.

The Gwydir Wetlands are known to be a major site for waterbird breeding in Australia (Morse 1922; McCosker 1996), and they also provide habitat for hundreds of species of animals and plants. The Gwydir Wetlands are part of the traditional country of the Gamilaroi people and were an important location for traditional Aboriginal settlement (NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water 2010).³⁴



Front Cover of *Birds of the Moree District* and letter to his cousin, Mary

³⁴ https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/archived/guide_pbp/Gwydir-region.pdf



Amongst the rushes –F.C. Morse

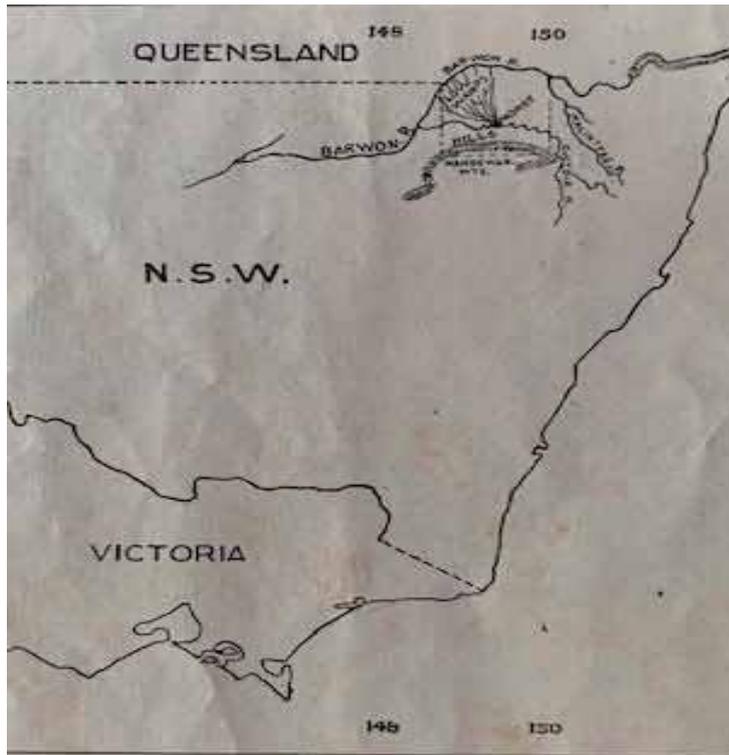
The first page of F.C. Morse's 'little book' describes:

The district of Moree is situated in the extreme northwest boundary of NSW. It comprises an area of 6,870 square miles. With the exception of the eastern boundary it is all flat country, varying from large open plains to dense forests of Belar (*Casuarina*) and Brigalow. The Gwydir River runs through the centre of the district and, after passing the town spreads out in numerous narrow channels and broad swamps, the water eventually finding its way through these to the Barwon River, 70 miles further west.

Owing to the diverse nature of the country – hills, thick forests and large swamps – birdlife is varied and numerous. My observations extend over a period of thirteen years, during which time I have noted 216 species which number, I am sure, could be added to by working the hilly to mountainous country of the eastern boundary, but I have never had an opportunity to do this. Naturally, types would exist there that do not occur on the plains. My only visit has been of a fleeting nature – a hurried run through by car.³⁵

His detailed map included in his book shows exactly the location of the Gwydir wetlands. This area of watercourse at convergence of the Gwydir River would have been considered an absolute treasure, a paradise for migratory birds, a sanctuary for water birds and a haven of immense proportions.

³⁵ *Birds of the Moree District* by F.C. Morse (RAOU) Moree NSW



Wild Life in Australia, a book written by W.H. Dudley Le Souef, then Director of the Zoological Gardens (Melbourne), has the front cover photograph credited to F.C. Morse - *Coocalla*, May 1918. Le Souef's preface reads: "my object is to place on record a few facts about our fast-disappearing fauna, and to interest others in the wonderful book of Nature and stimulate them to learn for themselves how rich a storehouse of marvels it is."

Frederick Morse certainly took up this challenge.



Gwydir Wetlands photo taken by Diana Wilson (2009)

It is an imperative for each generation to ask questions of their parents and grandparents because once they are lost; the history is lost, never to be retrieved. My father had a horse called *Coocalla*, it always seemed a strange name and I had no idea of its origin until I started this research. The Morse family also had a property called *Newent* near Bundarra and, once again, no one asked “why that name”? It has all been revealed many years later after all the relevant relations have passed on. Each generation must ask questions of why, when and how of their parents and grandparents in order to pass that information to the next generation. Today there are countless avenues for research which was not available during grandfather’s time.

Coocalla station was situated in very close proximity to The Gwydir Wetlands, the Gingham Channel and the Big Leather Channel. “Records of major breeding events date back to the 1920s, when the Gwydir Wetlands were thought to hold the ‘largest heronry in NSW’ with ‘hundreds of thousands of birds breeding there’ (Morse 1922).”³⁶

The Gwydir’s headwaters are impounded by Copeton Dam, which was built in the late 1970s. This dam has a capacity of 1,364 GL: the dam controls only about 55% of Gwydir system inflows (Keyte 1994) because a number of unregulated tributaries flow into the Gwydir River below it. Historically, the Gwydir Wetlands covered an area of around 220,000 ha (Green & Bennet 1991). Unfortunately, irrigated agriculture and broadacre cropping has reduced these vast wetlands by 85% (Bowen & Simpson 2009), with remnant wetlands now remaining as fragmented patches within a cultivated landscape.³⁷

Irrigation, agriculture, livestock and other encroachments have devastated the original wetlands which, according to F.C. Morse, were estimated to cover 6,780 square miles. They are now reduced to just 28 square miles which have now been turned into a State Conservation area. However continued droughts have seen the water completely lost.



Image:<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/> May 2018

It seems incomprehensible that over many years, millions of words and millions of Australian dollars have been spent researching the Darling River Basin, of which the Gwydir Wetlands is a part, without any constructive solutions. For example: the *2001 Government Survey on Environment, Climate Change and Water* noted:

A major feature of the **wetlands** is the **Gwydir Raft** which is an accumulation of debris, timber and sediment downstream from Moree that has effectively blocked the original river channel from the early 1900s (McCosker 2001).³⁸

In the early days, the Raft was present as a blockage due to tree felling after which floods would sweep the logs and debris down the river to pile up and then the water seeped out to low-lying areas creating a natural wonderland and haven for birds. It was an absolute treasure to the environment.

³⁶ Assessment of environmental water requirements for the proposed Basin Plan: Gwydir Wetlands
[/www.mdba.gov.au](http://www.mdba.gov.au)

³⁷ abid

³⁸ www.environment.nsw.gov.au/

The Raft has been a contentious issue for decades with the landholders above The Raft benefiting whilst the landholders below felt deprived of the water ceasing to flow below the blockage even in flood times, therefore the floodwaters spread out across the flat plains and did not course down the river proper. On the 15th February 1945 the *Collarenebri Gazette* had a column reprinted in the *Warialda Express* and the *Northern Districts' Adviser* discussing 'the departmental ineptitude' in finding a solution. This argument still continues today.³⁹

My grandfather's name appears in many of these surveys as he is credited as being the first to discover the rookeries.



My father Henry Tourle Morse and his sister (Olive Kathleen Morse) collecting eggs of another kind.

³⁹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/>



CHAPTER 5

BIRDS, EGGS AND COLLECTING

Frederick Charles Morse was - naturalist, ornithologist, oologist, observer of wildlife - and a bird photographer and egg collector. It was apparent that he was also a taxidermist, an expert in skinning birds and preserving their bodies.

Throughout history birds and nature have fascinated mankind. In the 4th century BC, Aristotle mentions “170 species of birds in his works on animals and he recognised eight principal groups.”

In the 1st century AD, Pliny the Elder’s *Historia Naturalis Book X* is devoted to birds.⁴⁰ In the 1800s, Darwin acknowledged Aristotle’s genius of observation of birds and animals some two thousand years earlier. “Aristotle was the first to collect animal specimens, the first to describe and record species and the first who thought it worthwhile to do so.”⁴¹

In 1770-1783 Buffon’s *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux* was the first work to take into account geographical distribution of birds.⁴² The preface to this book reads:

We should certainly be guilty of a gross absurdity if, in an age like the present, we were to enter into an elaborate discussion on the advantages to be derived from the study of NATURAL HISTORY; the ancients recommended it as useful, instructive, and entertaining.

Educated people in Britain had many global publications available to them on natural history and ornithology. There are over 100 publications from 1702-1799 devoted to the study, behaviour, distribution and drawings of birds. George Edwards (1694-1773) was known as the ‘father of British ornithology’ and produced *A Natural History of Uncommon Birds*, with many drawings and beautifully illustrated plates.

In addition, he wrote *Gleanings of Natural History*,⁴³ enhancing his narrative with exquisite, intricate and lifelike paintings, such as the owl featured on the next page.

Some of the most profound and exquisite artistry was achieved by women painters and illustrators who were not recognised for their work historically, because they were ‘women’. Harriet and Helen Scott produced exquisite work from their base on Ash Island near Newcastle and “by 1862 they were already established in their careers as professional artists, natural science collectors and illustrators.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ http://www.fact-index.com/t/ti/timeline_of_ornithology.html

⁴¹ Stott, R. *Darwin’s Ghosts*, Bloombury, London 2012., p 20

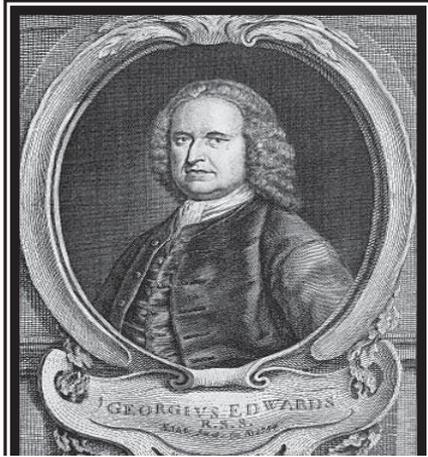
⁴² <http://www.gutenberg.org/>

⁴³ <https://www.panteek.com/EdwardsBirds/index.htm>

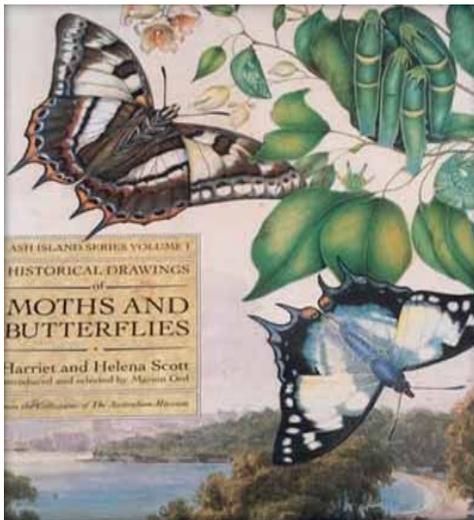
⁴⁴ *Moths and Butterflies* – Historical Drawings Craftman House 1988

The Victorian era, between 1837 and 1901, was a time when collecting was a fashionable, favourable and fantastic pastime. The wealthy collected everything from stamps, coins, birds, birds' eggs, animals, butterflies and plants and it was considered 'the golden age of natural history collecting'. Harriet and

Helena Scott lived on Ash Island in the Hunter River Newcastle in the late 1800s. They mixed with naturalists and scientists and published their work to wide acclaim. Their father stated "We are all bird mad, shell mad and insect mad."



George Edwards and his intricate artistry of an owl from his book, *Gleanings of Natural History*.



Harriet and Helena Scott's artistic skills on the cover of the book, *Moths and Butterflies*.

The pursuit of collecting fauna and flora from around the planet was driven both by a desire to learn about nature, as well as a "quest to prove oneself against the wilderness."⁴⁵ "Victorian egg collectors never dreamed of how their eggs would be used in the future."⁴⁶

During this period, some of the greatest naturalists inspired and stimulated interest throughout the world with their observations, collections and writings. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace collected different species while chasing the sources of evolution. The so called 'Wallace line' is an invisible divide which separates the Eco lines between Asian and Australian fauna. Naturalists travelled the world, sometimes spending years in great discomfort, collecting specimens to take back home to cater to the demand of museums around the world. The art of collecting became an absolute obsession for many.

Iain McCalman writes in his book *Darwin's Armada* about "four young naturalists, each of whom voyaged to the southern hemisphere in search of adventure and scientific fame."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ <http://brightonmuseums.org.uk/discover/2011/08/15/mary-merrifield/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/03/the-lost-victorian-art-of-egg-collecting/475476/>

⁴⁷ McCalman, I. (2010). *Darwin's Armada*. Simon & Schuster, London, p54



Alfred Wallace's Wellington Chest;



Note the formal attire of this collector pictured here

Those young men were Charles Darwin on the *Beagle* (1831-36), Joseph Hooker on the *Ross* (1839-43), Thomas Huxley (1846-50) on the *Rattlesnake* and Alfred Wallace (1848-66) who travelled on numerous vessels in South East Asia. These adventuring naturalists visited Australia and would have created a massive impact on those interested in natural history.

The Victorians promoted natural history collecting as an ideal form of recreation. It was considered a worthwhile pursuit because "it took people outdoors and increased knowledge and interest in many varieties."

The development of the microscope brought into clear and high focuses even the tiniest insects and plants. In addition, the development of a portable camera enabled collectors to photograph and collect on site without cumbersome equipment. Some people took huge risks to collect the eggs.



Women's fashion was a huge influence on the 'feather trade' and almost completely obliterated some bird species. The Victorian period was a time of arrogance, affluence and indulgence with massive plumage and complete skins displayed on women's hats.

In the words of Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea: “Man is seldom content to witness beauty. He must possess it.”

The appalling carnage created by the ‘feathery’ demands of women’s fashion led to the destruction of millions of birds. At the time, an ounce of feathers had a higher value than an ounce of gold. The plume trade “arose because of the general economic prosperity of a growing middle class that had provided opportunities to purchase nonessentials. Emulating the fashionable elite, men selected fedoras with feather trim and women adorned their hair and hats.”⁴⁸ Introduced legislation, conservationists and changes in fashion ended this destructive avian trend.

However, the collection of exotic birds’ feathers continued to provide lures for fishing. Collectors went to great lengths and huge expense to make salmon-fishing flies. Many stooped to criminal activity and theft to procure exotic feathers and slaughtered many spectacularly beautiful birds, particularly Birds of Paradise from Indonesia and New Guinea.

In New South Wales, the most prominent and well-known collectors were S.W. Jackson from the Grafton area and the wealthy grazier, Henry L. White, from *Belltrees*, Scone. Jackson had a large collection of eggs which he sold to White and then continued to work as White’s curator of his substantial collection.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, collecting was a pastime which was vigorously pursued by many. Judy White refers to this in her book *The Art of Collecting* in which she wrote about H.L. White of *Belltrees* and his obsessive bird study skin and egg collections and the correspondence and letters he had written and received from other collectors, including my grandfather.

It is clear there were many books available to suit the pursuits of an enthusiastic young naturalist. Many of these were beautifully illustrated, often by women. Elizabeth Gould was a gifted illustrator and artist while her husband, John, was an avid collector and publisher.

John Gould produced *The Birds of Australia*, a book published in seven volumes between 1840 and 1848. It was the first comprehensive survey of its type and included descriptions of 681 species, 328 of which were new to science and were first described by Gould.

It would appear that all the illustrations in the book were by Elizabeth Gould but she was hardly given any credit for her incredible talent by her husband. “Darwin’s finches were sent to John Gould for classification and his wife, Elizabeth, drew and perfected the illustrations of these new discoveries, sadly her name was omitted as the artist in his publication.”⁴⁹



Elizabeth Gould’s illustration of the Gouldian Finch ⁴⁷

⁴⁸ https://web.stanford.edu/group/stanfordbirds/text/essays/Plume_Trade.html

⁴⁹ <http://vintagebookillustrations.com/darwins-finches-by-elizabeth-gould>



The exquisite work of Elizabeth Gould⁴⁷

50



⁵⁰<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-25/elizabeth-gould-illustrator-of-birds-of-australia-overshadowed>



Gould League certificate

The Gouldian finch became synonymous with the Gould League of Bird Lovers, throughout Australia.⁵¹ When formally established in 1909, the *Gould League of Bird Lovers*, as it was then called, was devoted to bird protection.

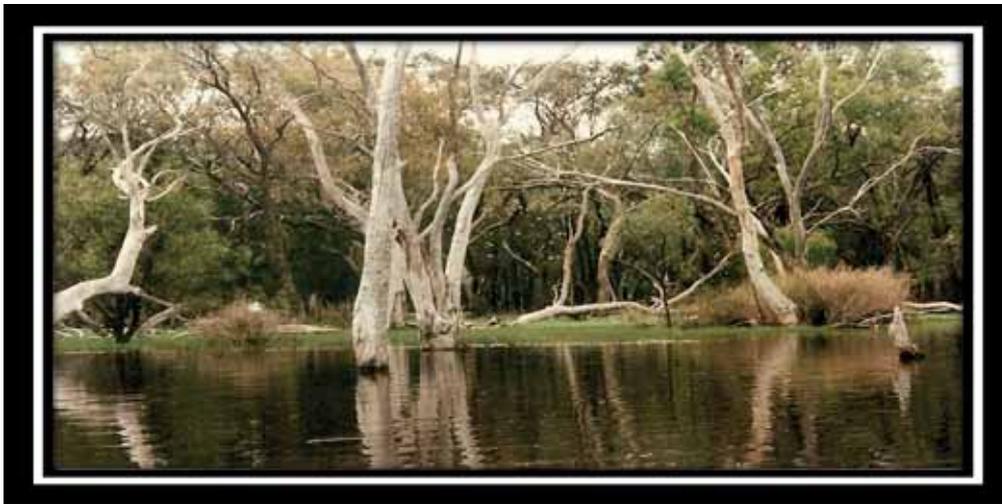
⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gould_League



CHAPTER 6

FREDERICK CHARLES MORSE

Frederick Charles Morse was not a man of wealth but a man with a great love of nature and a passion for collecting birds' eggs and photography. He was one of the first to find the massive bird-breeding colonies in the Gwydir Wetlands in 1922.



Gwydir Wetlands - photograph by Diana Wilson

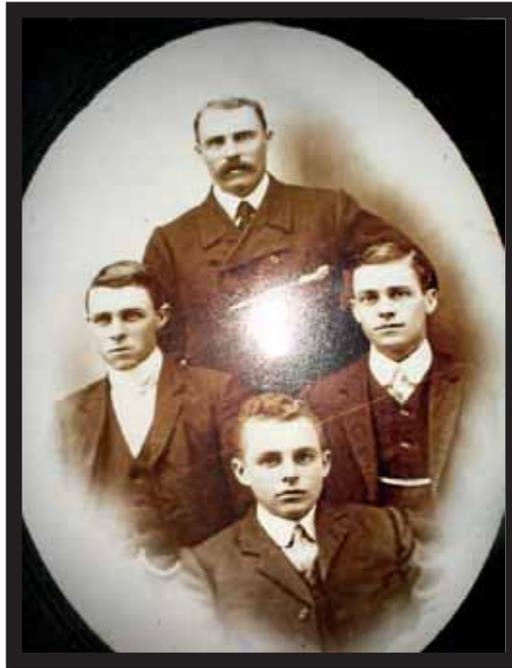
My siblings and I have never known much about our grandfather who died when our father was only 10 years old. This was a generation born of English heritage that did not express themselves but remained private with a 'stiff upper lip'. As a result, my father had known little about his father and we knew even less. We did appreciate the fierce loyalty to the family name, the strong and impassioned interest in birds and of our far-reaching family tree. We did not however, realise the respect and esteem in which our grandfather F.C. Morse was held. My brother Christopher, when enquiring about his grandfather, at Melbourne Museum was asked "Are you enquiring about the great F.C. Morse?"

As children growing up in Collarenebri, we were in awe of our grandfather's Wellington Chest.

It stood tall, with 12 small drawers, each of which was laid with cottonwool and nestled against the whiteness of the fibre, lay some of the finest, most intricate works of nature. Many birds' eggs were settled in there, very much undisturbed, except for the wide-eyed children who reached on to tiptoes to see inside the cupboard.

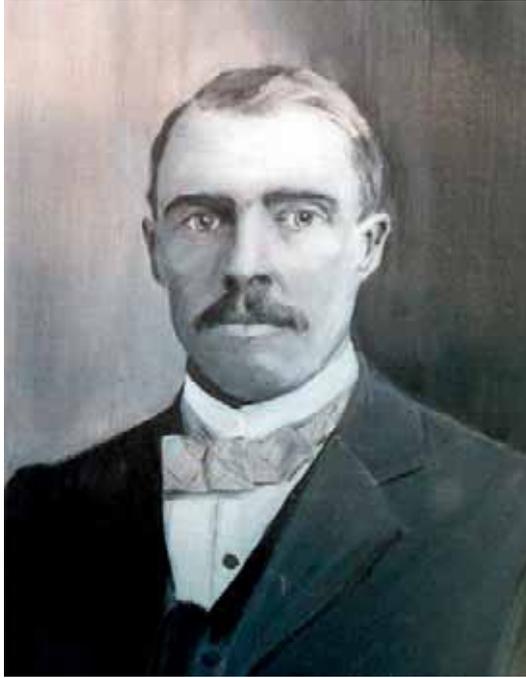


F.C. Morse Wellington Chest



F.C. Morse with his brothers

Frederick C. Morse left many treasures: his egg collection of more than 200 clutches are stored in Museums Victoria with his bird count logs, his observations and submissions to the journal *Emu* (now *Birds Australia*), his magnificent black and white photographs and his letters to and from other collectors. The reason for this book is to have a record held in perpetuity of *The Treasures of the Gwydir* and F.C. Morses' collections/



Frederic.C. Morse - painted by Pamela Morse from a photograph

Frederick Charles Morse was born at *Balala* on 10 July 1874. He was educated at All Saints' College, Bathurst, where he won distinction as a scholar and a superb athlete in many branches of sport. As an educated young man, Frederick would have been privy to many great literary authors of the time, especially books written by Darwin, Thoreau, Dickens, Melville and Waldo Emerson.

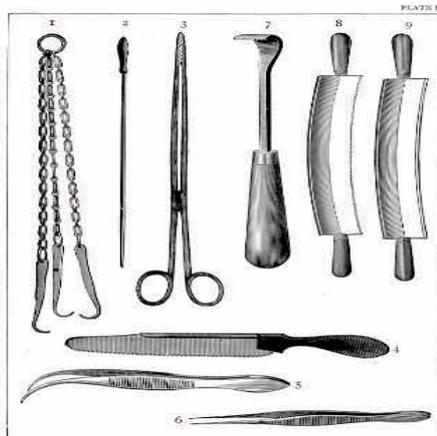
An enthusiastic nature-lover, he devoted most of his time to the study of birds. Being a keen and reliable observer, a splendid bushman, a daring climber and a clever photographer, his contributions to *The Emu* and other journals have added considerably to the knowledge of Australian ornithology.

Frederick's oological collecting started in 1901 when he was 27 years old, and manager of *Bundy* a property near Coonabarbran. The greater part of his egg collection, in particular his photography, took place during his time in the Gwydir Wetlands. His camera was an amazing piece of equipment which produced some wondrous photographs. It is claimed that he would use a piece of string as a trip wire to release the shutter when his 'prize' subject was in the right position. We are also led to believe that Frederick practised taxidermy as collectors letter refer to wanting "skins." A tiny instrument set was seen at *Nariel*, home of Bruce and Madeline Morse, and is believed to have been the equipment required for skinning birds.





Frederick C. Morse's camera and taxidermy instruments





CHAPTER 7

BIRDS OF THE MOREE DISTRICT

The importance of the Gwydir Wetlands is recorded on the NSW Governments *Water* website:

The wetlands provide breeding and feeding grounds for colonial waterbirds and habitat for many threatened species. Over 235 species of birds have been observed in the wetlands, of which 165 species have been recorded as breeding (DEWHA 2009a). The wetlands also provide habitat for 13 migratory species listed under international agreements. During flooding in 1998 over 500,000 waterbirds were observed using the wetlands (DEWHA 2009a). Apart from their value as waterbird habitat, the Gwydir wetlands are considered to provide a good example of an inland terminal delta which plays an important role in the ecological functioning of the Murray-Darling Basin.⁵²

F.C. Morse's own 'little book' *Birds of the Moree District* led the way in documenting the importance of the area for our Australian natural history.



In reproducing the excerpts, logs, lists and other documentation it was determined to maintain the integrity of F.C. Morse's vernacular of the day and spelling of bird names both Latin and Anglicised. Many of the bird names and descriptions have changed over the last 100 years and species may have been amalgamated into other groups. While some experts may disagree, these words were the ones he used at the time and reflected his understanding and knowledge of that era.

As well as publishing *Birds of the Moree District*, Frederick Morse also made many contributions of his findings and observations which were published in ornithological journal, *The Emu*.

⁵² <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/>

Birds of the Moree District

by F.C. Morse (RAOU) Moree, NSW

The district of Moree is situated in the extreme northwest boundary of NSW. It comprises an area of 6,870 square miles.

With the exception of the eastern boundary, it is all flat country, varying from large open plains to dense forests of belar (*Casuarina*) and brigalow (*Acacia*). The Gwydir River runs through the centre of the district and, after passing the town, spreads out in numerous narrow channels and broad swamps, the water eventually finding its way through these into the Barwon River, 70 miles further west.

Owing to the diverse nature of the country – hills, thick forests and large swamps – bird life is varied and numerous.

My observations extend over a period of thirteen years, during which time I have noted 216 species, which number, I am sure, could be added to by working the hilly to mountainous country of the eastern boundary, but I have never had an opportunity to do this. Naturally, types would exist there that do not occur on the plains. My only visit has been of a fleeting nature – a hurried run through by car.

I am indebted to Mr Hugh A. Mawhiney [*sic*] for notes on the breeding of several species, but of those birds enumerated two only have not come under my personal observation.

Dromicius novaehollandiae Emu. Plentiful, especially on the larger holdings, where they have more scope. In the prickly pear country they are numerous, subsisting on the fruit of this plant, which is going to be the means of protecting them for many years to come.

Alectura lathamii Bush Turkey. In the N and NE portions of the district, where the prickly pear is extensive, these birds are very numerous, and as this same type of country embraces a large portion of Southern Queensland, their preservation is assured.



Gwydir wetlands (above) - photographs by F.C. Morse *circa*.1922



Gwydir wetlands (above) - photographs by F.C. Morse circa.1922

Coturnix pectoralis Stubble Quail. After a succession of good seasons, these birds are here in countless thousands. I don't think this is caused by a large influx from other parts but through their own wonderful powers of propagation. The breeding season lasts from August to the end of March, each hen laying from eight to thirteen eggs, and no doubt she will bring out two or three broods in a season.

Synoicus australis Brown Quail. Not numerous, confining themselves more to the swamp and margins of creeks and rivers.

Turnix varia. Painted Quail. Thinly distributed all through the lightly timbered country.

Turnix pyrrhacorax Red-chested Quail. This year (1922) they are numerous on the open plains. Starting breeding October and there are still eggs to be found. Nests are always hooded over.

Turnix velox Little Quail. Not so plentiful as the former species; but still fairly numerous. They seem to prefer the lightly timbered land to the open plains.

Geopelia humeralis Bar-Shouldered Dove. Is thinly distributed through all the pine belts.

Geopelia placida Peaceful Dove. Not numerous except in the eastern quarter, where no doubt they are attracted by the wheat.

Geopelia cuneata Diamond Dove. Thinly distributed over the greater portion of the district. For its size this bird has a remarkably loud call.

Phaps chalcoptera Bronze wing. Thinly distributed through the western portion, but very numerous round the margins of the brigalow and belar forests, where they collect to feed on the berries of a bush known as the wild currant.

Histriophaps histrionica Flock-Pigeon. I have on two occasions seen a single bird. History relates that before the advent of the sheep, they at times came here in thousands. One old identity informed me that during the eighties "they were breeding in such numbers in his horse paddock that he could have filled a washing tub with the eggs."

Ocyphaps lophotes Crested Pigeon. Very numerous over the whole district. In the 1919 drought I began feeding a couple of pairs in the garden, and by the end of a few weeks 80 birds used to turn up every morning for breakfast.

Leucosarcia melanoleuca Wong-Wonga. In the same type of country as that favoured by the Brush Turkey, these birds are still fairly plentiful.

Hypotaenidia philippensis Buff-banded Rail. Numerous during the summer months; they appear to arrive with the Snipe during August. Breed freely in the swamps.

Porzana fluminea Spotless Crake. During one of our camps on the watercourse, Mr Mawhiney secured a specimen of this bird, but that is the only one I have seen.

Porzana pusilla Baillon's Crake. Plentiful, breeding from September to February.



The heronry discovered and photographed by F.C. Morse (1922)



White-necked Heron (*Notophyx pacifica*) on nest - photograph by F.C. Morse

Tribonyx ventralis Black-tailed Water-Hen. Common. One pair nested in a kerosene box placed near a tree.

Gallinula tenebrosa Black Moor-Hen. Very numerous; breeding freely during spring months.

Porphyrio melanotus Bald Coot. Very numerous in the vicinity of the high sags and tall rushes. Nests and eggs are very similar to previous birds.

Fulica atra Coot. Very numerous where there are open spaces of water; breeds freely during spring months.

Podiceps ruficollis Black-throated Grebe. Plentiful in all quiet waters. During the spring of 1921, several nested in a small lagoon close to my house, and it was here I first witnessed the old birds carrying the young under their wings, which they continue to do for the first fortnight.

Podiceps cristatus Hoary-headed Grebe. Not numerous; there are certain lagoons where a few pairs are generally to be found. Breeds during summer months.

Chlidonias leucopareia Whiskered Tern. These graceful little birds can often be seen flitting and skimming over the surface of the large lagoons, no doubt breeding in some quiet spot.

Erythrogonys cinctus Red-kneed Dotterel. Plentiful round the margins of the lagoons, preferring the still to running water, nesting freely on small muddy islands. They do not, as has been previously stated, coat their eggs with mud as a protection.

Lobibox novae-hollandiae Spur-winged Plover. Numerous.

Zonifer tricolor Black-breasted Plover. Numerous, prefers the more open and barer ground of a drier nature than that favoured by the Spur wing.

Charadrius melanops Black-fronted Dotterel. Numerous.

Peltohyas australis Australian Dotterel. I have only seen a single living bird of this species, and that was during the drought of 1919. Mr. Mawhiney often reports them from his quarter, but he tells me he only seems them on one little gravelly plain.

Himantopus leucocephalus White-headed Stilt. Plentiful about the swamps, where they breed in colonies.

Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae Red-necked Avocet. Rare visitor. I have, on two or three occasions, seen a pair of these birds during droughts, each time they have been wandering about in the swamps caused by the overflow of artesian bores.

Gallinago hardwickii Australian Snipe. Very numerous from August to March. Large bags are often secured by sportsmen along the watercourse. I know of three guns accounting for one hundred and fifty birds in one day.

Glottis nebularius Greenshank. A shy and rare visitor; it is hard to approach, and when it rises it usually circles high overhead, all the time uttering a loud call.

Pisobia acuminata Sharp-tailed Stint. Numerous during the summer months round the margins of lagoons and swamps.



Heronry nest in right hand corner - photograph by F.C. Morse

Rostratula australis Painted Snipe. Thinly distributed through the swamps and marshes, choosing the quiet places for breeding purposes. In the heat of summer can often be found in some shady nook a hundred yards or more from water.

Glareola maldivarum Oriental Pratincole. In March 1920, while driving in the north-east quarter of the district, I flushed a small band of five Pratincoles from the roadside. In this same quarter Mr Mawhiney often sees them, and all times of the year, so the probability is they breed there.

Burhinus grallarius Southern Stone Curlew. The wail of the Curlew can still occasionally be heard but the intervals between are becoming longer and the birds rarer and rarer. This can be attributed to the fox, to which these birds falls an easy prey.

Ardeotis australis Australian Bustard. Like the previous bird, is becoming scarcer and scarcer; but the fox is not the only reason for this; the advent of the motor car has sounded the death kneel of the old turkey. A bird so timid that one can seldom approach within a hundred yards of it on foot or horseback will permit itself almost to be run over by a car full of men and bristling with guns.



Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) at nest - photograph by F.C. Morse (RAOU)

Antigone rubicunda Brolga (Australian Crane). Numerous, but also suffering from the depredations of the fox. In drought time they go to the prickly pear country and subsist on the fruit.

Threskiornis molucca White Ibis. Very numerous; breeding in many parts of the watercourse, either among the sags or on polygonum bushes, and recently we found them nesting in numbers in the coolabah trees twelve or fifteen feet from the ground.

Threskiornis spinicollis Straw-necked Ibis. Very numerous. There are several large rookeries along the watercourse, where many thousands nest on the polygonum bushes. Breeding lasts from October to January if the water continues running.

Platalea regia Black-billed Spoonbill. Numerous. Nests in company with Cormorants or Ibis; if with the former, chooses the highest branches of the tall gum trees; if with the latter, is quite satisfied to make a nest on a polygonum bush three or four feet above the water.

Platalea flavipes Yellow-billed Spoonbill. Not as numerous as the previous species; but like its relative, is satisfied to take a lowly or elevated position for nesting, according to the habits of the other birds it is in company with, which are more often Pacific Herons and Cormorants than any other species.

Xenorhynchus asiaticus Jabiru. This bird has been twice recorded, and although I did not see it personally, there can be no doubt as to its identity by description. The last record was during the past winter, when one was seen on the McIntyre River during a flood.

Notophox pacifica White-necked Heron. Very numerous. I know of one very large heronry that I have visited on several occasions, where some hundreds of birds breed annually.

Notophox novae-hollandiae White-fronted Heron. Very numerous. During the present season they started building nests in July and continued till December.

Nycticorax caledonicus Nankeen Night-Heron. Very numerous. Several large heronries exist where the birds breed in great numbers.

Dupetor flavicollis Yellow-necked Mangrove-Bittern. I once saw a single specimen of this species fly from some tree roots overhanging the water; the action of flight caused such a commotion among the small birds, many of which gave chase, that I conclude the bird was quite foreign to them.

Botaurus poiciloptilus Australian Bittern. When camped at one of our favourite spots near the sags, the boom of the Bitterns could be heard from all quarters in the direction of the swamp, but, try as we would, we could not flush a single bird and, in my many rambles in this quarter, I have seen only one.

Chenopsis atratus Black Swan. Numerous; usual breeding months July till September.

Anseranas semipalmata Pied Goose. Not numerous; breeds in the densest parts of the sags during August and September.

Chenonetta jubata Maned Goose. Numerous; usual breeding months July and August.

Dendrocygna javanica Whistling Duck. At times very plentiful. This bird is known locally as the 'red whistler' – a good descriptive name, which can be more appreciated when the two species are seen together.

Dendrocygna eytoni Plumed Whistling Duck. Very numerous in spring and summer. Nests are often found out on the plains a mile or two miles from water. Usually breeds in October, but I have just heard of a nest of seventeen eggs found in January.

Anas superciliosa Grey (Black) Duck. Very numerous; in favourable seasons breeds for nine months out of the twelve, either in trees or on the ground, sometimes fully a mile from water.

Virago gibberifrons Grey Teal. The most numerous of all the family. I have never found a nest anywhere but in hollow spouts. They breed for fully nine months, and lay as many as seventeen eggs, twelve to fifteen being a common occurrence.



Plumed Egret (*Egretta intermedia*), nest and young - photograph by F.C. Morse (RAOU)

Viago castanea Chestnut-breasted Teal. An occasional visitor in small numbers.

Spatula rhynchotis Blue-winged Shoveler. Never in large flocks, but thinly distributed all over the district. Nests close to the swamps in long grass or herbage.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus Pink-eared Duck. On occasions large flocks of these are to be found. They favour the quiet backwaters and lagoons, where they nest in all sorts of places; shallow hollows, tops of stumps and forked limbs are equally favoured. The eggs are always enveloped in down. Eight eggs seem to be the maximum clutch.

Stictonetta naevosa Freckled Duck. An occasional visitor. At a battue (a shooting of game towards hunters by beaters) in aid of the Red Cross which I attended, two of these birds were bagged and among the twelve shooters present (all old residents of the district) one only had seen the Ducks before. On our last trip to the Glossy Ibis rookery (19th February 1922), we saw a flock of about 20 of these and secured four specimens, one of which was undoubtedly an immature bird.

Nyroca australis White-eyed Duck. Very numerous; always builds a nest in a tussock of reeds or grass in the water; often makes use of a Coots or Moor-Hen's nest.

Biziura lobata Musk Duck. Plentiful in the larger reaches of water. The power of flight of this bird is sometimes doubted. Some years ago I happened to be sitting on the verandah with others in the moonlight, when a large body banged on the roof and rolled down the iron into a flower bed below; where we all had a good inspection of the culprit – an old Musk Duck.

Phalacrocorax carbo Cormorant. Fairly plentiful. Nests in rookeries with other species, but always selects the highest positions.

Phalacrocorax ater Little Black Cormorant. Very numerous; breeds freely in large rookeries.

Phalacrocorax varius Pied Cormorant. Not numerous. I have never yet found their nests.

Microcarbo melanoleucus Little Pied Cormorant. Very numerous. Large rookeries at many places on the watercourse.

Anhinga novae-hollandiae Australian Darter. Not numerous; but their cackle can be heard at all the larger lagoons. I have never found them nesting in colonies. Sometimes half a dozen nests can be located within a hundred yards of one another, but many birds are quite solitary in their habits.

Pelecanus conspicillatus Australian Pelican. Numerous; has an unpleasant habit of swallowing young Ducks or anything else that comes within reach.



Plumed Egret (*Egretta intermedia*), nest and young - photograph by F.C. Morse

Circus assimilis Spotted Harrier. Rare; odd pairs arrive during flush seasons when Quail are plentiful. Quite recently one appeared the first we have seen for four years. This bird should not be called a Swamp Hawk; he is always to be found working the open plains. I have never seen him near these swamps.

Circus approximans Swamp Harrier. A true Swamp Hawk; always to be found working to and fro over the sags, but I have never seen one away from the watercourse.

Astur fasciatus Australian Goshawk. Rare; seldom to be found away from the rivers, where it seems to favour the tall timber, in which it nests.

Uroaetus audax Wedge-tailed Eagle. Plentiful throughout the district.

Hieraetus pennatus Little Eagle. Rare; a few birds are occasionally to be found where rabbits are plentiful.

Haliastur sphenurus Whistling Eagle. Very numerous on all the rivers and watercourses. They appear to be quite friendly with the other birds, often nesting in the same tree or in close proximity to the heronries.

Lophoictinia isura Square-tailed Kite. I have seen an odd pair or an occasional bird of this species but they do not remain here for long.

Gypoictinia melanosterna Black-breasted Buzzard. During the 1919 drought a pair of these birds remained about here for some months, causing much consternation among the Magpies, which were nesting at the time.

Elanus axillaris Black-shouldered Kite. At odd times I have seen a good many of these birds scattered through the district, but only when field mice are plentiful.

Falco peregrinus Peregrine Falcon. Fortunately for the Ducks this slaughterer does not often appear here. I have seen only three, two of which were amusing themselves duck killing. I recorded in *The Emu* some years ago the fact that Mr Mawhiney and myself witnessed a single bird kill, apparently only for sport, twelve Ducks in about half an hour.

Falco subniger Black Falcon. A rare visitor. The only time I have seen them was seven years ago, when I came across a little band of five amusing themselves chasing Pigeons.

Falco longipennis Little Falcon. Thinly distributed all over the district. Quite recently I saw one attempt to catch a Black-breasted Plover, but was very surprised to note that the Plover, owing to its wonderful dodging, got right away.

Ieracidea berigora Brown Hawk. Numerous. The sneak thief among the Hawk tribe. Have several times seen one stealing young birds from nests, especially young Grallinas.

Ieracidea occidentalis Striped Brown Hawk. I have often seen birds which are apparently referable to this race in company with the former kind.

Cerchneis cenchroides Nankeen Kestrel. Numerous. Nests in hollows or just as readily in an old nest of a Raven or Magpie.

Ninox boobook Boobook Owl. Rare. I do not remember ever having seen one but can occasionally hear them.



White Egret (*Egretta alba*) - nest and young. Photograph by F.C Morse, RAOU

Ninox connivens Winking Owl. Rare. Last winter one took up his quarters close to the house in a Wilga tree, his retreat being disclosed by the leg of a chicken found lying beneath; and on the following evening he made another attempt at a poultry supper. So very reluctantly, and acting on instructions from a higher authority, I brought the gun into use.

Tyto alba Barn-Owl. After a succession of good seasons, there is usually a plague of mice, at which times these Owls are numerous. Although seldom seen in daylight, numbers are flushed from the roadside when one is motoring at night. Their screech is distinctly disagreeable and, if heard in large cities, the police force would be searching for murderers.

Trichoglossus moluccanus Blue Mountain Lorikeet. A rare visitor; occasionally a little band can be seen feeding on the blossom of the Moreton Bay ash.

Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus Scaly-breasted Lorikeet. I have one record in my notebook of a visit paid by a small band of these in 1917, and like the previous birds they were feeding on the blossom of the Moreton Bay ash.

Glossopsitta concinna Musk Lorikeet. Plentiful at times in the eastern quarter, when one of their natural foods is in abundance – the native apple tree (*Angophora*) blossom.

Cacatua galerita White Cockatoo. Fairly numerous in spring along the Gwydir and Barwon rivers where they nest in the big trees.

Cactua roseicapilla Galah. Very plentiful through all the districts.

Leptolophus hollandicus Cockatiel. In good seasons in countless numbers.

Aprosmictus erythropterus Red-winger Parrot. Fairly well distributed throughout the district. Their food is principally the seeds of various trees, such as the leopard, white wood and prickly acacia.

Platycercus adscitus Pale-headed Rosella. Not numerous; more often found among the big gums of the rivers.

Platycercus eximius splendens Yellow-mantled Rosella. During the winter and early spring a few of these birds are to be found but they always leave before summer sets in, and take up their quarters in the eastern parts of the district where wheat is grown.

Barnardius barnardi Ring-necked Parrot. Thinly distributed all over the district.

Psephotus haematogaster Blue-bonnet Parrot. Plentiful.

Psephotus varius Many-coloured Parrot. In 1918, I came across several pairs of these birds along the Barwon River. I don't know whether they are permanent residents or not, as I have had no further opportunity of investigating, but it is the only time and place I have seen them.

Psephotus haematonotus Red-backed Parrot. Not numerous in the western quarter but plentiful in the wheat growing area.

Melopsittacus undulates Budgerigah. Countless numbers of these pretty little birds are here in some seasons.

Podargus strigoides Tawny Frogmouth. Plentiful, but not often seen.

Aegotheles cristata Owllet Nightjar. Plentiful, but like the previous bird, not often seen.

Eurystomus orientalis Australian Roller. A few pairs migrate annually to the large trees on the riverbank to breed.

Dacelo gigas. Kookaburra. Numerous.



Ibis and cormorants in the wetlands - photograph by F.C. Morse, RAOU

Halcyon pyrrhopygius Red-backed Kingfisher. Not numerous. Seldom seen away from the rivers, where they tunnel in the banks for nesting purposes.

Halcyon Sanctus Sacred Kingfisher. Plentiful from October to March, after which they all go away.

Merops ornatus Rainbow Bee-eater. For the past five years we have made a note of the arrival of these birds, and during that time the first was seen between 22nd and 25th September; never earlier or later. A dozen pairs or so remain close to the house to breed each year, but the wily fox has added the young to his menu, and except those actually nesting in the garden, all fall victims to this omnivorous feeder. He gets them in the same manner he does young rabbits by simply digging a perpendicular hole to the nest. No effort is wasted in following the burrow from the entrance.

Eurostopodus guttatus Spotted Night-jar. On rare occasions I have flushed one of these birds. I fancy they are birds of passage as they disappear entirely.

Chaetura caudacuta Spine-tailed Swift. Often noted passing – usually the herald of stormy weather.

Micropos pacificus White rumped Swift. During the summer months large flocks often seen passing.

Cuculus pallidus Pallid Cuckoo. Plentiful; a few birds remain here all the winter.

Cacomantis flabelliformis Fantail Cuckoo. During the winter, I have seen numbers of these in the large Casuarina forests; no doubt many hibernate here. They disappear in summer, and I have no record of an egg being found.

Mesocalius osculans Black-eared Cuckoo. Rare; old pairs occasionally seen.

Chalcites basalus Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo. Very numerous.

Lamprococcyx palgusus Bronze Cuckoo. Not plentiful, and like the Fantail, does not remain here to breed.

Scythrops novae-hollandiae Channel billed cuckoo. Only seen occasionally, sometimes at intervals of years; but I do not think any pass without advertising themselves by their loud call.

Hirundo neoxena Welcome Swallow. Plentiful.

Cheramoeca Leucosternum White-backed Swallow. Until the last decade this bird was unknown in the district, now they are permanent residents in the extreme eastern quarter.

Hylochelidon nigricans Tree-Martin. Very numerous; occasionally makes use of a little mud to plaster up the mouth of a large hollow in which they are nesting. A pair also built quite a respectable mud nest this year in my hayshed, a thing I did not think they were capable of.

Hylocelidon ariel Fairy Martin. Very numerous.

Microeca fascinans Brown Flycatcher. Numerous.

Petroica multicolor Scarlet-breasted Robin. Rare in brigalow and belar (sic area) of NSW.

Petroica goodenovii Red-capped Robin. Numerous.



Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia* Threskiornithidae) - photograph by F.C. Morse

Melanodryas cucullate Hooded Robin. Rare in brigalow and belar of NE.

Smicrornis brevirostris Short-billed Tree-Tit. Rare in brigalow and belar of NE.

Gerygone albogularis Bush-Warbler. Rare.

Gerygone There is a more common species here than the previous one, but I am not sure of its identity yet; it certainly is not the Southern Bush-Warbler (*G fusca*).

Eopsaltria australis Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin. Plentiful in the belar and brigalow forests.

Falcunculus frontatus Shrike-tit. Fairly plentiful along the rivers and watercourses.

Oreoica gutturalis Crested Bell-Bird. Numerous in parts of the district.

Pachycephala pectoralis Yellow-breasted Whistler. Not numerous. Only to be found in the densest belar forests.

Pachycephala rufiventris Rufous-breasted Whistler. Very plentiful all through the district.

Rhipidura flabellifera White-shafted Fantail. Numbers of these little birds pass here in August, a few remaining to nest in the large belar forests. two of these little birds, though Mr Mawhiney reports them occasionally in his quarter, but he has been unable to find them nesting.

Eurostopodus guttatus Spotted Night-jar. On rare occasions I have flushed one of these birds. I fancy they are birds of passage, as they disappear entirely.

Chaetura caudacuta Spine-tailed Swift. Often noted passing usually the herald of stormy weather.

Micropus pacificus White-rumped Swift. During the summer months large flocks often seen passing.

Cuculus pallidus Pallid Cuckoo. Plentiful; a few birds remain here all the winter.

Lamprococeyx palgosus Bronze Cuckoo. Not plentiful, and like the Fantail, does not remain here to breed.



Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia* Threskiornithidae) on nest - photograph by F.C. Morse

Rhipidura leucophrys Black and White Fantail. Very numerous. Last spring there were no less than nine nests (all being used) within 100 yards of the house.

Seisura inquieta Restless Flycatcher. Plentiful; more especially near the water.

Rhipidura rufifrons Rufous Fantail. Very rare. I cannot recall ever seeing more than

Myiagra rubecula Leaden Flycatcher. Very rare, but few pairs remain in the district to breed each summer, though they do not appear until the weather is hot.

Pteroplocys maxima Ground Cuckoo-Shrike. Fairly plentiful. Nesting commences in August and lasts till October, seldom later.

Graucalus novae-hollandiae Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike. Numerous. These birds are late breeders, not beginning till October; but nests can often be found as late as January.

Graucalus mentalis Little Cuckoo-Shrike. Fairly numerous along the rivers, but seldom seen elsewhere.

Campephaga tricolor White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater. Numerous in the late spring and summer; some birds remain here all through the winter, though the majority go north. Several returned soldiers have told me that the note of the male is just like a burst of machine gun fire. Why not call him the Machine Gunner?

Pomatostomus spercilliosus White-browed Babbler. Very rare. I have never seen these birds in the district, but since I started writing this. Mr Mawhiney rang me up to say he had just found them breeding. This is also the first record he has of them. ***Epthianura tricolor***. Crimson Bush-Chat. Not numerous, and like the former bird, favouring certain localities, preferably the tall thistles, where they breed.

Epthianura aurifrons Orange Bush-Chat. My first sight of these pretty little birds in the district was on the return trip from RAOU.camp at Wallis Lake. When driving home from Garah, two flew from the roadside. Subsequently I saw numbers of them, and Mr Mawhiney found them breeding in the prickly acacia bushes on the plains.

Cinclorhamphus cruralis Brown Song-Lark. Numerous. The flight of the male bird of this species is more like the aerial movements of an aeroplane than that of any other bird I know of. Prefers the open plains.

Cinclorhamphus mathewsi Rufous Song-Lark. Numerous; but prefers the lightly timbered country; more especially large ringbarked timber.

Epthianura albifrons White-fronted Bush-Chat. On occasions, and at certain favoured spots, these little birds are to be found, but they are not numerous.

Acrocephalus australis Australian Reed-Warbler. Very numerous along the watercourse, where the abundance of sags and tall reeds is all they desire. Many can be found in the mid-winter in this favoured place.



Glossy Ibis and nest – photograph by F.C. Morse

Megalurus gramineus Little Grass-Bird. Numerous, especially in the swamps, where the polygonum bushes grow.

Chthonicola sagittate Speckled Warbler. In the more heavily timbered lands in the NE we saw a fair number of ‘specks’ on one of our excursions. Black-eared Cuckoos were also more numerous there than elsewhere, but we could find no ‘speck’ nests, consequently no Cuckoo’s nests.

Acanthiza nana Little Tit-Warbler. Fairly plentiful in the sandal-wood scrubs.

Acanthiza pyrrhopygia Red-rumped Tit-Warbler. Rare. This little bird, owing to its quiet, retiring nature and modest appearance, could easily be mistaken for several other species, and in this way overlooked, but its nest is quite unique, and usually in an exposed position – a distinct invitation to the Bronze-Cuckoo.

Acanthiza uropygialis Chestnut-tailed Tit-Warbler. Plentiful generally to be found in little bands; always nests in a hollow with a tiny entrance.

Sericornis frontalis White-browed Scrub-Wren. On the extreme eastern boundary, where there are shaded gullies running from the hills, I have seen little bands of these birds, but father west they do not care to go.

Malurus cyaneus Blue-Wren-Warbler. Not numerous, but fairly well-distributed.

Rhipidura leucophrys Black and White Fantail. Very numerous. Last spring there were no less than nine nests (all being used) within 100 yards of the house.

Seisura inquieta Restless Flycatcher. Plentiful; more especially near the water.



Glossy Ibis on nest – photograph by F.C. Morse



Grebe on nest – photograph by F.C. Morse

Malurus leuconotus White-winged Wren-Warbler. This beautiful little bird is to be found in small companies all over the open plains, more especially where there are roly poly bushes, in which they build their nests.

Malurus lamberti Variegated Wren-Warbler. Fairly plentiful.

Artamus leucorhynchus White-breasted Wood-Swallow. Numerous.

Artamus superciliosus White-browed Wood-Swallow. Numerous.

Artamus personatus Masked Wood-Swallow. Numerous.

Artamus cinereus Black-faced Wood-Swallow. Numerous.

Artamus minor Little Wood-Swallow. Rare. A few pairs of these little birds distribute themselves over the district each spring; they seem to prefer the ring-barked belar country, where they nest in some hollow spout. This district must be about their 'furthest south'; 80 miles NW they are plentiful.

Colluricincla harmonica Harmonious Shrike-Thrush. Plentiful.

Grallina cyanoleuca Magpie Lark. Plentiful.

Aphelocephala leucopsis Whiteface. Plentiful; one of the earliest and latest breeders. I have found nests early in July and as late as March.

Neositta chrysoptera Orange-winged Nuthatch (Tree-runner). Numerous in the belar forests.

Climacteris picumna Brown Tree Creeper. Plentiful in the open forest country; begins nesting as early as June.

Climacteris leucophaea White-throated Tree Creeper. Thinly distributed in the belar forests. I have never seen them elsewhere.

Climacteris erythroptera Red-browed Tree Creeper. Very rare; an odd pair in the NE quarter. In 1920 Mr Mawhiney found one pair breeding; the nest was fairly low in the cleft of a boony tree.

Zosterops lateralis White-eye. In the autumn months I have several times seen little bands of these birds about, but they do not seem to remain long, and I have never seen or heard of their nesting in the district.

Dicaeum hirundinaceum Mistletoe-Bird. Not numerous.



Nest of Grebe – photograph by F.C. Morse

Pardalotus assimilis Orange-tipped Diamond-Bird (Pardalote). Numerous. Dr D'Ombra described this bird in *The Emu* of July 1921. The note is always chip-chip.

Pardalotus striatus Red-tipped Pardalote. Not numerous, but to be found along the rivers in eastern extremes. Their note is quite distinct from that of that of the previous species; it sounds like wit-e-chu.

Pardalotus punctatus Spotted Pardalote. Rare. On rare occasions I have seen these little birds. Their note is also quite distinct from those of the previous two. *Melithreptus gularis* Black-chinned Honeyeater. Rare. The only spot I have seen them in any numbers was along the McIntyre River.

Melithreptus brevirostris Brown-headed Honey-eater. Not numerous, but being such unobtrusive little birds, may be more plentiful than one supposes. They move about in little bands from one blossoming tree to another, and the only note uttered is a very tiny one when in flight.

Plectorhyncha lanceolata Striped Honey-eater. Plentiful.

Myzomela migra Black Honey-eater. In the spring of 1918 numerous of these little birds appeared, remaining for about a month, feeding the while on honey from the sandalwood (*Eremphila mitchelli*). That short visit is the only time I have ever come in contact with them.

Grantiella picta Painted Honey-eater. At times fairly plentiful in certain parts of the district, but I think their movements are influenced by the fruiting of the mistletoe, on which they seem entirely to feed. Mr Mawhiney and E Rickman found several of their fragile nests in the belar and myall trees in 1920. This year none are about, and there is likewise no fruit on the mistletoe.

Stimatops indistincta Brown Honey-eater. The identity of this bird is doubtful. In a little gully full of flowering banksia, we (that is Dr D'Ombra, myself and others) saw a pair of small brown Honey-eaters with long, curved bills. I thought they were of this species; the Dr says not. They were building a nest at the time and as we were returning by the place a fortnight later, we decided to make further investigation then; but when we did return, the trees had ceased flowering, and the birds had gone. Whatever they were, they had no right there.

Meliphaga fusca Fuscous Honey-eater. Where the hills give way to the plains at the extreme eastern boundary the Fuscous Honeyeater is to be found, but the flat country marks his boundary line.

Meliphaga virescens Singing Honey-eater. Plentiful. Their increase is checked very much by the Pallid Cuckoo, which is very partial to their nest. They overcome this difficulty in a measure by nesting continuously from September to March.

Meliphaga penicillata White-plumed Honey-eater. The most plentiful of all. Numerous throughout the district.

Myzantaha garrula Noisy Miner. Plentiful.

Myzantha flavigula Yellow-throated Miner. I think even more plentiful than the previous species.

Acanthagenys rufogularis Spiny-cheeked Wattle-bird. Numerous.

Philemon corniculatus Friar-Bird. Fairly numerous along the rivers, but scarce elsewhere.

Philemon citreogularis Yellow-throated Friar-Bird. Numerous in the spring and summer but disappears entirely during the colder months.

Anthus australis Australian Pipit. Not numerous.

Mirafra javanica Horsefield Bush-Lark. Numerous on the open plains when the seasons are good.

Zonaeginthus guttatus Spotted-sided Finch. Like all the representatives of the Finch family, only here in good seasons. At present very plentiful.

Taeniopygia castanotis Chestnut-eared Finch. At times in thousands, making their nests in low hollows or prickly acacia bushes.

Steganopleura bichenovii Branded Finch. Rare.

Aidemosyne modesta Plum-headed Finch. At present very plentiful. Nesting in the black thistles and roly poly bushes.

Aegintha temporalis Red-browed Finch. Only extends to the eastern boundary of the district among the hills.

Oriolus satittatus Australian Oriole. Not numerous; prefers the belar forests.

Chlamydera mukulata Spotted Bower-Bird. Owing to this interesting bird's destructive habits in the gardens, they are not nearly so plentiful as formerly, except in the prickly pear country, the fruit of which plant keeps them out of mischief elsewhere.

Corvus bennetti Short-billed Crow. An occasional visitor, whose presence can always be detected by the very different 'caw' from that of the Ravens.

Corvus coronoides Raven. Plentiful. In spite of guns, traps and other means of destruction, the old Ravens, I am glad to state, seem as plentiful as ever.

Stuthidea cinerea Grey Jumper. Plentiful. The most homely bird we have, and generally looked on as a garden pest. The society often take possession of a Grallina's nest for their own purposes.

Corcorax melanorhamphus White-winged Chough. In times when mud for building purposes is scarce, they often overcome the difficulty by using soft cattle droppings.

Strepera graculina Pied Bell-Magpie. Plentiful in the prickly pear country, no doubt attracted there by the fruit.

Cracticus nigrogularis Black-throated Butcher-Bird. Numerous. I always think the note of this bird is the most beautiful of all our songsters, but it is heard to advantage only at daybreak in the spring.

Pardalotus striatus Red-tipped Pardalote. Not numerous, but to be found along the rivers in eastern extremes. Their note is quite distinct from that of that of the previous species; it sounds like wit-e-chu.

Pardalotus punctatus Spotted Pardalote. Rare. On rare occasions I have seen these little birds. Their note is also quite distinct from those of the previous two.

Cracticus torquatus Collared Butcher-Bird. Numerous.

Gymnorhina tibicen – Black-backed Magpie. Numerous.

F.C. Morse wrote: "In this list I have omitted, two species, both migrants, of whose identity I am not certain, but they were probably a Whimbrel and a Sanderling."

My grandfather's bird count amounted to 260 different species during his time of just seven years at Coocalla. This list contains 207 bird species he encountered during his time in the Moree District.

LIST OF BIRDS FROM 'BIRDS OF THE MOREE DISTRICT

by F.C. MORSE *The Emu* 1st July, 1922

Emu
Brush Turkey
Stubble Quail
Brown Quail
Painted Quail
Red chested Quail
Little Quail
Bar Shouldered Dove
Peaceful Dove
Diamond Dove
Bronzewing
Flock Pigeon
Crested Pigeon
Wonga Wonga
Buff Banded Rail
Spotted Crake
Spotless Crake
Black-tailed Water Hen
Black Moor Hen
Bald Coot
Coot
Black throated Grebe
Hoary Headed Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Wiskered Tern
Red-kneed Dottrel
Spur-winged Plaover
Black Breasted Plover
Australian Dottrel
White-Headed Stilt
Red-necked Avocet
Greenshank
Sharp-tailed Stint
Australian Snipe
Painted Snipe
Oriental Pratincole
Southern Stone-Curlew
Australian Bustard
Brolga
White Ibis
Straw Necked Ibis
Black Billed Spoonbill
Yellow-billed Spoonbill
White-shouldered Cateriller-eater
Grey-crowned Babbler

White-browed Babbler
Brown song-Lark
Ruffous Song-Lark
White-fronted Bush-Chat
Orange Bush-Chat
Australian Reed-Warbler
Little Grass-Bird
Speckled Warbler
Little Tit Warbler
Yellow tailed Tit Warbler
Red-rumped Tit Warbler
Chestnut-tailed Tit Warbler
White-browed Scrub Wren
Blue Wren-Warbler
White Winged Wren-Warbler
Varigated Wren-Warbler
White-breasted Wood Swallow
White-browed Wood-Swallow
Masked Wood-Swallow
Black-faced Wood-Swallow
Little Wood-Swallow
Harmonious Shrike-Thrush
Magpie Lark
Whiteface
Orange-winged Nuthatch
Brown Tree-Creeper
White-Throated Tree-Creeper
Red-browed Tree-Creeper
White-eye
Mistletoe Bird
Orange-tipped Diamond Bird
Red-tipped Pardalote
Spotted Pardalote
Black-chinned Honey-eater
Brown-headed Honey-eater
Striped Honey-eater
Black Honey-eater
Painted Honey-eater
Brown Honey-eater
Fuscous Honey-eater
Singing Honey-eater
White-plumed Honey eater
Noisy Miners
Yellow-throated Miner
Spiny-cheeked Wattle-bird

Blue-Faced Honey-eater
Jabiru
White-fronted Heron
White Necked Heron
Nankeen Night Heron
Yellow Necked Mangrove Bitten
Australian Bitten
Black Swan
Pied Goodse
Maned Goose
Whistling Duck
Grey (Black) Duck
Grey Teal
Chestnut-breasted Teal
Blue Winged shoveller
Pink-eared Duck
Freckled Duck
White eyed Duck
Musk Duck
Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Little Pied Cormorant
Pied Cormorant
Australian Darter
Australian Pelican
Spotted Harrier
Swamp Harrier
Australian Goshawk
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Little Eagle
Whistling Eagle
Square -tailed Kite
Black Breasted Buzzard
Black-shouldered Kite
Peregrine Falcon
Grey Falcon
Black Falcon
Little Falcon
Brown Hawk
Striped Brown Hawk
Nankeen Kestrel
BooBook Owl
Winking Owl
Barn-Owl

Blue Mountain Lorikeet
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
Musk Lorikeet
White Cockatoo
Galah
Cockatiel
Red-Winged Parrot
Pale Headed Rozella
Yellow Mantled Rozella
Ring-necked Parrot
Blue-bonnet Parrot
Many-coloured Parrot
Red-backed Parrot
Budgerygah
Tawny Frogmouth
Owlette Nightjar
Australian Roller
Kookaburra
Red-backed Kingfisher
Sacred Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Spotted Nightjar
Spine-tailed Swift
White-rumped Swift
Palid Cuckoo
Fantaied Cuckoo
Black-eared Cuckoo
Bronze Cuckoo
Barrow-billed Bronzed Cuckoo
Channelbill
Welcome Swallow
Tree-Martin
Fairy Martin
Brown Flycatcher
Scarlett-breasted Robin
Red-capped Robin
Hooded Robin
Short-billed Tree-tit
Bush-warbler
Gerygone(?)
Yellow-breasted Whistler
Ruffous-breasted Whistler
Shrike-tit
Crested Bellbird

Yellow-breasted Whistler
Rufous-breasted Whistler
White-shafted Whistler
Rufous Fantail
Black and White Fantail
Restless Flycatcher
Leaden Flycatcher
Ground Cuckoo Shrike
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Little Cuckoo Shrike
Meadow Lark Spotted sided Finch
Chestnut eared Finch

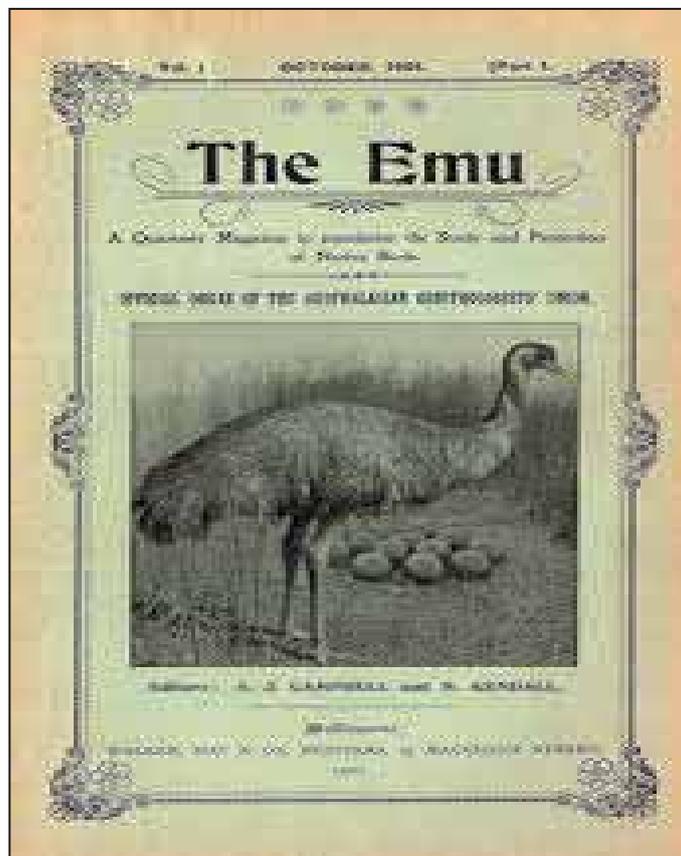
Banded Finch
Plum-headed Finch
Red-browed Finch
Australian Oriole
Spotted Bower Bird
Short billed Crow
Raven
Grey Jumper
White Winged Chough
Pied Bell-Magpie
Black-throated Butcher Bird
Collared Butcher Bird
Black-backed Magpie

His list serves to remind us of the numerous varieties and numbers of birds which prevailed in the area, 100 years ago. The heartbreaking reality facing us now is how so many have diminished in number or completely disappeared. Water loss, irrigation, dry farming and other types of agriculture have decimated numbers and species. Sadly, we should consider the migratory birds that flew thousands of miles in order to reach feeding areas around the Moree wetlands only to have perished due to the disappearance of water, marshes and mud flats. There has always been the added dimension of droughts and floods which have had great impacts on the wetlands.



CHAPTER 8

THE EMU CONTRIBUTIONS





Frederick Morse was a member of The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU), now part of Bird Life Australia which was founded in 1901. It promoted the study and conservation of the native bird species of Australia and adjacent regions. This makes it Australia's oldest national birding association. It was also Australia's largest non-government, non-profit, bird conservation organisation.

Libby Robin's *The Flight of the Emu – A Hundred Years of Australia Ornithology 1901-2001* describes *Emu* readers as: “‘cabinet naturalists’ as well as field ornithologists, and oologists who had a passion for plugging gaps in their collections and their scientific knowledge.”

She goes on to say:

‘Perhaps *Emu*’s most important function was keeping collectors in touch with each other.

Frederic C. Morse’s short papers on birds and eggs of Garah, near Moree, New South Wales appeared in *Emu* between 1919 and 1922, often illustrated with photographs and prompted a fascinating range of responses. A set of letters to Morse, now held in Museum Victoria, reveals how the *Emu* became the focus of a range of ornithological and oological networks. Morse’s 1922 paper provided ‘the most northerly record of *Acanthiza pyrrhopygia* (the Chestnut rumped Thornbill now *A. uropygialis*) raised questions about the range of the Inland Thornbill (then *A. albiventris*, now *A. apicalis*). The paper prompted a letter from A.G. Campbell seeking to borrow skins from Morse ‘for examination and checklist purposes.’ Campbell’s father wrote separately praising Morse’s photography: ‘Your egret pictures are as grand as they are rare. With your assistance and advice, the RAOU should get a cinemetograph (sic) in those some seasons. A film or two of such pictures would make the untion famous!’

H.L. White of *Belltress* (Scone, NSW). whose patronage had been behind the inclusion of Morse’s articles in *Emu* was excited by Morse’s exceptional finds:

By Jove! You are in luck finding that big heronry: what a wonderful breeding ground. Yes glossy Ibis eggs are very good and should make excellent exchanges. I’d much like a set of Ibis and each of the Egrets and will make the value up to you later. The type clutch of Plumed Egret..eggs was taken in Riverina by A.H. Mattingley in 1906.

Over the years, Frederick Morse had many articles published in *The Emu*. These are some of his observations.

The Emu 1st July 1922

Egret and Glossy Ibis Rookeries

by F.C. Morse, RAOU, *Coocalla*, Garah, NSW

“For many years I have been firmly convinced that the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis Falcinellus*) bred somewhere along the 70 miles of watercourse in this district, and, in company with Mr H A Mawhiney, I have spent many days in search of their nests.

On almost every trip we made to various points in this vast expanse of swamps the birds were seen, but no sign of a nest was found. To help us in the quest, we questioned every person we met living anywhere near the set area. Most of them did not even know the bird. We were fortunate in at last meeting Mr S A Freeman, who has a block of land in the Ibis country, and a telephone message on 2nd December from him to the effect that “Glossy Ibises were going to and fro past his camp daily, and apparently their headquarters was at a large Straw-necked Ibis rookery”, had Mr F McCallum, RAOU (who happened to be with me at the time), quickly preparing for a trip.

We reached Mr Freeman’s camp next day about 2 pm, and started a mile walk through shallow water towards the polygonum swamp, in which the Straw-necks (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) were breeding. This swamp covers a large area, through which we hunted for the remainder of the afternoon but could not even see a bird of the Glossy species. We returned to camp very disappointed but decided next day to work the northern portion of the swamp on which we had not yet touched. Carrying out these intentions, we had no sooner reached the polygonum bushes than a flock of Glossies rose just in front of us. Hurrying over to the spot, we could see several nests, mostly containing recently hatched young or eggs just chipping. One nest contained four eggs and one young just out of the shell. In all we counted seventeen nests in close proximity but could find no more further out. The nests were all very low down from two feet to six inches above the water, well back in the bushes, an outer ring of Straw-neck and White Ibis nests almost obscuring them from view. They were all built of the green, wiry ends of the polygonum bushes. After taking a few photos, all of which I lost through dropping the camera in the water, we made back to the camp, and that afternoon walked a couple of miles in another direction, hoping to locate some more Glossies in that quarter, but without success.

Next day, when six miles on the homeward track, we pulled up, leaving the car by the roadside, walked about two miles through fallen belar to another portion and quite a different type of swamp lands. In this place the channel was not more than a quarter of a mile wide, but a dense growth of eumung (*Acacia varians*) trees, with their spreading branches, almost covered up the water way. These trees do not grow more than 30 feet in height.

We were no sooner in this area than we were in the midst of hordes of birds – Egrets, Herons, Spoonbills, Cormorants and White and Glossy Ibis. The last were in great numbers, and nests were in evidence on all sides. Some contained large young, which on our approach, scrambled away up the branches.

Other nests were in process of construction, and there were eggs and young in all immediate stages. Having satisfied ourselves that we had at last found the long-sought spot, we made our way homewards with the intention of returning at an early date.

The following weekend, 9th December, saw us again on the same spot, this time accompanied by Mr Mawhiney. We worked the swamp both east and west for about half a mile but did not reach the end of the nesting area. For this reason, it would be impossible even to guess at the number of Glossies breeding here, but we concluded that we had seen three or four hundred nests.

The Glossies' nests, viewed from below, are indistinguishable from those of the Plumed Egrets. They are certainly built by the occupants, as we saw many birds carrying material. They are all constructed of the leafy ends of the eumung trees, some placed on old nests, others built in forks or branches of the trees from seven to twenty feet above the water level. They measure from 11 to 15 inches in width, with an egg cavity of two inches in depth. Clutches, usually three or four eggs; two nests contained five and one six eggs.

White, Plumed and Little Egrets (*Egretta alba*, *intermedia*, and *garzetta*) were also breeding here, the former two in great numbers. Of the Little Egret we could find only one small colony of perhaps thirty to fifty birds. These also were in all stages. In some nests the young were fledged, while other birds were only now building. Clutches of the White and Plumed were usually three, often four, while those of the Little were usually four or five.

On 17th December, heavy rain fell, and the country was once more flooded, and we were unable to get to the place again till 17th February of this year. Birds were still apparently as numerous as ever. A few nests still contained eggs, but there was evidence on all sides that breeding had practically ceased. The water was drying off, and many of the occupied trees were now on dry land.

We were rather alarmed at hearing what we took to be pea rifle shots every now and then and thought some marauders or murderers had got among our birds; we were much relieved to find it was only eggs popping in the drying mud.

This most interesting spot is probably the largest heronry in New South Wales. There are hundreds of thousands of birds breeding here. It is on the extreme portion of four different holdings. The land itself is of very little value for grazing purposes, and probably very little or no objection would be raised to its being proclaimed a sanctuary. The total length is not more than three miles, of an average width of about a quarter of a mile. In conclusion, I would like to mention that this is the only place where I have seen the White Ibis nesting among the trees, many nests being fully 20 feet from the ground. They usually occupy quite a lowly position.”

Many of the historic birdlife photographs featured in this book were included in F.C. Morse’s book *Birds of the Moree District* published in 1922. They are more than 100 years old and have weathered time well. Most of these photographs were taken in the area close to his home *Cooalla*, in the Gwydir Wetlands.



Unique nesting place of the Native Hen – F.C. Morse



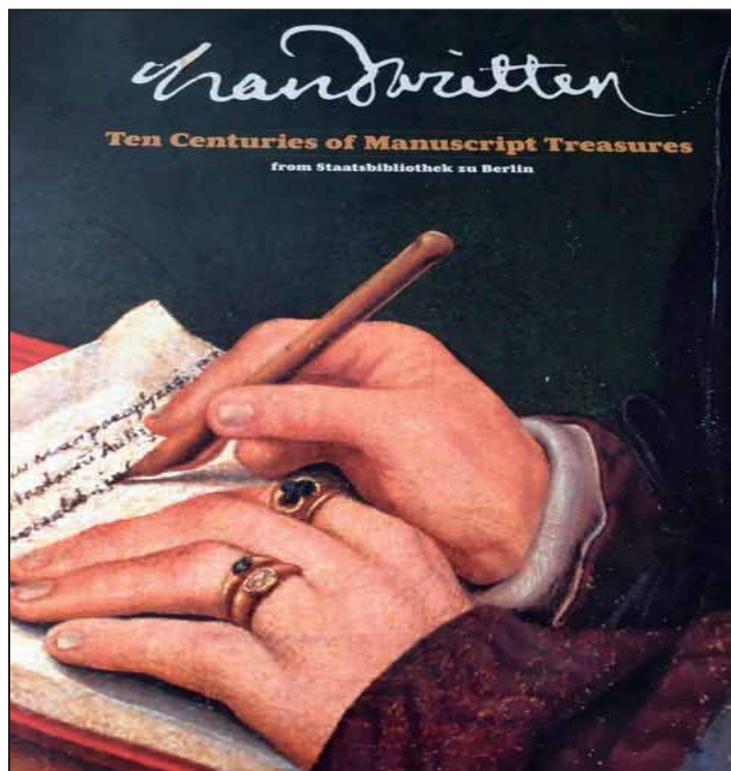
Possibly Pectoral Sandpipers – photograph by F.C. Morse



CHAPTER 9

THE COLLECTORS LETTERS

As with collecting, letter writing was also a pleasurable and prolific pastime during this period. According to The National Library of Australia's book *Handwritten, Ten Centuries of Manuscript Treasures*: "In an era when the practice indeed the art, of writing by hand is fast giving way to the keyboard, it is timely to pause and consider the volume of words penned on paper over time."⁵³



⁵³ National Library of Australia *Handwritten Ten Centuries of Manuscript Treasures*

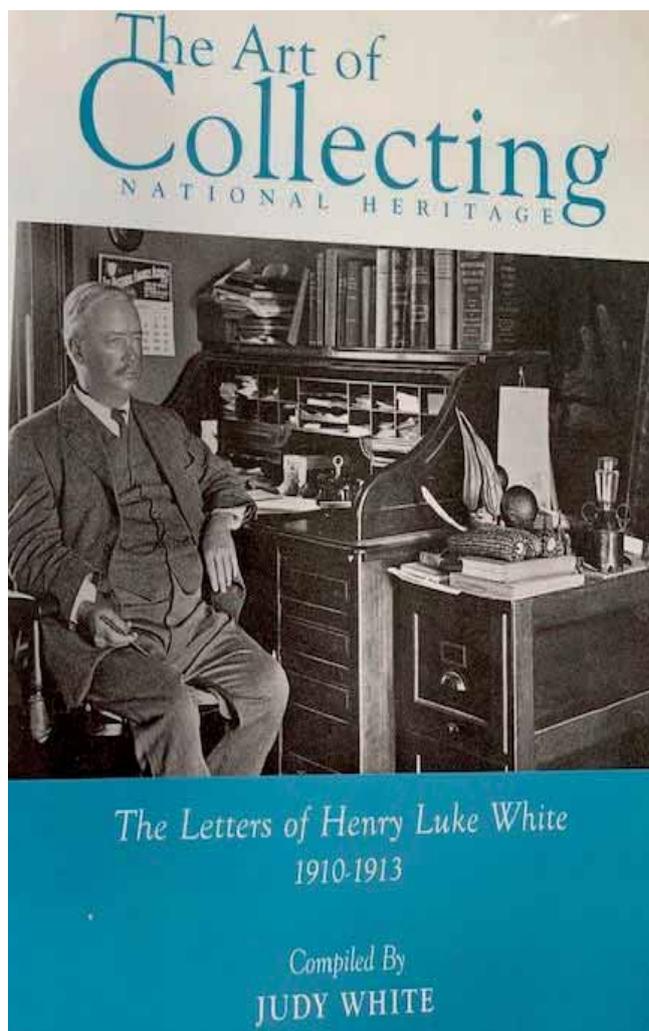
From the early 1920s, Frederick Morse wrote and received letters from other collectors within Australia and overseas.

The content, written in the copperplate script of the period, was not always easy to read and certainly the spelling of some Latin words has been a challenge. In addition, the Latin names used more than 100 years ago have changed and been supplanted by other names over time and the common language used then sometimes differs from modern style and usage. Distance, land area and temperatures are in the old Imperial Measure.

Judy White, *Belltrees*, Scone, writes “A hundred years ago there was no greater letter writer than the pastoralist, H L White, patriarch of one of Australia’s most influential farming families, whose years of writing letters and collecting birds, eggs and stamps and books.” Mr White apparently penned 54,000 letters to his agents, friend and fellow collectors among them was F C Morse.⁵⁴

Some of the most notable people with whom my grandfather, F.C. Morse, had correspondence were:

- H.L. White – Pastoralist, *Belltrees*, Scone
- Department of the Interior – United States Geological Survey, Washington USA
- C. Anderson, Director, The Australian Museum, Sydney
- Neville Cayley, Author – *Birds of Australia*
- Angus & Robertson, Publisher
- Taronga Zoological Park Trust



Many of these letters were written in beautiful script and very few had been typed. It is interesting to note the formal style in which the writers addressed each other.

⁵⁴ *The Art of Collecting* National Heritage White. J,

Kilgobbin Vic
8 July 22

F. B. Morse Esq
Dear Sir

After reading your interesting
bird notes in last issue I venture to
ask if you have or could obtain
any skins of *Acantopiza* which you
would care to lend for examination.
For checklist purposes I am assisting
the committee with this family at
present. Yours is the most northerly
record for *pyrrhopygia* I may prove
to be *albiventris* a species whose range
is not yet determined, but specimens
of the other three you name will be
appreciated. I am especially keen on
immature birds. Thanking you

yours faithfully

A. J. O. Campbell

Instead of the trouble of skinning formalin makes a
good specimen if diluted part for part with water
& a half teaspoonful placed in an incision in the
loamen & some drops down the throat. Better still
use a hypodermic syringe.

this season. A. J. O.

Belltrees (*connected with Scone by Telephone*)
Scone, NSW

2nd November, 1920

To: F C Morse Esq.
Coocalla Garah

Dear Sir,

Thanks for yours of the 28th Ult and the two clutches of eggs, both of which are very wet. Please satisfy my curiosity as to why one of the clutch eggs has a drill hole so much larger than the others; my theory is that you commenced with a larger hole than was afterwards found necessary. Your experience with ducks of this specimen is interesting and instructive. Have you eggs of Trichoglossus septentrionalis; if (not) I can send you a clutch lately received from Cape York.

Can supply also 1/2 Eutonuza harterti from same locality.

We have dropped into summer weather, all of a sudden 96° in my office verandah yesterday; there could be some lively bush fires about Xmas time.

Kind regards and renewed thanks

Yours very truly

H L White

Ryecroft
Lyndhurst
Victoria
27.11.1920

F C MORSE ESQ

Dear Mr Morse,

Yours of the 19th instant came to hand this morning for which I thank you much. I am very pleased to hear you have secured me a clutch of the Whistling Duck. I have been after a clutch of this species since 1905. I am pleased to hear you secured a clutch of the Painted Honeyeater did you take this yourself. As the season here is now over will you kindly send me a complete list of your collections also your duplicate clutches and I will let you know what I can let you have. I have a few good clutches placed on one side for you, and I feel sure you will be very pleased with. I had no idea you had so many Foxes in your district have you many dogs. I have often shot these two pests with a 32 rifle. Yes late in November seems to be the time for Rifle Birds breeding in the Dorrigo. If you can possibly let me have a few of your collection before the 20th December I will be much obliged as a collector is coming to go through my dupes and I would like to pick out any of use to you before he 'digs in' to use a vulgar expression. We are having a good season here but rather much rain as we cannot get on to the ground to cut the Hay Crop. I received a good egg today viz the 'Cape Petrel' this is the first specimen I have ever seen but I hope to secure some others before long and needless to say I will remember you. I am collecting Indian eggs so any common dupes not required will be welcome especially if we cannot secure them here. I have some beautiful marked eggs of the Yellow Faced Honeyeater 3 egg clutches I could send you if you would care to have them of course they are only common eggs but are useful to show variations. Hoping to hear from you in due course and wishing you the compliments of the approaching season.

Athenae
Bryson Street
Canterbury Vic
Nov 29th '20

F C Morse Esq
Coocalla Garah NSW

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 22nd inst to hand. I was glad to hear from you and particularly glad that you had had a good season, especially with the birds. Our season is now in full swing and I hope to take many sets before it closes. I cannot believe that your treecreeper is the red-browed species. (Cerythrops) and I think it is referable to the C superciliosa,. If I mistake not your locality is the open plain country where the red-browed bird is never seen; also it is a stationary species and frequents the mountainous country in coastal districts. Of your duplicates I'll be glad to get Eagle 1/2, Red-winged Lory 1/4, Grey Teal, if 12 or more, Wood Duck 1/12, Mallee Parrot (could do with two sets if to spare) and Gill Bird 1/2.

I have some good duplicates on hand that I collected in the Mallee and Southern Victoria and will send a list when I have time to arrange and go through them.

*Yours in haste
F E Howe*

*Department of the Interior
United States Geological Survey, Washington*

July 12/20

*Mr F C Morse
Coocalla Garah NSW*

Dear Sir,

In vol. XIX '19 para 107 an article by Dr F W Shepard Hon meant RIOU you will see I am deeply interested in Australian Oology. I respectfully request if we can enter in exchange of carefully prepared sets of bird's eggs with full accurate data. Mr Morse owing to the great distance and time it takes to exchange correspondence I am asking you to forward me a nice selection of your sets. I would like to get Blk Swan Cerana Eagle Hawk and the Shiny Birds(?) of course all kinds. I will return you a nice set of American eggs of some of your migratory birds.

Sincerely Yours

*Edward J Court
U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY*

I would like especially to secure several sets of the handsomely marked Wedge Tailed Eagle and in (return for) which I shall send you extremely rare migrants. I am in touch with collectors in all parts of the world – Alaska to Falklands and all of Europe.

Secure me full sets in original clutches of the Australian Crane and the larger mill marker typical eggs all shore birds and the beautiful some species? I would like a set of the G thio Minor and Nosey Fryre Bird a set also Cape Barren Goose. I have a 1/5 James Maclain take clutches Is. Bass Strait.

Secure me a series of the bright sets of Brown Hawk and all hawks.

Sincerely

E J Court

Will post you box next week and aim same will please you.

184 Napier Terrace
Kings Park S A
17.12.20

Dear Mr Morse

Just returned from Moolawalana Stn and pleased to find your letters here, many thanks for same.

We are having a wonderful season in the north but with all that eggs are scarce, that is those of value. I have just packed up a few sets for you and hope I'm not duplicating your collection, I have included a 1/2 set of Ashbycai Lorensis it is a complete set, I sometimes find 3 of the set and even took a 4 set just recently but 2 is in my belief the usual. I shall let you have a 3 set when I get it. I have only 2 three sets on hand and these were promised before to other collectors. A 3 set Aust. Dotterel and 1/3 Plumed Egret, 1/2 set of Melinrnis longrishis and 1/5 set Zosteropo grinli both from WA trip and a fairly rare set of 1/2 Pachycephala rufiventris mandeae or Central Aust Thickhead named by Capt White – two is the usual set and a 1/2 set of the WA Flyeater. I'm sorry Grey Falcon is not available. I had promised it

Washington DC
April 15/21

Mr F C Morse
Coolcalla, Garah NSW

My dear Mr Morse

I am in receipt of the eggs and your highly esteemed letter and I assure you our exchanges will be a real pleasure.

I am sending you some of the immigrants also some of our showy Avocets.

Yes I would greatly appreciate if you could take me two sets (5 each) of the Black Swans this September.

I am especially desirous always to have full clutches, but I desire all of the Australian kites. April 10th 1921 my friend Herbert A Stone and myself collected 10 11 14 of the extremely rare duck here – this species breeds in natural centres in tree on the water edge by the small streams.

*Rose Cottage 156 Main Road
New Town Tasmania*

12/3/1921

*F C Morse Esq.
Coocalla
GARAH New South Wales*

Dear Sir,

*It has been my intention for some considerable time to communicate with you in connection with bird matters, i.e. with a view to opening up an exchange relations, but unfortunately my collection proper has been packed up for approximately two years and it is only recently that I have had access to same. By this mail I am taking the liberty of forwarding to you a 1/3 clutch of eggs of our *Acanthornis magna* which I hope will be a welcome arrival at your address. I understand that you take eggs of the Pectoral Rail (*H philippensis*) and should you have a spare clutch of eggs of this bird would I be asking too much of you to favour me with the same in return for the 1/3 *A. magna* forwarded: I trust not – I am well off for eggs of the Crakes and Rails inhabiting Tasmania with the exception of *H p* and am naturally anxious to secure a good clutch, near the maximum if possible. Herewith I am forwarding Lord's list in which will be found a specification of my spare duplicates, amongst which may be something of interest to you. If so please return List and quote numbers shown in parenthesis. My *desidernovae-hollandiae* (White Goshawk): this is desired to exchange for either 1/3 *Falco lunulatus* or a complete clutch of *A novae hollandiae* taken on the mainland. I have a nice 1/4 in my collection but always aim at duplicating from a different locality. I am also anxious to secure a well-marked clutch of *U. audax*. Should you be able to assist me in either of these connections I should be much indebted.*

Trusting to hear favourably from you in the near future.

I am

Yours faithfully

H B Hollingsworthe

P/S I use RAOU Check List (1913) numbers, Lord's trinominal handlist merely for convenience.

156 Main Road
New Town Tasmania

29th May 1921

F C Morse
Coocalla Garah

Dear Sir,

I have your favour of the 7th inst. To acknowledge, also the box of specimens, for both of which many thanks. I have delayed in replying because I was hoping to forward the 1/2 H. maculata and 1/6 P. fluminea asked for by you, but unfortunately I have been kept too busy to pack and am afraid I will not be able to do so until the end of next week. I am just on the point of a trip (business) to the West Coast. I note that you require eggs of P formosus. I have 1/3 that I can let you have now if you wish, but I could improve as regards numerical value before the end of next season. This is a complete clutch although small the unusual number here being 1/4. In fact I have only taken the one 3 egg clutch. I regret that I did not communicate with you earlier because the spare 4 egg clutches have long since been promised to Messrs Howe and Archer of Melbourne. Please let me know if you would like to have the 1/3.

You will be sorry to learn that the 1/1 Wedge-tailed Petrel arrived in a badly damaged condition. It has a clean crack almost all round. I have examined under a microscope and find that an old fault oxidated, probably from the time it was laid, and doubtless the knocking about in the post did the rest. I will return with other eggs for you to see.

What an interesting district yours must be in a wet season. I hope those nesting 'ponds' of yours will soon be brimming over and remain so until the 'right time'. In the matter of ducks, however, I'm afraid it will be a difficult matter for me to effect an adequate exchange for eggs 'new' to me that you may be able to secure, unless negotiations in a certain direction terminate favourably, in the event of which I will be able to get you well in my debt.

My time is now limited but I will write to you fully when I forward specimens. Kindly drop me a line by return. In case I am delayed in packing, in which case, the 1/3 P formosus could be included.

In great haste.

Yours very truly

H B Hollingsworthe

*1 Kings Park
SA
24.11.21*

Dear Mr Morse

I suppose you are wondering what has become of me as it is ages since I wrote.

Under separate cover I am mailing you a box of eggs, there are eight sets that do not appear in your list, most of these have been in my collection but having secured another set with fuller data I am now able to part with them I hope they will fill a gap until you (like myself) are able to get better sets.

Did that Wonga Pigeon take pity on my 'wants' I've been trying ages to get a good set, I have one egg that may be authentic but I'm rather in doubt of it so would much like to put it in the fire.

I've not done very much collecting personally but have enlarged my collection considerably this season and now have well over 500 species and subspecies represented – I hope you are getting along as you wish with yours. New sets are too secure for me now though many common sorts are missing also.

Business in Adelaide is very slack and most places are slackening hands. It's a good job wool is a decent price for with low stock prices holders of pastoral country – would be hard pity. We got 15 to 13 per lb fleece for those wethers that cut 17lbs wool, a good return is it not.

Yours faithfully

J Neil McGilp

*Munduberra
Queensland
18/8/21*

*F C Morse Esq.
Garah*

Dear Sir,

*In May I wrote to you re exchange of eggs. As our season is now coming on I am sending you a list of things I either get myself or have sent to me. If there is anything that you would care for will you kindly let me know as early as possible, when I will put them by for you. Amongst my long list of requirements I would like any whitefaces, ducks with down, any waders such as Bitterns, Spoonbills, Avocets, Stilts, any Herons, Moorhens or Rails, any quails, little Crake, Native Hen, Hoary Headed Grebe, Red Kneed Dotterel, Black breasted plover, Painted Snipe particularly
A E L Bertling*

Petworth Park
Moora
West Australia

28th Dec 1921

F C Morse Esq
Coocalla
Garah N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

In a recent letter from Mr H L White (Belltrees) he gave me your name as a collector of Birds Eggs and I thought we might be able to exchange same to our mutual advantage, if so I should very much like to receive your list of duplicates.

I take many solely Westralian species Liومتis pastualtor, Baruardius zouarus and Petroca camphrele.

But a Queensland collector has them under offer.

Mr White has been exchanging with me for many years, but it's getting very difficult to procure fresh material for him now.

Yours truly,

C L E Orton

*The Australian Museum
Sydney
13th January 1922*

*Mr F C Morse
Coocalla
GARAH NSW*

Dear Sir

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 23rd December 1921 together with packet containing the eggs of the Glossy Ibis. As to the nest we should indeed be glad to receive one if you could procure it; we should also like to have a photograph of the nest in situ.

Yours faithfully,

*C Anderson
Director*

*Auckland Ave
Geelong
May 23rd 1922*

Dear Mr Morse

I hear by the 'Emu' that you have been well among the Ibis and the Egrets so I am taking the liberty of letting you know that the eggs of the Glossy Ibis and Plumed Egret are new to me. In your last letter to me you mentioned that at some future date you would send something along in exchange for the Bush bird eggs I sent.

Last October I was fortunate to find a White Ibis rookery so you can imagine I secured several clutches of the eggs of this bird.

Are you taking the trip to South Australia this year? I cannot go but Bert Watson expects to get away.

With Kind regards

Yours faithfully

*H A Purnel
Ps The photos you secured were very fine*



Glossy Ibis on nest - photograph by F.C. Morse

Athenae
1 Bryson Street
Canterbury VIC

January 23rd 1922

F.C. Morse Esq

Dear Sir,

In the current issue of 'The Emu' I see that you have taken eggs of Plegallis alcinellus and Dendracnaeytoni.

I must again remind you that both species are new to me. I have had plenty of opportunities to get the former from Europe but I want an Australian laid set.

I finished up one of the best seasons ever experienced and my mallee trip was a record. I'd be glad to have a list of your collection, together with your duplicates as I think I will be able to help you to something or other.

Last week I spent a night with Mr C L Barrett, an old friend, who gave me many photo prints for my catalogue. Mr Barrett mention that you had plenty of photos – is there any chance of getting a few prints for illustrating my catalogue? I have duplicates of Drymodes, malarius melanttic, glycipilia albipious and many others.

Yours very truly

F E Howe

Cobborah Estate
Cobbora NSW

Dear Mr Morse,

You will see I am home again, and have been for nearly three weeks, but did not write before owing to not feeling too well and leaving more writing to be done than I could manage in the time. The eggs I found here awaiting me quite safe. I herewith enclose a list of duplicates which I think I leave on hand, but I cannot say for certain, so better mention for then the two sets I owe you, in addition to the 3 Warty-faced Honey-eater and 1 of the Nightjar you asked for, both these I have put away for you.

On the 28th inst I am going away for three weeks holiday.

Yours faithfully,

Herb P Austin

ARCHER, R.

27-11-1920

Ryecroft
Lyndhurst
Victoria

J. C. Moore Esq

Dear Mr Moore

Yours of the 19th inst
came to hand this morning for which I
thank you much I am very pleased
to hear you have secured me a clutch
of the Whistling Duck I have been
after a clutch of this species since 1905
I am pleased to hear you secured a
clutch of the Painted Honeyeater did
you take this yourself. As the season
here is now over will you kindly
send me a complete set of your collection
also your duplicate clutches and I will
let you know what I can let you have
I have a few good clutches placed on one
side for you, and I feel sure you will
be pleased with. I had no idea you
had so many Foxes in your district
have you many Dogs I have often shot
these two pests with a 32 Rifle. Yes late
in November seems to be the time for
Rifle Birds breeding in the "Dorrigo"

54 Claremont Avenue,
Malvern Victoria
2 March 1922

F C Morse Esq.
Coocalla Garah N S Wales,

Dear Sir,

About 2 months ago I received from J Neil & McGilp of . Australia, a letter in which he suggested that if I wanted a set of eggs of the glossy ibis I should write to you. I knew that you had a very fine collection and that probably I would have nothing new to you to offer in exchange and therefore I did not act on Mr McGilp's suggestion. This week I received from him another letter in which he asks if I have the chestnut-breasted quail, mentions that he has just received a set of 4 from you and states that if I am in need of a set you might spare one. So I decided to write you and ascertain if among my best duplicates there is anything which you might accept in exchange for a set of either of the species mentioned by Mr McGilp. I am not quite sure which quail he calls the chestnut-breasted, for the RAOU list contains the chestnut-bellied and the chestnut-backed , but no chestnut breasted. But I have neither of those on our list. The only quail sets I have at present are stubble 8, brown 9, Tasmanian brown 10, red backed 4 (damaged) painted 4, little 4. My collection contains well over 500 species, but there ae a great many gaps that I hope to fill sooner or later.

Would any of the following be of use to you:

182 grey heron 5, 235 allied swamp hawk 4, 361 pallid cuckoo 1, with 648 yellow faced honeyeater 2, 361 pallid cuckoo 1 with 671 bell miner 1, 362 fantail cuckoo 1 with 471 pilot bird 1, 366 narrow billed bronze cuckoo 1 with 530 blue wren 2, 471 pilot bird 2, 472 scrub robin 1, 476 rufous bristle bird 2, 583 orange-winged pee runner, 627 spinebill2, 629 tawney-crowned honeyeater 2, 671 bell miner 2.

In the case of the grey heron the clutch was collected for Dr Richards of the United States Navy on 29/3/08 at Briesen (by) Mark Brandenburg, Germany but all the others well collected in our own country and I have the names of the collectors etc.

I would have written to you long ago if I had not known that you were exchanging with R H Archer, F C Howe and the late A . Stone all from this neighbourhood.

Already I have in my collection a set of grey teal taken by you and in my catalogue which is illustrated with nearly 500 photographs I have a fine picture of the entrance to a bee-eaters tunnel taken by you. The eggs I received from W Archer and . Le Louef of the Melbourne Zoo gave me the photo.

*Yours faithfully,
J A Ross*

Cayley's Birds of Australia
Bul-ga-roo
18 Wellington Road,
Box Hill Vic
22nd July, 1922

F C Morse Esq RAOU
Coocalla, Garah NSW

Dear Mr Morse,

I read with much interest your article on the Birds of Moree in last 'Emu'. It is a valuable contribution to the distribution of species, which is a special favourite of mine. It is pleasant to identify a particular bird and thence put our finger over the map of Australia and show its habitat. But we have much to learn yet before that can be properly done. However, you have put your brain into the structure.

Now, for one or two points in our list. First, the unidentified greystone. Some years ago I named one after our friend S W Jackson – A Jackson. He got it somewhere along your border but I fancy further west. Possibly it is that bird or else the Southern Greystone – G culiavore (Gould) not G Rusea as shown in your article (although the true Rusea may be found in your Eastern ranges. Gregory Machurs has our transposing names rusea for culicivora or richmondi or something else and has been making 'confusion worse confounded' as Milton says.

A J CAMPBELL

*Cobborah Estate
Cobbora NSW*

December 25th

Dear Mr Morse

I have just been away for a holiday and found your letter and box of eggs awaiting me upon my return, for which many thanks. I have put aside the egg of the spotted nightjar and 1/3 Warty-faced Honeyeater for you, but will not send them on yet as there might be something else to go for exchange for a well marked clean set of four Royal Spoonbill and a good 2 of four Glossy Ibis also perhaps something else that from that wonderful new rookery. I regret to say I have not got a set of Rifle-birds eggs in my duplicates and I am very much after, as you will be, to find anyone who has. I also had P Vicariae but gave it to the RAOU collection.

Very many thanks for your kind invitation to pay you a visit next year, there are few things I would enjoy more but due to bad health I am very much afraid I will not be able to accept. I cannot however resist the temptation is very great, so will see how when the time comes.

Yours sincerely,

Herb P Austin

*Angus & Robertson Ltd, Publishers - 89 Castlereagh Street, SYDNEY
18/1/22*

*F C Morse
Coocall Garah NSW*

Dear Fred,

Thanks for yours of 7th inst. I am pleased you are letting us have the photos of the Egrets and enclosed is a cheque and the usual forms. I made a selection from the prints you sent me, but of course we will want the negatives to make enlargements.

Ramsay's charges are very reasonable and being a bird man he knows what to do with Bird Subjects. I'll get him to make a few enlargements of some of your birds and send them along to you. The skins reached me safely. I took them to the Museum and compared the Quail with skins there. Your identification is quite correct, Nos. 1 and 2 are T pyrrothorax; Nos. 3, 4, and 5 T velox. Enclosed is a print of my plate of them which will bear out the identification.

Have been going through the Photographic section to see how we stand. Am trying to break new ground; the accompanying list will give each contributor an idea of what we still want. You may be able to help, especially with habitats, and nests and eggs of some of the Quail. Other lists will follow shortly. Although we have up to date, accepted 1000 photos you will see there are still a number of birds where we have nothing. The Sea Birds are the worst of the lot. Anyway I have a few months still left in which to fill some of the gaps and hope to get photos of their habitats at least.

Thanks for the skins Fred, they are always acceptable especially when they are new records for districts. There is talk of lumping together these two quail, but I'm quite certain they are distinct and firmly believe from my own observations that there are two Brown Quail. Littler in his book on the 'Birds of Tasmania' says there are two there – S Australia and S diemenensis, the latter being the large Swamp Quail. I'm of the opinion that we have the same here.

I have always found the large bird in swampy ground and in small numbers, their eggs are larger and again they are constant in colour, not like the plain variety (where) in a dozen birds it's hard to get two alike; they are always in large numbers and much smaller. My old Dad, a great quail and snipe shot, always said there were two but they still have only one on our list. What do you know of them Fred? I would like others to look into this to hear their views.

I do not think the Museum people will be able to send a collector away for this season, but may do so next (if there is a season next year). I hope so, there are still plenty of photos wanted of the Cranes and Ducks.

*With Kindest Regards
Yours sincerely Neville W Cayley*

*Roseneath,
Casterton
5.2.22*

*F C Morse Esq.
Coocalla Garah NSW*

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 28th to hand also list of dupes.

I will be delighted to get the 1/4 set of Glossy Ibis and feel I am getting very good value for my Black Cockies. All eggs I send will be side blown & full data. I am sending the eggs right away. As (per) your list the ones I am short of are 1/6 Native Hen, 1/6 Pink eared Duck, 1/4 Black Throated Butcher bird, 1/4 Striped Honeyeater, 1/3 Night Heron, 1/5 Plum headed finch, 1/2 Northern blue 1/2 Northern Blue faced Honeyeater, also Red chested Quail.

I have nothing good in duplicates but will also send a list of my collection and if there is anything there you want I will keep on the lookout for you.

Yours truly

C E Simson

Bul-ga-roo
Wellington Rd
Box Hill

21.2.22

F C Morse Esq. RAOU
Garah N.S.W.

Dear Mr Morse,

*Our mutual friend Mr H L White (Belltrees) mentioned your name to me and asked me had I any doubt that the little *Qualis Turnix velox* *St parpohorase* were separate and distinct species. I replied I had no doubt whatsoever, but that I required a description and the nest of the latter for 'Cayley's Birds of Australia', upon which work I am engaged.*

Mr White sent the message that I could not do better than write you on the subject, hence this letter.

I shall indeed be glad if you can find time to send me a brief notated description of the nests of both species as well as a distinct description of each bird's nest and skin, usual sites or situation. Anticipating any best thanks for same.

Yours very sincerely,

A J CAMPBELL

p s: Had you any other kind of Quails nesting with you this season?

AJC



⁵⁵ Acanthza

⁵⁵ <http://birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/brown-thornbill>

*Kilsyth Vic
8 July, 22*

F C Morse Esq.

Dear Sir,

After reading your interesting bird notes in last 'Emu' I venture to ask if you have or could obtain any skins of Acanthiza which you would care to lend for examination. For checklist purposes I am assisting the committee with this family at present. Yours is the most northerly record for pyrhopygia and may prove to be albrivenins, a species whose range is not yet determined, but specimens of the other three you name will be appreciated. I am specially keen on immature birds.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

A G Campbell.

Instead of the trouble of skinning, formalin makes a good specimen if diluted part for part with water and half a teaspoonful placed in an incision in the abdomen and some drops down the throat, better still to use a hypodermic syringe.

Best to you this season...AGC



56

Grey Kangaroo

*Taronga Zoological Park Trust
Zoological Gardens, Mosman
Sydney
15/7/22*

Dear Morse,

Two definite requests which I should be glad of some data on

(A) The dark kangaroo, have you a variety of the Great Grey that lives in the scrub or long river grass, found singly or in pairs or at most three, dark brown in colour, back of ears practically hairless, if so any confirmatory information will be gladly received and very useful.

(B) Should you know of the roost of an owl will you be kind enough to get the kiddies to collect all the stomach voidings under the tree or at the bottom of hollow, send them along in order to see just what they are feeding on. You can publish the results in any papers you write all I want is to see what rats and small marsupials you have in the district.

The name and address of the man on the Diamantina, my friend Mr Mick Hammond, is Tenham Station, Diamantina, via Charleville.

If you are going up that way I will write to him and I have no doubt that he will look after you well. There is a wallaby up there, found on the rocky hills with striped or ringed tail that I am anxious to get, one skins and skull will be plenty also please inquire for a wombat, he is or used to be a little south of this and may be as far west as the Diamantina.

Sincerely yours,

A S Le Souef

⁵⁶ <https://mansfieldzoo.com.au/animals/eastern-grey-kangaroo/>



Mistletoe bird

*Your note on *Grantiella picta* is of interest esp on its Mistletoe berry food. I am able to verify this from personal observation between Ivanhoe and Wilcannia last summer. You have *Glareolinae maldivarian Orientae Pratincole* on your list. Should this not be *Stiltia Isabella* the Australian Pratincole?*

*I hope you will not consider me a carping critic but your list is very useful to me in fixing the geographical distribution and I want to be sure of the identity of the various species. You do not mention any Black Cockatoo. There is one on the Darling with Menindie as its Southern limit and it goes up the Paroo towards and into Queensland and I have been wondering how far it follows the *C Banksia* in the species.*

*Yours sincerely,
MACGILLRAY W D H*

⁵⁷ <http://www.birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/mistletoebird>

*Angus & Robertson Limited
89 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY*

CAYLEY'S BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA.

Photographic Section

We are concentrating on the first twelve parts, which will deal with the birds numbered 1–110 in the 1913 check list of the RAOU. Mr. Cayley's coloured plates illustrating these 110 birds and their eggs are ready; and, as soon as all available information and photographs concerning them have been gathered and collated, publication will commence.

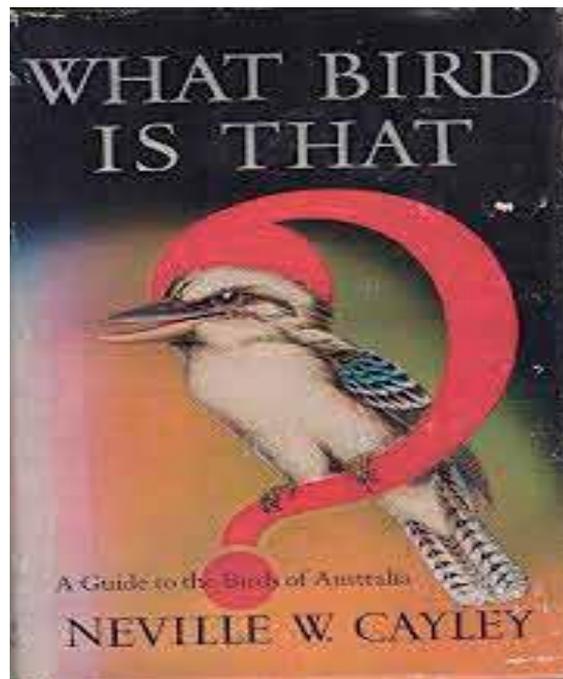
Where possible, it is intended to reproduce along with the description of each bird a series of photographs illustrating its nest in situ, eggs, young, habits, habitat, etc. So far about 1000 photographs have been selected for inclusion in the complete work. Those we have been able to secure are indicated by an X on the attached list; those without an X are still wanted, and we beg bird lovers to send in photographs to fill the gaps. The photographer's name will be printed under each picture, and a nominal fee will be paid where required. When payment is made the same photograph must not be reproduced elsewhere, except in books published under the photographer's own name, and in scientific journals and newspapers. To have one's work included in 'Cayley' (the cost of which will run into many thousands of pounds) will secure for each photograph the distinction of being the best known of its subject.

Mr Cayley has relieved Mr Charles Barrett of the photographic section of the work in order to leave him free to attend to the editing and general supervision of the letterpress – in itself a heavy task. All photographs, therefore and correspondence referring to them should be addressed to Angus & Robertson (Publishing Department) 89 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

Field observations, written on forms (sample enclosed) which we can supply in any quantity are also solicited. All information made (available to) us of will be duly acknowledge;, correspondence and suggestions are invited and will receive prompt attention.

A further list, showing what photographs are needed for birds numbered 111 to the end of the check list will be sent to you in the course of a week or two.

*Yours faithfully
ANGUS & ROBERTSON LTD
F.C. Stemson*



Neville W. Cayley's book, *What Bird is that* – a Guide to the Birds of Australia

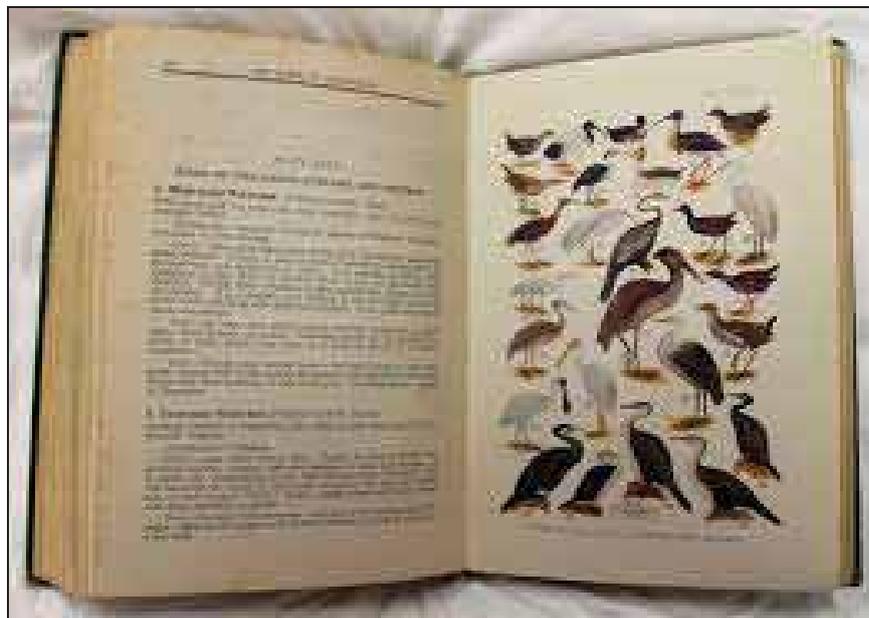


Photo spread from Neville Cayley's book about the birds of Australia.



Gwydir wetlands photographed by F.C. Morse

Edenhope
June 18th

Dear Mr Morse

Your letter to hand today. I hope the flood does not do much damage they are things quite unknown on this part not that (there is) not a lot of water about some winters but it never does any damage. Yes you are quite right in saying that I am not offering you the equivalent for what I am getting from you but I offered you the best I had and it will not be my fault if you are the loser by sending me these eggs, I will give you first chance of anything good I get this coming season. Yes, I have the Painted Snipe taken by you I got it from R Archer in exchange for Painted Honeyeater it is a beautiful set the best I have ever seen for colour and even as possible. I do not wonder at the Plumed Whistling Duck being sought after they are birds I know very little about, The Freckled duck come here but only when it is very dry in other parts, a few flocks stayed here one winter but they did not breed, the Blue Bill duck used to breed here but I have not seen a nest since 1909. You have been collecting the same time as I have but I think you have got on better although our numbers are about even you have better quality. There are some fairly good eggs to be got in the Vic Mallee not so many miles north of here. I intend to have another look round there this year, as I go to S A and perhaps after I come back. + I do not expect to get very much about his part this coming year so I will work.

I have one egg (Rept for old acquaintance) said to be taken nearly 60 years ago. Although you say you take the Black throated Honeyeater in your district you have not got it marked, I mean 616. I see you are weak in Parrots there are a few of them that I should be able to offer you next season if I have any luck. 304 Crimson Parrot breeds here and 300 Black tailed not far north of here, 319a Yellow vested Parrot is fairly common in the same part. You have two kinds of Ducks that I have never taken, the White eyed and Plumed Whistling duck. I have a set of Chestnut breasted Teal in my collection taken here they very seldom breed here. What is the size of your Shoveler set mine is twelve and I have seventeen Mountain duck.

You have not got 235 the common Harrier marked is that a mistake? I have a five set and a four of Australian Goshawk. Would you mind telling me where your Common Ground-bird and Pratincole were taken? My brother found the latter breeding in flocks in the far north of S A.

Yours sincerely,

H Collins

Edenhope
18th June

Dear Mr Morse

Your letter to hand with list of collection and dups which I am pleased to have. I have gone very carefully through the list and I find a few spaces there I might be able to help you to fill so I am sending you a list that I am in hopes of you choosing something from. Your list of dups has on it two sets I am keen on getting viz the Plumed and Australian Egrets. I have all the rest except these and the Masked Plover but I am not so keen on it. Your collection is a very nice one with some very valuable sets, what is your set of Plain Wanderer is it four? There are a few numbers not on your list that are such common eggs that think you must have omitted them.

I hope my rambling letter does not tire you but I don't meet any egg collectors in this part to talk to. Have you the Bare-eyed Cockatoo have not it marked I could easily get you a set from the North next season they are very common up there.

Our rain was late in coming which means that the ducks will not breed very freely. I hope you are having a good season up there. I found Garah on the map I have never been in that part of N S W. Edenhope is about 20 miles from the S A border just south of the Victorian Mallee about 40 miles south of Mildura on the Adelaide to Melbourne line. We have no line here the closest is 25 miles away, it is open forest country with lakes and swamps dotted through and mostly grazing country.

Hoping to hear from you again and that you will find something to choose in this list.

H Collins

Vol. I.

OCTOBER, 1901.

[Part I.]

The Emu

A Quarterly Magazine to popularise the Study and Protection
of Native Birds.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.



Editors: A. J. CAMPBELL and H. KENDALL.

Melbourne.

WALKER, HAY & CO., PRINTERS, 41 BACCHLOP STREET.

1901.

Front cover of the [R]AOU 1901 issue of *The Emu*



CHAPTER 10

THE EMU CONTRIBUTIONS

The Emu was formerly the quarterly magazine of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU). It was established in 1901 and is the oldest ornithological journal published in Australia. It is now known as *EMU-Austral Ornithology* and is the official flagship publication of Birdlife Australia, the nation's largest bird conservation organisation.

F.C. Morse made many contributions to *The Emu* expressing observations he seen and anecdotal incidences he observed. Some of them are reproduced in the following pages.

Ornithological Notes by F.C. Morse, RAOU, Coocalla, Garah, NSW Nesting of Painted Snipe

13th October 1917 – I was in search of Snipe (*Gallinago australis*) about eight miles from my home, in a swamp formed and fed by artesian water, being the terminus of a bore drain from a bore 20 miles east. Here I accidentally discovered the nest of a Painted Snipe (*Rynchaea Australia*) with a full clutch of four slightly incubated eggs. On the following Saturday, in the same swamp I found four young Painted Snipe nearly able to fly. This was evidence enough that the first nest was not a solitary example, but subsequent searches revealed nothing more for 1917.

19th August 1918 – I visited the swamp again for the sole purpose of finding out more of the breeding and nesting habits of the Painted Snipe. I was fortunate enough this time to find four nests with full clutches (four eggs), one of which was just on hatching, two others about half incubated and one fresh.

24th August 1918 – I searched the swamp carefully and found four more nests – two full clutches (fresh) one with two eggs (cold) one nest deserted with one egg.

7th September 2018 – I made another search with a companion and found one nest containing a full clutch of fresh eggs. Three other nests were found, in which the eggs had been broken. One set of three had large holes made in the side, and the contents extracted, the shell being otherwise undamaged, and one egg in another nest was in the same condition.

The swamp covers an area of about 20 acres, over most of which the water is only a few inches deep, and the grass is not more than a foot in height. The favoured spots for the nests are where the water lies in basins, and in the basins are scattered mounds of earth, the tops of which are a few inches above water level, not over one foot in diameter, and roundish in shape. On the outside edge a ring of soft grass grows, and in the centre, well concealed, the eggs are laid. Incomplete sets of fresh eggs were practically lying in a slight depression on bare mud, but as incubation increased the nests also increased, till in the one with eggs just on the point of hatching there was quite a substantial padding of soft grass collected from the surrounding grassy sides. The nests averaged 5 ½ inches in diameter. In most cases I flushed both birds from the vicinity of the nest, and when they rose they did not drop again till they were 100 to 200 yards away. Altogether I counted 14 birds on one day; there may have been a few more. This is an unusually large number to find in one swamp.

In November or December one can often flush five or six birds close to the same spot, but these are invariably the old pair with the season's young.

I don't know of any part of central or north-west New South Wales where these beautiful birds are numerous, and the unfortunate thing is that when the Jack Snipe (*Gallinago australis*) comes in (about August) the Painted Snipe is nesting, both birds frequenting the same locality, and the latter falls to the gun of the sportsman who, in nine cases out of ten, makes no distinction. In this way many breeding birds are killed each year.

21st September 1918 – I again visited the swamp, but could not flush a single bird; they had all gone. This may be accounted for by the fact that after the birds started nesting here there was a good fresh down the river, to the nearest point of which it would only be about three miles. Thousands of acres of good snipe lands were flooded, and the birds have probably gone to fresh pasturage.

Besides Painted Snipe, I one day counted 30 Jack Snipe and saw many other waders, Spur wing, Plover, White-necked Stilt, Red-kneed Dotterel (nesting), Black-fronted Dotterel, Sharp-tailed Stint, Many Little Crake, and a Greenshank.

F C Morse, *Coocalla*, Garah, NSW

Nesting Notes from Moree (40 miles from Queensland Border)

During the months of August and September I examined fourteen Ravens' (Crows?) nests, eleven of which contained five eggs, two four, and one six eggs.

1st September 2018 – I noticed the first arrival of Wood-Swallows; these were the masked variety. They are generally accompanied by the White-browed, but for some reason these latter did not appear. There are always some of the White-rumped and Common Wood-Swallows to be found here during the winter months. On the same day I noticed one Pied Caterpillar-eater.

20th September – Watched a Brown Tree-creeper dropping something down a hollow spout. She did not appear to be feeding young, so I climbed up and opened the hollow with my tomahawk. About a foot down there was the foundation of a nest made of grass, on the top of which was about a handful of kangaroo droppings, probably to give warmth. Many birds use dry manure for lining their nests, the White-browed Babbler in particular, but more so for the winter quarter nests than those for breeding purposes.

15th September – Found three nests of the Tawny Frogmouth, none of which was quite complete. About here the clutch is almost invariably four eggs.

21st September. – First flight of Bee-eaters noticed.

29th September – Found the nest of a Ground Cuckoo-Shrike; on climbing up, found three large young therein. Shortly after I found another with three fresh eggs.

1st October – Found a Brown Hawk's nest, which was high up in a tall, straight belar tree (Casuarina). The nest contained two eggs. Attached to the bottom of the nest was a Yellow-tailed Tit's nest, with eggs, on which the little bird was sitting. It is a remarkable thing that these little birds should so often choose a similar place to nest. I wonder if it is for protection.

On another occasion, on the Macquarie River, I found one nesting under a Sparrow-Hawk's nest, and a few days ago, I noticed a Spotted-sided Finch flying with grass up to an Eagle's nest.

11th October – Found a Striped Honey-eater's nest; to obtain it I had to attach a strong cord to the limb, which I then cut off and lowered to the ground. The little bird continued to sit on her eggs. The nest contained three fresh eggs.

Birds are nearly all robbers. The little Spotted-sided Finches' nests in the jacaranda trees in the garden are literally torn to pieces each year by 'Blue-faced Soldiers', White-rumped Wood-Swallows, and many other kinds, to build their own homes.

13th October -- Went with my two small boys to a swamp to see if I could shoot a Snipe. This is not a natural swamp, but is the terminus of a bore drain, and every year a few birds collect there.

The drain itself runs into a large tank about 60 yards square, and the sides are now overgrown with flags, in which the Reed-Warblers and Grass-Birds congregate. I was successful in getting six couple of Snipe, but the prize of the day was a Painted Snipe's nest, with four eggs. We also found one Pectoral Rail's with seven eggs, and two Reed-Warblers; also a Square-tailed Kite's, with two heavily-incubated eggs. During the week, while driving a mob of sheep, I noticed a Magpie-Lark fly from a Magpie's nest. Passing the same spot a week later, I saw the same thing occur. Curiosity got the better of me, and, although the nest was on the thin branches of a white-wood tree, I took the risk, and to my surprise found the bird, which builds a mud nest, was sitting on four eggs of her own.

She did not seem to have re-lined or made any alteration to the Magpie's nest. As I was coming down the tree again I found a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater's nest with two eggs.

20th October – Found a Bell-Bird's nest with two eggs; nest was lined with sheep's wool and a few hairy caterpillars, and the rim was finished off with a beautiful lining of sheep's wool. A sheep had died a few yards away, from where, no doubt, the birds got the material.

27th October – Paid another visit to the swamp. Succeeded in finding – or rather, my dog did – three young Painted Snipe, unable to fly, close to where I had found the eggs a week before; also shot five more of the 'Long-bills'. The Painted Snipe must lie very quiet while breeding. As a rule they are not hard to flush; but in my two visits to this swamp I only saw one bird, while, on the evidence of nest and young, there must have been two pairs, unless the birds nest again as soon as the first brood is fledged. We also found three Pectoral Rails' nests and one egg of a Spotted Crake.

25th October – Took a Narrow-billed Bronze-cuckoo's egg from a Tit's nest. The birds had not finished building, and the Cuckoo's egg was slightly incubated. I make special note of this, as a Narrow-bill's egg previously taken from a Tit's nest was far further incubated than the Tit's eggs. A Pallid Cuckoo's taken from a White-plumed Honey-eater's nest in the garden, which we were watching carefully (having seen a Cuckoo hanging round), was laid four days before the owners laid their first egg.

5th November – Paid a third visit to the swamp, and found one Little Crake's nest with two eggs, also several nests of the Grass-Bird, all in polygonum bushes over the water. One had two large young; the other two were not quite built.

5th November – Found the first Pied Caterpillar-eater’s nest, also Sacred Kingfisher’s, latter had five fresh eggs. Found several Pectoral Rails’ nests; eggs scattered about, with small holes pecked in them, as if by some bird. Noticed a large flock of Starlings about. I wonder if they were the culprits. They have only recently appeared in these parts and have not established themselves yet.

8th November – Noticed large numbers of White-browed Wood-Swallows about, many of which started nesting a few days later.

12th November – Found a Bell-Bird’s nest in a low wild cherry tree, and many White-browed Wood-Swallows nesting in fence posts and any available spot. Found Singing Honey-eater’s nest; nest contained one large young Pallid Cuckoo, also a Honey-eater’s egg, which was on the Cuckoo’s back, and almost over the edge of the nest; also found Oriole’s nest with three fresh eggs. During same week found four fresh eggs of the Kestrel and found the shell of an egg of the Bustard; egg apparently recently hatched.

Author’s note: although F.C.M. mentions the Australian Painted Snipe he had no photographs of them.



Australian Painted Snipe⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Birds Australia

17th November – Found the Mistletoe-Bird building; female doing all the work, while the male conducted to and fro, singing all the while.

18th November – Paid another visit to the swamp; found two Pectoral Rails' nests, also found a Grass-Bird's nest with three eggs.

24th November – Found a little Peaceful Dove's nest and Barred-shouldered Dove's both with eggs.

27th November – Flushed a Horsefield Bush-Lark from nest of three eggs; near same spot, two days later, flushed Brown Song-Lark from a nest of two eggs. Both sets seemed fairly heavily incubated.

4th December – Flushed Brown Lark from nest of three eggs; seemed quite fresh. Also found a Whistling-Duck's nest under a roly-poly bush, containing six fresh eggs. Previous year I found a Whistler's nest in the long grass with seventeen eggs.

7th December – Found fresh egg of Pallid Cuckoo in a White-browed Wood-Swallow's nest.

10th December – Found Little Dove's nest through the antics of bird in trying to attract me away; the nest had two fresh eggs in (it). Close by found a White-rumped Wood-Swallow nesting in a Magpie-Lark's nest. These birds nearly always make use of the deserted nest of the Magpie-Lark, after re-lining it to their own satisfaction.

16th December – Found a White-Fronted Heron's nest with four eggs; also a Little Love's nest with two fresh eggs.

23rd December – Found a nest of White-winged Superb Warbler with three eggs, also with one Narrow-Billed Bronze Cuckoo's (egg).

1st January Paid another visit to swamp; noticed many Reed-Warblers' nests with eggs and young. Also found several Plum-head Finches' nests in the long grass. Found one Little Crane's nest with six eggs in, also several Grass-Birds' nests. Found the nest of Bald Coot, built on flags bent over; nest contained five eggs and two little ones just hatched. On approaching, the little ones jumped into the water, and tried to dive, but without much success- they could only get their little heads under, kick as they would. I got two rotten eggs; the remainder were just chipping. In the one green tree (coolabah) at the edge of the tank was the nest of a Square-tailed Kite. I noticed the shells of Duck eggs and also a lot of down, lying about under the tree. One of the boys climbed up to investigate and found a Duck had made use of the Kite's nest and had recently hatched.

6th January – Noticed numbers of Bee-eaters flying about fairly high as if preparing for migration. It may be the earlier broods getting their wings, as there are several nests near the house in which the young are still being fed.

8th January – Paid a visit to a lagoon about eight miles away; flushed a Darter from nests in which were four ugly, long-necked young ones.

20th January – Found White-winged Superb Warbler's nest with three Warbler's eggs and one Narrow-billed Cuckoo's; took the latter, which was quite fresh. Also found a Whiteface's nest, containing three eggs, in an old Finch's nest.

22nd January – Found Singing Honey-eater's nest – one fresh egg; this is only the second specimen I have found. The bird itself is very rare here and confines itself to small areas. The nests are difficult to find, being of scanty structure and built high up in the small branches.

23rd January – On the way home from Garah my boys and I had a hunt through the grass for Quails' nests and found the nests of three Little Quail each containing four eggs and also one Stubble Quail's nest with five eggs. Noticed many young Quail of both species in all stages of growth.



Australian Reed Warbler – photograph by F.C. Morse

24th January – While driving a mob of sheep I noticed a Painted Quail fly up from a salt-bush; on examining which I found a nest with four eggs.

28th January – There are still some Bee-eaters about, but the majority have gone. I believe now the only ones remaining are the late breeders.

29th January – Made a farewell visit to the swamp. Reed-Warblers still nesting freely; also found three Grass-Birds' nests, with eggs, but all heavily incubated.

30th January – Found Little Dove's nest close to the house, with two eggs. A pair of Delicate Owls has nested for years in a large red gum tree near the house. I made one attempt to climb the tree, without success. These birds are said to hoot but their call is a horrible screech, like a tenor White Cockatoo with a prolonged note. Every night through the nesting season, from August to January, the birds pass backwards and forwards over the house, making the most discordant noise, which is most disagreeable and alarming to any stranger. When I first came here, seven years ago, we cleared a small area of ground, and in felling one tree, close to where the present nest is, a limb split open, which contained for fully two feet, mould, and more particularly bones of small birds and mammals; there must have been thousands destroyed to form such an accumulation of bones, which were chiefly the jaws of small rodents and beaks of birds.



Black-backed Wren, male – photograph by F.C. Morse

4th February, - Found a Mistletoe-Bird building. As on a previous occasion, I noticed a little female bird did all the work, encouraged by the melodious little twitter of her more gaily dressed mate.

5th February – Noticed a pair of what I believe to be Black-eared Cuckoos; have never seen these birds before. Most of the Wood-Swallows have disappeared during the previous fortnight, though I have not noticed them collect as they usually do before migration. The Bronze-Cuckoos and Pallid are still about, but the Fantails have been absent for the whole of the summer. I cannot help thinking that these birds winter here, as I have noticed many of them in the depths of winter in the big belar scrubs. About July one could see 20 or 30 birds in half an hour's ride, but they all go away for the summer. The Pallid Cuckoo is here all the year, but the Bronze leaves us in March, and does not appear till the following spring.

Have been carefully watching all the season for another set of Owlet Nightjar's eggs with the black markings. The bird did not come back to the same hollow to nest. I have been unable to find a Nightjar's at all this season, although we can hear the little birds calling every night close to the house.

10th February – *Merops ornatus* – Took a young Bee-eater from its nest to photograph it. The nest had a fortnight earlier (when the little ones were just hatched) been broken by a horse; we noted the occurrence and built a roof of boards over the tunnel. I have done the same thing on several previous occasions and have never known the birds to desert their young, though our construction was very different from the original.



Masked Woodswallow – photograph by F.C. Morse

12th February – *Dictum hirundinaceum* – Found a nest of the Mistletoe Swallow containing three fresh eggs; just recently have noted several of these little birds getting material for building.

12th February – *Ptilotis sonara* - Found a Singing Honey-eater's nest with two eggs. I often wonder why these birds are designated 'Singing'. Their notes are few and far between – one a 'Preet, preet, preet', which is a call to its mates; another a plaintive little mew, sometimes like that of a kitten; and another of two notes, which I never heard during the breeding months. Their food is chiefly gathered from the mistletoe blossoms, and although they can be heard from the house, I never knew one to touch fruit in the garden.

Turnix velox – Last week I brought home a Little Quail, the young of *Turnix velox* – a tiny thing not larger than the joint of one's thumb. For the first afternoon it would not eat, but next day was tempted to try a fly, after which it developed a most voracious appetite for *insects only*. We tried it with grass-seeds, breadcrumbs, oatmeal, biscuit, various berries, and all manner of things that one would imagine a Quail might like, but it would have nothing except insects and spiders. It delighted in large brown-and-green blowflies. It kept my family going all day in catching food for it.

On the second night of its captivity I caught 18 earwigs, each about half an inch long, all of which it ate next morning in a few minutes and in a quarter of an hour it was just as hungry as ever. It must have eaten more than its own weight of insects each day. After the fourth day its little life was cut short by getting itself under someone's foot. There are thousands of these Quail about, and I presume all have appetites similar to the one in question. What a bearing they must have on the insect pest – perhaps too on the blowfly, which has cost the country so much money! It would be quite simple for the birds to get the flies in the early mornings; and it is a striking fact that this year the fly trouble with the sheep in these parts has been practically nil, while last year the loss was enormous.

The season in all respects seemed to favour the fly, and at the same time the Little Quail were much more numerous than I have ever known them to be.

11th March – *Notophox pacifica* – Found a large colony of White-necked Herons nesting in the big red gum trees on the Barwon River; the young were flying or standing on limbs near the nest. There was also a pair of Black-billed Spoonbills (*Platalea regia*) with a nest among the herons.

28th March – *Strix delictual* – The Delicate Owls that have been within earshot of the house since August have suddenly disappeared, and the absence of their horrible screech is most marked. These birds come here every spring to breed and disappear during the winter months. Their departure now cannot be influenced through want of food, as the whole country is overrun with mice. Strange to relate, the Quail have also all gone – not only from here, but the whole district reports the same thing. I believe the Quail have been driven away by the mice, which have eaten up everything.



*Cabbage Tree Island off Port Stephens also known as John Gould Nature reserve*⁵⁹

23rd March –was on an island off the New South Wales coast, where Mutton-Birds and the little Blue Penguins breed freely, up the gullies, under fallen palm leaves, we found some young Petrels, and also some mature birds, caught in the *Pistioia* seeds. I believe these belonged to the genus *Estrelata*. We took one of these on board our boat and fed it for two days on pieces of garfish, and, although when found it was very weak, the fish diet strengthened it so much that we were able to liberate it. I was struck by the way the bird used the hook of its bill; it was continually trying to climb out of the boat by hooking on to anything in reach, and made me think they must use their bills largely for climbing into the rocky situations in which the eggs are laid, flight there being impossible owing to the density of the foliage.

⁵⁹ <https://www.google.com/search?q=cabbage+tree+island+port+stephens+old+photos>



Ibis nest and eggs - photograph by F.C. Morse

24th March – Paid a visit to another small island of about 15 acres, three miles from the mainland. There are no trees, but the surface is fairly flat and covered in coarse grass and reeds. Every square foot is utilised by Mutton-Birds. We also flushed a number of Brown Quail. The only other land-bird was the Australian Pipit (*Anthus australis*). There does not appear to be much animal life, but we noticed many small brown lizards.

3rd April – Returned home, and on 5th noticed a flight of Bee-eaters making north.

12th April – *Zosterops*. – Numbers of Silver-eyes have come about; never saw these little chaps so far inland before.

20th April – *Artamus spencilio* – Large flight of White-browed Wood-Swallows passed over today, apparently going south-west.

25th April – Heard an unusual disturbance among the birds in a sandal-wood tree. On investigating found a brown snake's skin hanging from the branches; evidently it was carried there by a whirlwind. Round it, in great consternation, were 'Jacky Winters' (Australian Brown Flycatcher) Rufous Whistlers, Yellow-tailed Tit-Warblers, Little Tit-Warblers, some 'Soldier Birds' (Noisy Miner) and 'Razor-grinders' (Restless Flycatchers).

4th May – Emus are now in pairs everywhere in these parts; we are always on the look-out for fresh eggs this month. Listening to one of Mr L Souef's interesting lectures reminded me of an old male emu. Living by himself in the hills, far removed from any of his kind, he has each year, for many years, gone to the rubbish heap and got together about a dozen bottles, on which he used to sit for some weeks. This happened every year for eight years to my knowledge, and I don't know how long after.

6th May – Was witness to a funny incident yesterday. Great Brown Kingfishers come every morning for the mice thrown out of the traps. One got his mouse and flew with it to the limb of a tall, dead gum tree. Another laid claim to the same mouse and flew up and grabbed the other end. They both sat back and pulled. We watched them for a few minutes, then went in for our own breakfast leaving them still steadily pulling. Fifteen minutes later they were still in the same position, but had been joined by five others, which were watching the contest with apparently much interest. No. 1 then made a mighty effort to get the mouse, overbalanced, and fell of the limb; but in spite of this he still hung on, and spun slowly round and round under the limb with wings tightly closed. The strain was too great, and he had to let go, at which the five spectators threw up their heads and laughed heartily. However, the defeated one bore no malice; he joined the others on the limb and joined in the merriment.

The mice do not only provide for Jackasses. Two very large green frogs in our back skillion. Hearing an unusual scuffling in the onion-box the other night, we went out with a light, just in time to witness the larger frog getting a mouse down its throat.

The Emu, 1st July 1918

Quail and Mice

A strange thing has happened in these parts lately. A month ago the whole country was alive with Quail, both Stubble (*Coturnix pectoralis*) and Little (*Turnix velox*) but in a few weeks they were gone almost to a bird. I believe the reason is mice. These little rodents have run over the plains in countless swarms, and probably eaten all the grass seed; there are still heaps of dry grass, but no seed.

The Black-cheeked Falcon as a Duck-Slayer.

Two of us camped for the night of 8th September 1918, at the edge of one of the big Gwydir sag-beds. We were up before daylight next morning disturbing many sleeping Ducks from the edge of the water close to our camp. We then started off for a walk through the sags in quest of White Ibis. Ducks by this time were flying round in great numbers. Then we noticed a Black-cheeked Falcon (*Falco melanogenys*) swoop in among the flying birds, and a Black Duck came falling to the water; then another Duck came tumbling down. We stood still and watched, and in a quarter of an hour he accounted for *twelve birds*. Apparently, all were killed. Those that fell within reach of us were quite dead, but several fell in the sags, and we did not investigate. Although all he killed several birds within 100 yards of us, we could not see clearly how it was accomplished. He used to skim just over the top of his victim, and it would crumple up and tumble over and over to the water.⁶⁰



Apparently, this was just a little morning's exercise, as he did not attempt to pick up any of the 'kills'. Once he got three Ducks in succession without stopping his flight. Every now and then he would rest on a tree for a few seconds and then off again to the chase. The Black-cheeked Falcon is a rare bird here, and judging by the exploits of this one, it is fortunate for our wild game that he is so rare.



The Black and White Butcher Bird - photograph by F.C. Morse

⁶⁰ <https://www.survival.org.au/birds.php>

Avocets

10th May – I saw a pair of Avocets last week near Mungindi, the only pair I have ever seen in North-West New South Wales.

Fish-Eating Duck

17th May – I shot a pair of White-eyed Ducks (*Nyroca australis*). One had an unusually large neck. Closer investigation disclosed six fish (carp) averaging two inches in length, which the bird had evidently just caught.

Another Bush Tragedy

A pair of Harmonious Thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*) nested this year in the orange tree in the garden. The three young were almost fledged when one morning I missed the old one's efforts to drive me away from the tree. Investigation showed that a large orange had fallen into the nest. One little head was protruding over the side, two other little birds were underneath the orange, but all were quite cold.

The Emu, Vol XIX 1920

Nest of the Brown Hawk

Has any observer authentic evidence of the Brown Hawk, either *Hieracidea orientalis* or *berigora*, building its own nest. In 20 years I have never known either to do so, always occupying the disused nest of some other bird.

Pratincoles

I lately saw a small flock of Pratincoles in this district, the first for 30 years. I wonder if these birds are numerous anywhere, possibly in the southern plains. I have spent the best part of my life in the central regions, and have seen them only once before, and that 30 years ago. I also saw numbers of Bustards, counted 40 in one lot; so the foxes have not accounted for them all yet.

The Emu, Vol XXII, 1st July 1922

Mantis and Young Birds

The following remarkable story was told me quite recently by a man in whose testimony I can place every reliance.

A pair of (what I take to be by his description) Yellow-rumped Tits (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*) had built a nest in a vine growing round the verandah of his house, on the Barwon River. The distressed state of the birds attracted his attention one morning and, looking into the vine, he saw a large mantis with a tiny naked bird securely grasped in its spiked arms and apparently eating at its head. Thinking the occurrence most unusual, and needing a second witness to the act, he jumped on his horse and rode after a friend who had just left.

Together they came back and made further investigation. The mantis had gone, but had dropped its prey, which they found lying under the bush with three other tiny birds, each one of which had a tiny round hole in the top of its head and all the brains extracted therefrom.



Praying Mantis - the big beast responsible for the tragedy above

A Plea for Crows and Eagles

In entering on this contentious subject, I wish it to be understood that I am not generalising without sufficient data. Certain things have come under my notice that have led me to make certain conclusions; this need not necessarily apply to other parts of Australia.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle and the Crow (Raven) are condemned by the sheep-breeder, and war, in the shape of poison and guns, has been waged against them for many years. I have been among the agents of destruction and claim to have killed as many of each as anyone else and also claim to have hated the Crow with that somewhat venomous hatred that I hear expressed on all sides for the black devil.

In making these remarks, I wish to show you that I am not simply a bird-lover who can see nothing but good in everything that flies.

Before the advent of the rabbit the Eagle lived largely on marsupials, varying his diet occasionally with lamb (though there is no direct evidence of anyone having seen an eagle take a live lamb); however, circumstantial evidence is against him. But my contention is that where there are rabbits Eagles will do little or no harm to the lambs. When the rabbits spread over the Castlereagh country, I was doing colonial experience on a station in that district and was in charge of a flock of 12,000 breeding ewes; rabbits were numerous, and so were lambs, but the preference seemed to almost entirely for rabbits. Under one eyrie I counted the remains of fifty rabbits, *but not a single lamb*.

During 1915 I watched an Eagle's nest very carefully, and two young birds were reared; but during the whole period till the young flew away I could only find the remains of five lambs thrown from the nest – possibly these were dead when taken. This also was in a lambing paddock. Rabbits are very scarce, in spite of which the bird carried several to the nest, besides kangaroo-rats and birds.

Since the blowfly has become such a pest to the pastoral industry, sheep-owners are at their wits' end to find some means of combating the pest. Entomologists have proved that the larvae of the blowfly can only live on animal food; destroy that and there is nothing much left for the fly.

As a scavenger the Crow is second to none. No dead meat is too advanced in putrefaction for him; and whether fresh or otherwise a flock of Crows will clear up the carcass of any animal in a very short time; if not too tough in the skin they get to work at once – a tough-skinned animal has to be left till softened by decomposition – but the result is always the same, nothing left but bare bones.

During the spring of last year, I came across a very good illustration of their usefulness. Riding out one morning, I found a dead fox; it had just reached that stage when the whole thing was a moving mass. I was coming back the same way in an hour or so, so decided to burn it on my return; however, Crows found it in the meantime, and left absolutely nothing but a few scattered bones. I searched the ground carefully to see if any maggots had escaped but could find none.

Another illustration: I wanted to find a suitable spot to liberate some chalcid wasps and thinking of some sheep that had been bogged in a tank recently and the carcasses thrown out on the bank, I took my little boxful of wasps thither.

The chalcid attacks the pupal cases of the fly, so it is necessary to find the host in the proper condition, and knowing the time it takes for the fly to pupate, however, again the Crows got there first, and hunt as I would, under the carcass or under the surface of the ground, I could not find one. There were the marks where the Crows had picked up the ground, to five or six yards away from the carcasses, and had apparently found every pupal case.

It is stated on all sides that Crows kill sheep and lambs. They do, beyond any doubt; but it is the already dying sheep, and generally the weakling among the lambs. In good seasons, when everything is favourable to the sheep, the lambing percentage is also good in spite of Crows.

During the past three or four months we have passed through one of the worst droughts known. Many sheep and lambs died of poverty; many a one I found down, with one eye or two eyes out, but I cannot attribute the death of a single sheep or lamb to the Crows. They undoubtedly hastened the end; but when sheep reach the stage of emaciation that they have to be lifted up, death is inevitable, and the attacks of the Crows (and they never overlook a fallen sheep); cruel though it appears, in all probability simply save the poor animals more prolonged suffering.

In conclusion, I would ask those interested in sheep not to condemn the birds without a fair trial. Weigh the good and the bad, and I honestly believe the balance will be found in favour of protection as against destruction. NB: I have used the word 'Crow' all through, but the more common bird here is the 'Raven'.

Transcribing these tables from documents over 100 years old was a gruelling task both from the point of view of the Scientific and Vernacular Names. The task was achieved with a magnifying glass, a ruler, two brothers and a bird book. This information has only been altered where there are obvious errors in collector's names, etc. Specialists and orthothologists will see many variations to data of today.

Scientific Name	Vernacular Name	Locality	Collector	Clutch	Date
<i>Dromaius novae hollandiae</i>	Emu	Moree	F.C. Morse		08/08/1917
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	Mallee Fowl	SA	Dr Desmond	2	16/09/1909
<i>Cathetus lathamii</i>	Brush Turkey	Richmond River NSW	H.R. Elvery	6	11/11/1899
<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	Stubble Quail	Moree	F.C. Morse	8	16/12/1917
<i>Synoicus australis</i>	Brown Quail	Moree	F.C. Morse	7	10/12/1917
<i>Synoicus dreanensein</i>	Tasmanian Brown Quail	Tas	Geo Harley	10	01/12/1920
<i>Turnix varia</i>	Painted Quail	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	24/12/1917
<i>Turnix pyrrhothorax</i>	Red-chested Quail	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	28/01/1922
<i>Turnix velox</i>	Little Quail	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	01/03/1918
<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>	Plain Wanderer	Vic	Dombrain	1	no date
<i>Megaloproepia assimilis</i>	Allied Fruit Pigeon	Bloomfield NQ	F. Hislop	1	20/10/1894
	Nutmeg Pigeon	Green Island Mackay NQ	R.H. Archer	1	10/12/1909
<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Bar-shouldered Dove	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	05/10/1917
<i>Geopelia tranquilla</i>	Peaceful Dove	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	24/11/1917
<i>Geopelia cuneata</i>	Diamond Dove	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	24/08/1918
?	Little Green Pigeon	Richmond	H.R. Elvery	2	03/10/1907
<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Bronzewing Pigeon	Lynhurst Vic	R.H. Archer	2	
<i>Phaps elegans</i>	Brush Bronzewing	Port Stephens	F.C. Morse	2	07/01/1921
<i>Geophaps scripta</i>	Partridge Pigeon	Coen Q	W.R. McLennan	1/2	10/10/1921
?	Red-plumed Pigeon	Coongan R WA	H.L. White (Whitlock)	2	14/09/1917
<i>Lophophaps plumifera</i>	Plumed Pigeon	CA	E. Mellor	2	03/12/1906
<i>Lophophaps Leeconquister</i>	White-bellied Plumed Pigeon	Macdonnell Ranges	J.W. Mellor	2	03/12/1906
<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	Crested Bronzewing	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	10/09/1917
<i>Leucosarcia picata</i>	Wonga Wong	Bunya Mtns Qld	F C. Morse	2	07/10/1919

<i>Hypotaenidia bracypus?</i>	Slate-breasted Rail	Risdon Tas.	H.B. Hollingsworth	4	26/10/1918
<i>Hypotaenidia phillipensis</i>	Pectoral Rail	Moree	F.C. Morse	8	10/10/2017
<i>Crex crex</i>	Corncrake	Queensland	C.H. Allen	6	02/06/1909
<i>Porzana fluminea</i>	Spotted Crake	Moree	F.C. Morse	1	17/10/2017
<i>Porzana palustris</i>	Little Crake	Moree	F.C. Morse	6	17/10/1917
<i>Porzana immaculata</i>	Spotless Crake	Springfield TAS	J.A. Fletcher	3	20/10/1915
<i>Tribonyx mortierii</i>	Native Hen	Tasmania	A.E. Brent	6	09/11/1911
<i>Tribonyx ventralis</i>	Black-tailed Native-hen	Moree	F.C. Morse	1	17/10/1917
<i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>	Black Moorhen	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	10/10/1917
<i>Porphyrio bellus</i>	Blue Bald Coot	Herdsmen's Lake WA	Sidney Jarvis		
<i>Porphyrio melanotus</i>	Bald Coot	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	01/01/1918
<i>Fulica Australis</i>	Coot	Moree	F.C. Morse		27/11/1920
<i>Podiceps qualaris</i>	Black-throated Grebe	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	27/09/1920
<i>Podiceps poliocephalus</i>	Hoary-headed Grebe	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	19/12/1920
<i>Pelagroma marina</i>	White-faced Storm-petrel	Western Pt Vic	B. Purnell	1	21/11/1919
<i>Puffinus sphenurus</i>	Wedge-tailed Petrel	Cabbage Tree Island Port Stephens	F.C. Morse	1	10/01/1919
<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	Fleshy-footed Petrel	Lord Howe Island	H. Wilson	1	23/11/2019
<i>Puffinus broevicaudus</i>	Short-tailed Petrel	Cape Woolami Vic	R.A. Archer	1	23-Nov
<i>Oestralata solandri</i>	Brown-headed Petrel	Lord Howe Island	J.B. Waterhouse	1	15/06/2019
<i>Oestralata leucopteron</i>	White-winged Petrel	Cabbage Tree Island Port Stephens	F.C. Morse	1	10/01/1919
<i>Prion banksii</i>	Banks Dove Petrel	Stephens Island French Pass NZ	L. Maltins	1	21/11/1921
<i>Prion ariel</i>	Fairy Dove Petrel	Tasman Is. Tas	Miss M Kirkwood	1	06/11/1919
<i>Pelecanoids urinatrix</i>	Diving Petrel	Tasman Island Tas	C. Johnston	1	01/08/1919
<i>Diomedea albatrus</i>	Short-tailed Albatross				
<i>Diomedea melanophroys</i>	Black-browed Albatross	Campbell Island NZ	D. Verone	1	11-Dec
<i>Diomedea cauta</i>	White-capped Albatross	Bass St.	E.D. Atkinson	1	06/11/1909
<i>Hydrochelidon fluviatric</i>	Marsh Tern	Silistra Lake Broken Hill	Dr Macgillivray	2	22/12/1911
<i>Gelochelidon macrotarsa</i>	Gull billed Tern	Buzzards Bay USA	E.R. Skinner	2	11/06/1912

<i>Stylohelidun caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	Mardi Island Dampier Arch	F.B. Whitlock	1	09/07/1918
<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Rosate Tern				
<i>Sterna media</i>	Lesser-crested Tern	Great Barrier Reef NQ	R.H. Archer		22/10
<i>Sterna cristata</i>	Crested Tern	Montague Island			
<i>Onychoprion anetheta</i>	Bridled Tern	Barnard Island NQ	H.G. Barnard	1	16/11/1898
<i>Onychoprion fuliginosa</i>	Sooty Tern	Oyster Cay Cairns NQ	R.H. Archer	2	26/10/1909
<i>Sternula nerosis</i>	White-faced Ternlet	Kangaroo Is SA	S.A. White	2	28/09/1891
<i>Sternula placens</i>	White-shafted Ternlet	Port Stephens NSW	F.C. Morse	3	12/01/1921
<i>Procelsterna cinerea</i>	Grey Noddy Tern	Phillip Isl.	J. Ramsay	1	30/11/1916
<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Noddy Tern	Oyster Cay Cairns NQ	R.H. Archer	1	26/11/1916
<i>Anous leucocapillus (minutus)</i>	White-capped Noddy	Phillip Island	A.F. Bassett Hall		03/11/1908
<i>Gygis Candida</i>	White Tern	Norfolk Island	T.P. Austin	1	
<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull	Currie Tas.	E. Whitelaw	3	14/11/1911
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Geron	Germany	Dr. Richards	5	29/03/1908
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Plumed Egret	Roper River NT	=W.R. McLennan	3	14/03/1916
<i>Garzetta immucullus</i>	Lesser Egret	Watercourse Moree	F.C. Morse	4	08/04/1921
<i>Nemirilla sacra</i>	Reef heron	Kangaroo Isl	G.R. Bell	2	10/11/1920
<i>Gabianus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull	Kangaroo Is SA	E. Ashby	3	01/10/1908
<i>Stercorarius serepedius</i>	Nicardsen Skua Gull	Northern Iceland	for J. Court		06/10/1918
<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	Pied Oystercatcher	Cambridge Tasmania	W. Atkins	3	10/10/1907
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher	Bass Strait	W.J. Armstrong	2	
<i>Erythrogonys cinctus</i>	Red-kneed Dotterel	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	17/08/1898
<i>Lobivanellus lobatus</i>	Spur-winged Plover	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	17/09/
<i>Lobivanellus personatis</i>	Masked Plover	NT	Suzuki	4	March
<i>Lobifer pectoralis</i>	Black-breasted Plover	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	10/09/1918
<i>Phaeton rubicauda</i>	Red-tailed Tropicbird	Raine GBR	A. Venton	1	08/07/1921
<i>Aegialitis hiaticula</i>	Ringed Dotterel	Appin Scotland	D. Macpherson	2	09/05/1910
<i>Aegialitis ruficapilla</i>	Red-capped Dotterel	Port Stephens	F.C. Morse	2	07/01/1921
<i>Aegialitis nigrafrons</i>	Black-fronted Dotterel	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	01/12/1917
<i>Aegialitis monacha</i>	Hooded Dotterel	Bass Strait	V. Willis	2	12/10/1918
<i>Charadrius australis</i>	Australian Dotterel	Moolanataka SA	J.N. McGilip	3	17/09/1920
<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	White-headed Stilt	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	19/09/1920
<i>Recurvirostra novaehollandiae</i>	Red-necked Avocet	Lake Boga Vic	J. Robertson	2	07/09/1916
<i>Limosa melanuroides</i>	Black-tailed Godwit			3	
<i>Actitis hypoleucis</i>	Common Sandpiper				



Apostlebird on nest – photograph F.C. Morse

<i>Rynchaea australis</i>	Painted Snipe	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	13/10/1917
<i>Parra gallinacea</i>	Comb-crested Parra	Mackay NQ	E.M. Cornwell	4	07/07/1919
<i>Glareda grallaria</i>	Pratincole	Moolanataka SA	J.N. McGilp	2	01/12/2020
<i>Pedionomus grallarius</i>	Stone Plover (curlew)	Moree	F.C. Morse		08/08/1917
<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	Long-billed Stone Plover	North Qld	A. Dewar	1	27/05/1907
<i>Eupodelis australis</i>	Plains Turkey	Moree	A.H. Mawhinney	1	03/11/1918
<i>Antigone australia</i>	Native Companion	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	02/11/1917
<i>Ibis molluca</i>	White Ibis	Moree (Bullaranah)	F.C. Morse	3	07/09/1918
<i>Carphibis</i>	Straw-necked Ibis	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	27/09/1920
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy Ibis	Watercourse	F.C. Morse	4	03/12/1921
<i>Platalea regia</i>	Royal Spoonbill	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	27/11/1920
<i>Platibis flavipes</i>	Yellow Spoonbill	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	07/09/1918



Emu chicks - photograph by F.C. Morse

This photograph and the ones below were all take by F.C. Morse. Sadly, the clarity is not good. However, each picture tells a story of his dedication to photograph birds and their young.



Young Magpie lark (Pee Witt at nest) - photograph by F.C. Morse



Rufous-breasted Whistler (male)



Singing Honeyeater



Striped Honeyeater



Willie Wagtail

<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	Nankeen Night Heron	NSW			
<i>Butorides striatus</i>	Green-backed Bittern				
<i>Dupetor flavicollis</i>	Yellow-necked Mangrove Bittern	Roper River NT	W.R. McLennan	4	11/01/1916
<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Australian Brown Bittern	Vic	H. Collins	4	27/11/1919
<i>Chenopsis atratus</i>	Black Swan	Moree	F.C. Morse	7	07/09/1918
<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	Pied Goose	Moree (Bullaranah)	F.C. Morse	9	27/11/1920
<i>Cereopsis novehollandiae</i>	Cape Barren Goose	Reed bed SA	J.W. Mellor	4	23/06/1910
<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Wood Duck	Coocalla Moree	F.C. Morse	16	28/07/1920
<i>Dendro cygna eytoni</i>	Plumed Whistling-duck	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	02/11/2017
<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>	Shell Drake	Victoria	H. Collins	1	31/08/1918
<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Black Duck	Moree	S. Morse	11	30/09/1920
<i>Nettion gibberifrons</i>	Grey Teal	Moree	F.C. Morse		
<i>Spatula rhynchotis</i>	Shoveler	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	20/10/1920
<i>Malacorhynchus membranaceus</i>	Pink-eared Duck	Moree	F.C. Morse	8	20/10/1920
<i>Nyroca australis</i>	White-eyed Duck	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	10/12/1920
<i>Biziura lobata</i>	Musk Duck	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	27/11/1920
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Black Cormorant	NT	Suzuki	4	20/03/1920
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little Black Cormorant	Murray River SA	Capt. White	3	21/12/1913
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied Cormorant	Moree (Bullaranah)	F.C. Morse	5	27/11/1920
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	Little Pied Cormorant	Moree (Bullaranah)	F.C. Morse	5	27/11/1920
<i>Plotus novahollandiae</i>	Darter	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	20/12/1920
<i>Sula australis</i>	Gannet	Bass Strait	C. Barrett	1	04/12/1908
<i>Sula cyanops</i>	Masked Gannet	Norfolk Island	A.F. Bassett-Hull	2	03/11/1908
<i>Fregata minor</i>	Lesser Frigatebird	Malden Island	J.E. Fox	1	24/04/1897
<i>Phaethon riccuada</i>	Red-tailed Tropicbird				
<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	Australian Pelican	Coorong SA	J.W. Mellor	4	01/10/1894
<i>Circus assimilis</i>	Spotted Harrier	Coonamble	F.C. Morse	3	30/11/1906
<i>Circus gouldie</i>	Australian Harrier	Edenhope	H. Collins	5	18/10/1921
<i>Astur nova hollandiae</i>	White Goshawk	Cape York NQ	W.R. McLennan	2	18/10/1916
	Goshawk	Copmanhurst NSW	Geo. Savage	4	07/10/1894
<i>Accipiter torquatus</i>	Collared Sparrowhawk	Copmanhurst NSW	Geo. Savage	2	05/11/1895
<i>Uroaetus audax</i>	Eagle	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	08/08/1918
<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	Little Eagle	Brunette NT	Suzuki	2	10/03/1920
<i>Calopsitta novaehollandiae</i>	Quarian			4	
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Rosella	Goulburn	F. Furnell	5	08/11/1898
<i>Barnardius barnardi</i>	Ring-necked Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	11/09/1919
<i>Barnardius zonorius</i>	Yellow-banded Parrot	Port Lincoln SA	P. Puckinridge	4	17/09/1921
<i>Pstphorus haematogaster</i>	Blue Bonnet Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	6	04/08/1918



White-winged Choughs (*Corncorax melanorhamphus*) with nest and young – photograph by F.C. Morse

<i>Psephotus multicolour</i>	Many-coloured Parrot	Lamaroo SA	H. Collins	4	07/09/1918
<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	Red-backed Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	
<i>Euphema burkii</i>	Pink-bellied Grass Parrot	Autunga Central Australia	F. Buick	4	10/05/1915
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied Sea-eagle	Wallace Lakes	F.C. Morse	4	17/10/1901
<i>Haliastur leucosternus</i>	White-headed Seaeagle				
<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	Whistling Eagle	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	07/10/1917
<i>Milvus affinis?</i>	Allied Kite	NT	Suzuki	1	
<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Black-shouldered Kite	Castlereagh River	F.C. Morse	3	07/12/1906
<i>Falco melanogonys</i>	Black-cheeked Falcon	NW Tas	W. Peters	2	12/09/1898
<i>Falco hypoleucus</i>	Grey Falcon	Moolanalana SA	J.N. McGilp	2	19/09/1920
<i>Falco subniger</i>	Black Falcon	Moree	A. Mawhinney	3	14/10/1918
<i>Hieraaetus berigora</i>	Brown Hawk	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	04/10/1917

	Striped Brown Hawk				
<i>Cherchneis cenchroides</i>	Kestrel	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	17/09/1917
<i>Pandion leucocephalus</i>	Osprey	Wedge Island SA	A.M. Morgan	2	18/11/1918
<i>Ninox boobook</i>	Boobook Owl	Moolanalana SA	M. McGilp	2	20/09/1921
<i>Ninox maculata</i>	Spotted Owl	Austin's Ferry SA	H.B Hollingsworth	2	17/10/1918
<i>Tricoglossis seprionals</i>	Northern Blue-bellied Lorikeet	Coen N Qld	W.R. McLennan		03/10/1921
<i>Tricoglossis chlorolepidotus</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	NSW	C. Savage	2	06/08/1897
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Musk Lorikeet	Cobbara NSW	T. P. Austin	2	14/08/1918
<i>Glossopsitta porthyrocephala</i>	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Edenhope	H. Collins	3	14/09/1918
<i>Glossopsitta pusilla</i>	Little Lorikeet	Cobbora NSW	T. P. Austin	3	02/09/1918
<i>Calyptorhynchus vauini</i>	White-tailed Cockatoo	Moora WA	P.J. Sanderson	2	23/08/1917
<i>Calyptorhynchus naso</i>	Red-tailed Cockatoo	NT	E. Cole	1	10/2/1916
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	White Cockatoo		N. Cayley	1	no data
<i>Cacatua leadbeateri</i>	Pink Cockatoo	Sleepwell Creek Broken Hill	McGilvray & McLennan	3	23/09/1921
<i>Cacatua gymnopic</i>	Bare-eyed Cockatoo	Moolanalana SA	J.N. McGilp	3	29/08/1921
<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	Galah	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	21/09/1921
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	Tasmania	H.B. Hollingsworth	3	30/10/1921
<i>Melopsittacus undulatis</i>	Warbling Grass Parrot	Moree	A. Mawhinney	8	16/10/2021
<i>Pezoporus formosus</i>	Ground Parrot	Derwent valley Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth	3	16/01/1921
<i>Podargus papuensis</i>	Papuan Podargus	Innisfail NQ	Dr. Dombrain	2	



White shouldered Caterpillar-eater - photograph by F.C. Morse

Podargus Strigoides	Tawny Frogmouth	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	10/10/1917
Podargus cuvieri	Tasmanian Frogmouth	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth	2	05/10/1915
Podargus brachyptera	Short winged Podargus	Moora WA	C.L.E. Orton	2	20/09/1919
Podargus phalaenoides	Freckled Frogmouth	NT	Suzuki	2	20/03/1919
Podargus marmoratus	Marbled Frogmouth	Mackay	S. Ellves	2	29/10/1919
Aegotheles novahollandiae	Owlet Nightjar	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	28/10/1916
Eurystomus pacificus	Roller Dollarbird	Roumalla, Uralla	J.B. Sandlands	5	14/11/1919
Dacelo jigas	Laughing Jackass	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	10/10/1917
Dacelo leachie	Leach's Kingfisher	Mackay	H. Ellves	3	07/11/1919
Dacelo cerovirva	Fawn-breasted Kingfisher	Kings River NT	A.H. Ellis	3	19/10/1919
Halcyon macleayi	Forest Kingfisher	Brisbane	A.E. Bertling	5	25/12/1910
Halcyon pyrrhopygms	Red-backed Kingfisher	Banalla		4	
Halcyon chlorus	Red-backed Kingfisher	Kings River NT	A.E. Bertling	4	
Halcyon sanctus	Sacred Kingfisher	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	06/10/1919
Tanysiptera silvia	White-tailed Kingfisher	Cape York NQ	H.G. Barnard	3	11/12/1890
Merops onatus	Bee-eater	Moree	F.C. Morse	6	23/11/1919
Eurostopus pacificus	White-throated Nightjar	Wallace Lakes	G. Goggerly	1	16/10/1919
Eurostopus gultatus	Spotted Nightjar	Cunnamulla	S. Robinson	1	26/11/1902
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid Cuckoo	Moree	F.C. Morse	1	03/10/1917
Cacomantis falabelliformis	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Lyndhurst, Vic	R.H. Archer		
Caomantis variolosus	Square-tailed Cuckoo	Mackay N.Q.	W.H. Coleman	1	11/09/1916
Chrysococcyx basalis	Narrow-billd Bronze-cuckoo	Moree	F.C. Morse		30/10/1917
Chrysococcyx plagosus	Bronze Cuckoo	Dorrigo	F.C. Morse		20/10/1920
Centropus phasianinus	Pheasant Coucal	Port Newrey	D. Dewar	3	11/10/1907
Menura novaehollandiae	Lyrebird	Ferntree Gully Vic	F.E. Howe	1	17/08/1916
Pitta strepitans	Noisy Pitta	Macpherson Range SQ	Sid. W. Jackson	1-Jan	06/12/1919
Pitta iris	Rainbow Pitta	NT	J.A. Seits	3	
Hirundo neoxena	Welcome Swallow	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	10/10/1918
Cheramoeca Leucosterum	White-backed Swallow	Mooloolwatana SA	M. McGilp	4	17/10/1917
Petrochelidon nigricans	Tree Martin	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	17/10/1917
Petrochelidon ariel	Fairy Martin	Barwon River	F.C. Morse	3	23/10/1918
Microeca Fascinans	Brown Flycatcher (Jacky Winter)	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	13/10/1917
Microeca flavigaster	Yellow breasted Flycatcher	Mackay NQ	W.G. Harvey	1	30/12/1915
Petroica legis	Scarlet-breasted Robin	Somerville Vic	J. Docwra	3	18/11/1918
Petroica phoenicea	Flame-breasted Robin	Ringwood Vic	J. Rose	3	17/10/1917
Petroica goodenovii	Red-capped Robin	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	20/09/1918
Petroica phodinogaster	Pink-breasted Robin	Granton Tas	R. Atkins	3	

<i>Petroica rosea</i>	Rose-breasted Robin	Ferntree Gully Vic	F.E. Howe	3	28/12/1919
<i>Melanodryas bicolor</i>	Hooded Robin	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	29/08/1917
<i>Amaurodryas vittata</i>	Dusky Robin	Launceston Tas	F. Claridge	3	15/10/1912
<i>Smicronis brevirostris</i>	Short-billed Tree Tit	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	01/09/1917
<i>Gerygone albogularis</i>	White-throated Flyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	10/10/1917
<i>Gerygone culicivora</i>	Southern Flyeater	WA	J.W. McGilp	2	18/10/1920
<i>Gerygone magnirostris</i>	Large-billed Flyeater	King Range NT	W.R. McLennan for H.L. White	2	14/11/1915
<i>Gerygone fusca</i>	Brown Flyeater	Dorrigo	F.C. Morse	3	23/10/1920
<i>Gerygone cantalor</i>	Singing Flyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	23/10/1920
<i>Poecilodryas cabito</i>	Large-headed Shrike Robin	Dorrigo	F.C. Morse	3	27/10/1920
<i>Poecilodryas nana</i>	Little Shrike Robin				
<i>Lepsaltria australis</i>	Yellow-breasted Shrike Robin	Ringwood Vic	R.H. Archer	3	20/10/1917
<i>Eopsaltria chrysorrhoa</i>	Yellow-rumped Shrike Robin	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	14/10/1920
<i>Eopsaltria griseogularis</i>	Grey-breasted Shrike Robin	Kimba West Coast SA	W. Lister	2	17/09/1920
<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	Yellow-bellied Shrike Tit	Blacktown NSW	L. Harrison	2	01/09/1906
<i>Oreoica crisлата</i>	Bell Bird	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	10/10/1917
<i>Pachycephala gutturalis</i>	Yellow-breasted Whistler	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	25/09/1920
<i>Pachycephala gluralis</i>	Grey-tailed Whistler	Launceston Tas	R.H. Archer	3	17/11/1909
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous-breasted Whistler	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	20/10/1917
<i>Pachycephala olivacea</i>	Olive Whistler	Moree	F.A. Claridge	2	20/10/1917
<i>Rhipiduroa diemenensis</i>	Dusky Fantail	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth	3	27/11/1915
<i>Calopsitta novaehollandea</i>	Quarian			4	
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Rosella	Goulburn	F. Furnell	5	08/11/1898
<i>Barnardius barnardi</i>	Ring-necked Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	5	11/09/1919
<i>Barnardius zonorius</i>	Yellow-banded Parrot	Port Lincoln SA	P. Puckinridge	4	17/09/1921
<i>Pstphorus haematogaster</i>	Blue Bonnet Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	6	04/08/1918
<i>Psephotus multicolour</i>	Many coloured Parrot	Lamaroo SA	H. Collins	4	07/09/1918
<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	Red backed Parrot	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	
<i>Euphema burkii</i>	Pink-bellied Grass Parrot	Autunga Central Australia	F. Buick	4	10/05/1915
<i>Rhipiduroa albiscapa</i>	White-shafted Fantail	Ferntree Gully Vic	F.E. Howe	3	28/12/1913
<i>Rhipiduroa pressi</i>	Western Fantail	Wilson's Inlet WA	W. Armstrong	3	07/10/1914
<i>Rhipiduroa rufifrons</i>	Rufus-fronted Fantail	Vic	F.E. Howe		
<i>Rhipiduroa inotacilloides</i>	Black & White Fantail	Moree	F.C. Morse	4	02/11/1917
<i>Seisura inquieta</i>	Restless Flycatcher	Moree	F.C. Morse	3	23/09/1917



Young Bee-eaters, 1921 - photograph by F.C. Morse

<i>Myiagra plumbea</i>	Leaden Flycatcher	Moree	F.C. Morse	2	
<i>Myiagra nitida</i>	Satin Flycatcher	Launceston Tas	T.A. Claridge		05/12/1917
<i>Monarca melanopsis</i>	Carinata Flycatcher	Barwon River Qld	E. Freizelle		07/12/1911
<i>Pteropodocys fabasianella</i>	Ground Cuckoo Shrike	Moree	F.C. Morse		08/10/1917
<i>Graucalus melanops</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo Strike	Moree	F.C. Morse		08/10/1917
<i>Graucalus paravirostris</i>	Small-billed Cuckoo Strike	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		21/11/1916
<i>Graucalus mentalis</i>	Little Cuckoo Shrike	Moree	F.C. Morse		24/09/1921
<i>Campephaga rameralis</i>	White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater	Moree	F.C. Morse		22/11/1917
<i>Cinlosoma punctatum</i>	Spotted Ground Bird	Rislea Tas	W. Atkins		
<i>Cinlosoma cinnamomeum</i>	Cinnamon Ground Bird	Moolanalana SA	McGilp		22/09/1920
<i>Pycnoptilus floccus</i>	Pilot Bird	Ferntree Gully Vic	A.E. Bunn		
<i>Drymodes brunneopygia</i>	Scrub Robin	Panilga Vic	R. Ribbons		04/09/1921
<i>Psophodes crepilaris</i>	Coach Whip	East Hill Sydney	H. Keane		22/08/1914

<i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>	Grey-crowned Babbler	Bundarra NSW	R. Hays		03/08/1920
<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>	White-browed Babbler	Moree	F.C. Morse		28/08/1917
<i>Pomatostomus ruficeps</i>	Chestnut-crowned Babbler	Moolanalana SA	J.N. McGilp		14/05/1920
<i>Calamanthus fuliginosus</i>	Straited Field Wren	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		
<i>Calamanthus albiloris</i>	White-faced Field Wren	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		08/08/1920
<i>Cinclorhamphus cruralis</i>	Brown Song Lark	Moree	F.C. Morse		13/11/1917
<i>Cinclorhamphus rufesang</i>	Rufus Song Lark	Moree	F.C. Morse		23/09/1920
<i>Oreocinclla Lunulata</i>	Ground Thrush	Beaumaris Vic	F.E. Howe		16/09/1906
<i>Oreocinclla macrophyncha</i>	Large-billed Ground Thrush	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		15/08/1920
<i>Epthianura albifrons</i>	White-fronted Chat	Myalla NW Vic	R. Ribbons for F. Howe		05/10/1919
<i>Epthianura tricolor</i>	Tricolor Chat	Moolooowatana SA	J.N. McGilp		17/07/1918
<i>Malurus cyanochlamys</i>	Silvery Blue Wren	Cobbora NSW	T.P. Austin		14/08/1912
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Dark Blue Wren	King Island Tas	E. Marshall		01/12/1921
<i>Malurus indolandus</i>	Black-backed Wren	Mildura Vic	F.E. Howe		08/12/1921
<i>Malurus cyanotis</i>	White-winged Wren	Moree	F.C. Morse		13/11/1917
<i>Malurus Lamberti</i>	Varigated Wren	Moree	F.C. Morse		21/10/1917
<i>Malurus assimilis</i>	Purple-backed Wren	Laura SA			15/11/1915
<i>Epthianura aurifrons</i>	Orange-fronted Chat	Moolooowatana SA	J.N. McGilp		
<i>Ashbyia lovensis</i>	Desert Chat	Moolooowatana SA	J.N. McGilp		19/09/1920
<i>Acrocephalus australis</i>	Reed Warbler	Moree	Moree		17/10/1917
<i>Acrocephalus qualai</i>	Long-billed Reed Warbler	Micron WA	C.L.E. Orton		10/11/1921
<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	Grass Warbler				
<i>Megalurus graminus</i>	Grass Bird	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/09/1920
<i>Megalurus striatus</i>	Striated Grass Bird	Moora WA	C.L.E. Orton		20/11/1921
<i>Origma rutricata</i>	Rock Warbler	Sydney	N. Chaffer		20/09/1921
<i>Chthobicola sagittatus</i>	Speckled Warbler	Flemington NSW	H. Keane		23/10/1917
<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Little Tit Warbler	Moree	F.C. Morse		02/09/1917
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Buff-tailed Tit Warbler	Edenhope Vic			
<i>Acanthiza liniata</i>	Striated Tit	Vic	H. Collins		10/09/1917
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Tit Warbler		F.C. Morse		25/08/1914
<i>Acanthiza macularia</i>	Western Port Tit Warbler	Somerville Vic	J. Docwra		21/12/1910
<i>Acanthiza diemenensis</i>	Brown-rumped Tit	Austin's Ferry SA	H.B. Hollingsworth		07/10/1917
<i>Acanthiza ewingii</i>	Ewing Tit Warbler	Tasmania			16/08/1916
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Red-rumped Tit Warbler	Coocalla Moree	F.C. Morse		05/09/1919
<i>Sericornis sitreogularis</i>	Yellow-throated Scrub Wren	Bunya Mts Qld	F.C. Morse		06/10/1919
<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	White-browed Scrub Wren	Lyndhurst Vic	R.A. Archer		16/10/1916



Tawny Frogmouth and three young – photograph by F.C. Morse

<i>Sericornis magnirostris</i>	Large-billed Scrub Wren	Ourimbah	P.A. Gilbert		23/11/1913
<i>Sericornis humilis</i>	Brown Scrub Wren	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		14/12/1918
<i>Sericornis maculata</i>	Spotted Scrub Wren	Dango SA	J.N. McGilp		13/08/1921
<i>Sericornis asbyi</i>	Spotted Scrub Wren	Kangaroo Island	George Bell		
<i>Acanthorhynchus magna</i>	Scrub Tit	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		21/11/1919
<i>Malurus longicaudus</i>	Long-tailed Blue Wren	Glenorchy Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		06/10/1915
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Blue Wren Warbler	Moree	F.C. Morse		03/11/1918
<i>Malurus melanocephalus</i>	Orange-backed Wren	Atherton Qld	W.H. Coleman		25/10/1914
<i>Malurus cruentatus</i>	Red-backed Wren				
<i>Stipiturus malachurus</i>	Emu Wren	Somerville Vic	J. Docwra		13/10/1917
<i>Stipiturus Westernensis</i>	Western Emu Wren	Wilson's Inlet SA	F.L. Whitelock		05/11/1913
<i>Sphenura Broadbenti</i>	Rufus Bristle Bird	Lorne Vic	Abe Allen		21/10/1916

Artamus leucogaster	White-rumped Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		02/10/1917
Artamus superciliosus	White-browed Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		13/11/1917
Artamus personatus	Masked Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/11/1917
Artamus melanops	Black-faced Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		21/11/1917
Artamus sordidus	Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/10/1919
Artamus minoro	Little Woodswallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		
Colluricincla harmonica	Harmonious Thrush	Moree	F.C. Morse		29/09/1917
Colluricincla selbee	Tasmanian Shrike Thrush	Landfall Laun Tas.	F. Claridge		16/10/1910
Colluricincla rufiventris	Buff-bellied Shrike Thrush	Port Lincoln SA	J.N. McGilp		09/09/1921
Colluricincla parvulus	Little Shrike Thrush	Cairns Qld	W.H. Coleman		29/01/1921
Colluricincla megarhyncha	Allied Rufus Shrike Thrush	Cairns Qld	W.H. Coleman		
Grallina picata	Magpie Lark	Moree	F.C. Morse		10/10/1917



Wedge-tailed Eagles eyrie– photograph F.C. Morse

<i>Struthidea cinerea</i>	Grey Jumper	Moree	F.C. Morse		29/09/1917
<i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>	White-winged Chough	Moree	F.C. Morse		23/09/1917
<i>Aphelocphala leucepsis</i>	Whiteface	Moree	F.C. Morse		02/12/1917
<i>Aphelocphala nigricincta</i>	Black-banded Whiteface	SA	J.N. McGilp		16/05/1920
<i>Neositta chrysoptera</i>	Orange-winged Tree Runner	Moree	F.C. Morse		21/10/1917
<i>Neositta pileata</i>	Black-capped Tree Runner	Micron WA	P. Sandlands		27/10/1917
<i>Climacteris rufa</i>	Rufus Treecreeper	Kimba West Coast SA	H. Collins		26/08/1921
<i>Climacteris scandens</i>	Brown Treecreeper	Moree	F.C. Morse		28/09/1917
<i>Climacteris leucophaea</i>	White-throated Treecreeper	Moree	F.C. Morse		1919
<i>Zosterope quoldi</i>	Grey-backed White-eye	Moora WA	C.L.E. Orton		20/08/1921
<i>Zosterope dorsalis</i>	White-eye	Mornington	R.H. Archer		16/10/1916
<i>Diceum hirundinaceum</i>	Mistletoe Swallow	Moree	F.C. Morse		06/01/1918
<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Red-tipped Pardelote	Moree	F.C. Morse		27/09/1918



Galah coming out of nest – photograph by F.C. Morse

<i>Pardalotus diffinus</i>	Yellow-tipped Pardelote	Bothwell Tas	A.W. Swindells		11/10/1903
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Diamond Bird	Ringwood Vic	F.E. Howe		19/12/1915
<i>Pardalotus xanthopygus</i>	Yellow-rumped Pardelote	Manya Vic	H.W. Braun		17/09/1918
<i>Pardalotus rubricatus</i>	Red-browed Pardelote	Moolanwantan SA	J.N. McGilp		12/12/1920
<i>Pardalotus pallidus</i>	Pallid Pardelote	WA			01/08/1917
<i>Pardalotus melancephalus</i>	Black-headed Pardelote	WA			
<i>Melithreptus validirostris</i>	Strong-billed Honeyeater	Bruny Island Tas	H.W. Wentel		25/10/1921
<i>Melithreptus mellacophalus</i>	Black-headed Honeyeater	Tasmania			13/10/1920
<i>Plectorhyncha lanceolata</i>	Striped Honeyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse		17/10/2017
<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Blood Bird	Blacktown NSW			20/10/2016
<i>Myzomela nigre</i>	Black Honeyeater	Cobbora NSW	T.P. Austin		26/10/1917
<i>Myzomela obscura</i>	Dusky Honeyeater	Boyne River Mundubbera N Qld	A. Bertling		10/09/1918
<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Spinebill Honeyeater	East Hill Sydney	P.A. Gilbert		20/09/1915
	Tasmanian Spinebill				
<i>Acanthorhynchus superciliosus</i>	White-browed Spinebill	WA	C.L.E. Orton		10/09/1918
<i>Gliciphila fulfrons</i>	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	Mt Compass SA	J.N. McGilp		28/12/1920
<i>Gliciphila albifrons</i>	White-fronted Honeyeater	Manya NW Vic	R.G. Ribbons		16/10/1921
<i>Gliciphila fasciata</i>	White breasted Honeyeater	Mackay N Qld	W.G. Harvey		21/09/1916
<i>Entomophila picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater	Prairie NSW	Rickman		03/11/1920
<i>Meliphaga phrygia</i>	Regent Honeyeater	Cobbora NSW	T.P. Austin		02/09/1917
<i>Stigmatops</i>	Least Honeyeater	WA	F. Whiting		
<i>Ptilotis notata</i>	Yellow-spotted Honeyeater	Johnstone R N Qld	R. Robinson		07/12/1903
<i>Ptilotis fusca</i>	Fuscous Honeyeater	Bundarra NSW	R.G. Hays		01/09/1920
<i>Ptilotis chrysops</i>	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Lyndhurst Vic	R.H. Archer		19/10/1917
<i>Ptilotis flavigula</i>	Yellow-throated Honeyeater	Newham N. Tas	A. Claridge		21/11/1915
<i>Ptilotis fasclogularis</i>	Faciated Honeyeater	Mackay N Qld	D. Dewar		18/10/1916
<i>Ptilotis Leucotis</i>	White-eared Honeyeater	Somerville Vic	R.H. Archer		30/09/1897
<i>Ptilotis Auricenuis</i>	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Bundarra NSW	R.G. Hays		13/09/1920
<i>Ptilotis ornata</i>	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Murray Scrub SA	F. Riley		06/09/1906
<i>Ptilotis fluva</i>	Yellow Honeyeater	N Qld			20/03/1916
<i>Ptilotis penicillata</i>	White-plumed Honeyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse		14/08/1917
<i>Lichmera australasian</i>	Crescent Honeyeater	Ringwood Vic	F.E. Howe		06/09/1914
<i>Meliornis Nova hollandiae</i>	White-bearded Honeyeater	Edenhope Vic	H. Collins		10/10/1917

<i>Meliornis longirostris</i>	Long-billed Honeyeater	Yallingup WA	J.N. McGilp		22/10/1920
<i>Myzantha garrula</i>	Noisy Miner	Moree	T.P. Austin		15/10/1917
<i>Myzantha obscura</i>	Dusky Miner	Moora WA	P. Sandlands		16/09/1917
<i>Manorina flavigula</i>	Yellow-throated miner.	Moree	F.C. Morse		15/10/1917
<i>Myzantha melanotis</i>	Black-eared Miner	Manya Vic	R. Ribbons		29/09/1918
<i>Myzantha Lutea</i>	Yellow Miner	Kings River NT	W. Divine		15/10/1917
<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Red Wattlebird	Lyndhurst Vic	R.H. Archer		20/10/1917
<i>Anthochaera mauris</i>	Yellow Wattlebird	N Bruny Island Tas	A. Swindels		10/10/1921
<i>Anelbblia mellivora?</i>	Brush Wattlebird	Port Stephens	F.C. Morse		07/01/1921
<i>Anollobia lunulata</i>	Little Wattlebird				
<i>Acanthogynys rufigularis</i>	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/10/1917
<i>Entomyza Cyanetis</i>	Blue faced Honeyeater	Moree	F.C. Morse		21/09/1917
<i>Tropodgrynychus arenticeps</i>	Silvery-crowned Friarbird	Esk River N Qld	H.L. Olive		10/10/1917
<i>Tropodgrynychus buceroides</i>	Helmeted Friarbird	Annan River N Qld	H.L. Olive		11/12/1917
<i>Tropidorynchidus corniculatus</i>	Friarbird	Stradbroke Island Qld	F.C. Morse		02/10/1919
<i>Philemon citreouularis</i>	Yellow-throated Friarbird	Moree	F.C. Morse		28/10/1917
<i>Philemon sordidus</i>	Little Friarbird	Townsville Qld	D.F. King		22/11/1919



Brown Treecreeper feeding young - photograph by F.C. Morse

<i>Anthus australis</i>	Pipit (Ground Lark)	Moree	F.C. Morse		15/10/1917
<i>Mirafora horsefield</i>	Horsefields Bush Lark	Moree	F.C. Morse		17/11/1917
<i>Stagonpleura guttata</i>	Spotted-sided Finch	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/12/1917
<i>Lorreginthus bellus</i>	Fire-tailed Finch	Kangaroo Island	N. McGilp		07/01/1921
<i>Taenioptygia castanatis</i>	Chestnut-eared Finch	Moree	F.C. Morse		10/12/1917

<i>Stizoptera bichenovii</i>	Owl-eyed Finch	Moree	F.C. Morse		
<i>Stizoptera annulosa</i>	Black-ringed Finch	King River NT	W. Vivian		02/09/1917
<i>Muria castaneothorax</i>	Chestnut-breasted Finch	Mackay Qld	R. Milton		12/08/1913
<i>Acdemesyne Modesta</i>	Plum-headed Finch	Moree	F.C. Morse		01/01/1918
<i>Aegintha temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch	NSW	R. Bettington		12/10/1912
<i>Aegintha minor</i>	Lesser Red-browed Finch	Youngaburra N Qld	W.H. Coleman		12/01/1921
<i>Poephila cineta</i>	Black-throated Grass Finch				
<i>Oreolus viridis</i>	Green-backed Oriole	Moree	F.C. Morse		02/11/1917
<i>Oreolus offinis</i>	Northern Oriole	Cape York N Qld	B. Jardine		12/12/1906
<i>Sphecotheres flavicinctus</i>	Yellow Fig Bird	Cairns Qld	J. Burning		27/11/1901
<i>Sphecotheres maxillaris</i>	Fig Bird	Hillsborough Mackay Qld	D. Dewar		20/12/1912
<i>Chibia bracteata</i>	Spangled Drongo	Mackay Qld	D. Dewar		22/12/1912
	Shining Starling	Puritan Bay N Qld	D. Dewar		
	Cat Bird				
<i>Ailuroedus maculatus</i>	Spotted Catbird	Atherton Qld	C.N. Coleman		03/12/1914
<i>Chlamydera maculata</i>	Spotted Bowerbird	Coonamble	F.C. Morse		10/11/1906
	Yellow-spotted Bowerbird	Brunette Downs NT			
<i>Chlamydera nuchalis</i>	Great Bowerbird	Darwin NT	A.M. Hedbloom		11/11/1910
<i>Sericulus chrysocephalus</i>	Regent Bowerbird	Richmond NSW	H.R. Elvery		12/11/1910
<i>Prionodura newtoniana</i>	Golden Bowerbird	Herberton Range Qld			11/11/1910
<i>Ptiloris alberta</i>	Albert Riflebird	Cape York N Qld	H.L. Elvery		24/11/1909
<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Crow	N Qld			
<i>Corvus enneti</i>	Short-billed Crow	SA	J.N. McGilp		7/07/1918
<i>Corone australis</i>	Raven	Moree	F.C. Morse		10/09/1910
<i>Strepera melanoptra</i>	Black-winged Bell Magpie	NW Vic			
<i>Strepera anaphonensis</i>	Grey Bell Magpie	Edenhowe Vic	H. Collins		13/09/1920
<i>Strepera plumbea</i>	Leaden Crow Shrike	Moora WA	P.T. Sandland		16/11/1912
<i>Strepera infamedia</i>	Brown Bell Magpie	Kimba West Coast SA	H. Collins		20/08/1920
<i>Strepera fuliginosa</i>	Black Bell Magpie	N Bruny Island Tas	L. Johnson		14/10/1920
<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Black-throated Butcherbird	Moree	F.C. Morse		23/10/1914
<i>Cracticus picalus</i>	Pied Butcherbird	Fink River NT	A.H. Ellis		23/10/1920
<i>Cracticus leucophrus</i>	White-winged Butcherbird	Moora WA	C.L.E. Orton		05/09/1915
<i>Cracticus mentalis</i>	Black-backed Butcherbird	Coen N Qld	W.R. McLennan		10/10/1921
<i>Cracticus destructor</i>	Collared Butcherbird	Moree	F.C. Morse		20/10/1914

Cracticus cinereus	Grey Butcherbird	Launceston Tas	F. Claridge		09/11/1916
Gymnorhina tibicen	Black-backed Magpie	Moree	F.C. Morse		11/09/1917
Gymnorhina dorsalis	Varied Magpie	Moora WA	P.T. Sandland		
Gymnorhina leuconola	White-backed Magpie	Middleton SA	Parsons		07/10/1917
Gymnorhina organicum	Lesser White-backed Magpie	Old Beach Tas	H.B. Hollingsworth		07/10/1917



White-fronted Heron – photograph by F.C. Morse



Sid Morse – photograph by F.C. Morse



CHAPTER 12

The Emu OBITUARY FREDERIC CHARLES MORSE

By the death of Mr. F.C. Morse, of “Banarway” Mogil Mogil, N.S.W., which occurred after a short illness, on January 26th last, at Collaroy, a seaside resort near Sydney, where he was spending a holiday with his family, the Union lost a member who could ill be spared. He leaves a widow, three sons and a daughter.

The late Mr. Morse was born at “Balala” Station, near Armidale, on 10th July, 1874. He was educated at All Saints’ College, Bathurst, where he won distinction as a scholar and in many branches of sport.

On leaving school, Mr. Morse went on the land, and for many years managed “Bundy”, a well-known property near Coonamble. Afterwards he bought “Cocalla” at Garah, where he lived until last year, when he sold out and purchased “Banarway” at Mogil Mogil.

When quite a boy Mr. Morse began his career of an enthusiastic, nature-lover, devoting most of his time to the study of birds. Being a keen and reliable observer, a splendid bushman, a daring climber and a clever photographer, his contributions to *The Emu* and other journals have added considerably to the knowledge of Australian ornithology.

In bird photography, Mr. Morse excelled; the many beautiful pictures which have appeared in *The Emu* indicate his skill in that branch of his life’s hobby. His observations on the “Birds of the Watercourse” (Moree) and other articles written under the non-de-plume “Licacolaë” were mainly responsible for having that area declared a sanctuary, and his egg collection replete with full data, ranks amongst the best private collections in Australia.

A man of quiet, unassuming manner, a devoted husband and father, always generous and hospitable, he endeared himself to all those fortunate enough to know him. Whether in camp or in the scrub, Mr. Morse was a delightful companion and a typical Australia. He was a valued and esteemed member of the R.A.O.U. and will be greatly missed by all.



CHAPTER 13

THE MORSE EGG COLLECTION

In 1953, my grandmother (Laura Olive Morse) donated the entire collection of her husband's items including his letters, eggs, log books and other documents to The National Museum of Victoria. They have carefully catalogued the entire collection however not all the eggs have been photographed at the time of writing this book. Below are some examples of how the catalogue has been categorised by the museum. Each clutch of eggs is accompanied by a description and specimen details, the name of the collector and a location map. The cataloguing and detailing of the collection is meticulous in its detail.

As a child I remember Mr Hiscock, from the Museum coming to *Franxton* and staying a considerable time while sorting through the eggs we had stored. I believe there was a significant collection at *Banarway* which is where our granny was living when she died; most of her remaining days were spent there. I vividly recall visiting her at *Banarway* and seeing her tucked up in a big four poster bed, a glass jug and glass on the bedside table covered with a lace doily. I also recall the day she died. My governess Barbara had been plaiting my hair and I rushed off into the living room which was in darkness, there I saw my father sitting beside the fireplace, head bowed, my mother standing beside him, her hand resting on his shoulder, both in solemn silence.

The death of granny brought about the demise of L.O. Morse and Sons, each son thereafter buying each other's shares and retaining the rights and ownership of the properties they lived on. My father had the biggest property, the biggest family and the biggest debt. Enormous taxes at that time crippled the families with excessive death duty. It would appear that the family became fully aware of the legacy of F.C.M.'s extensive collection of eggs and photography and that after a period of time decided the best avenue was to donate the collection of eggs. At the time the collection was offered to Sydney Museum however they reniged and the Melbourne Museum became interested in the collection. My uncle Syd Morse seemed to become the chief negotiator regarding the collection and correspondence below indicates how the collection eventually ended up in Melbourne Museum.

June 16, 1952

Dear Mrs. Morse,

My Trustees have learned with considerable gratification of your very generous gesture in presenting to the National Museum of Victoria the collection of the eggs of Australian Birds made by your late husband Mr. F.C. Morse.

I can assure you that the collection will be well and faithfully cared for, and will occupy a notable place in the collections of this Institution alongside the H.L. White and other collections.

If you or any of your relatives are ever in Melbourne, the Director of the Museum will be pleased to show you the collection in its new home.

Please accept the thanks of the Trustees for your gift.

Yours faithfully,

(Sir Russell Grewade)

Chairman.

Mrs. F.C. Morse,
"Bahrany",
MUGIL MUGIL, N.S.W.

Tue 3 Jun 1952 / Page 3 / MUSEUM GETS 1,500 EGGS

MUSEUM GETS 1,500 EGGS

THE National Museum has received a valuable addition to the world famous H. L. White collection of bird eggs.

They are the 1,500 eggs of the F. C. Morse collection, and will go on show as a separate unit.

Mr. Morse's collection, all Australian, were presented to the museum by his widow, Mrs. F. C. Morse, of Garah Station, Mogil Mogil, N.S.W.

Mr. White and Mr. Morse were friends as well as collectors.

Mr. R. T. M. Prescott, museum director, said last night the museum now had 50,000 birds' eggs, including many rare and valuable specimens.

He added: "This collection not only will

have historic value, but will be of great interest to students also. It is unique."

BURL IVES OVER U

By RIDDY ALLEN

Burl Ives is a 20th Century Pied Piper.

His singing has a queer hypnotic quality. His raptures have the lift of the open road. His guitar makes the low rumbling sound of a far-away waterfall.

He worked his spells in such effect last night at the

March 22nd 1904

The Director

Nat. Museum Victoria
Russell Street
Melbourne

Dear Mr Percott.

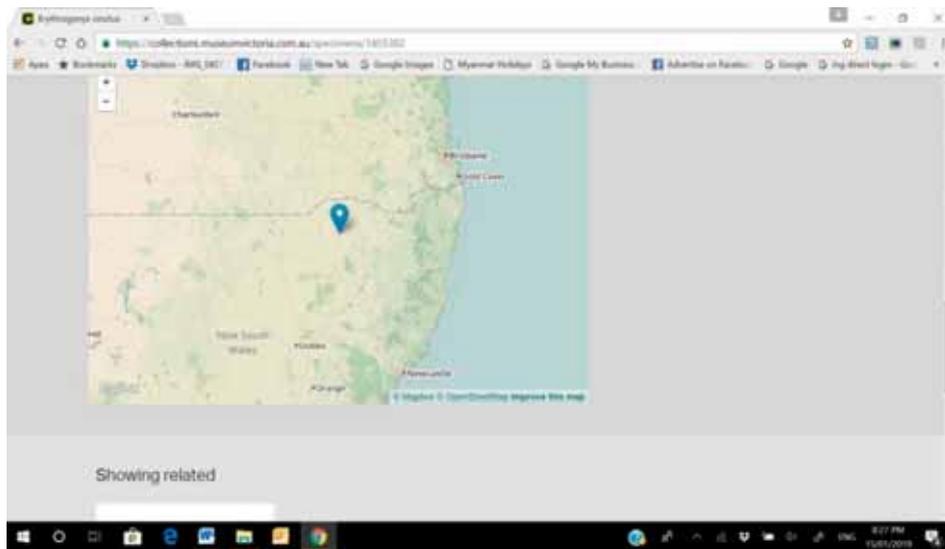
I have received your letter of the 25th February re the egg collection. Before committing myself finally I would be pleased if you would let me know if you require the eggs as a whole collection or for replacements as Mrs Morris Senior desires that they should be given as a whole collection.

Yours faithfully
S. E. Morse

(S. E. Morse)

In Museums Victoria Collections Department, each egg is accompanied by the specimen details and location map with exact latitude and longitude as precise locations of the collected egg and the name of the collector.





There is an ongoing project to photograph the entire Morse collection by Museums Victoria; with many more still to be recorded. This is a wonderful legacy of which the Morse family are extremely proud.



Australian Magpie



Australian Magpie



Black Currawong (Tas)



Australian Magpie



Australian Pipit



Beautiful Firetail



Black-eared Miner



Black-ringed Finch



Blue-faced Honeyeater



Brown Booby (BE.17150)



Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher



Chestnut-breasted Mannikin



Crescent Honeyeater



Doubled-banded Finch



Great Bowerbird



Green Catbird



Australian Magpie



Grey Butcherbird



Grey Butcherbird (NSW)



Grey Butcherbird



Grey Currawong (SA)



Grey Currawong (Vic)



Grey Currawong (WA)



Grey Currawong (WA)



Grey Currawong



Helmeted Friarbird



Horsfield's Bushlark



Island Thrush (Norfolk Island)



Little Crow



Little Friarbird (Qld)



Little Friarbird



New Holland Honeyeater



Metallic Starling



New Holland Honeyeater



New Holland Honeyeater



Noisy Friarbird



Noisy Miner



Yellow-throated Miner



Olive Backed Oriole



Pied Butcherbird



Pied Butcherbird (NT)



Plum-headed Finch



Red-browed Finch



Red-browed Finch (NSW)



Silver-crowned Friarbird



Australian Raven



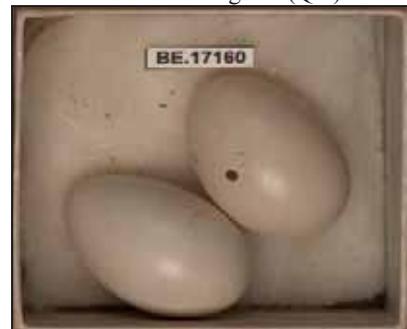
Southern Figbird (Qld)



Spangled Drongo



Spiny-checked Honeyeater



Spotted Catbird



Great Bowerbird (NT)



White-eared Honeyeater



White-plumed Honeyeater



Yellow-throated Honeyeater



Yellow-throated Miner



Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (BE.17149)



Yellow-throated Honeyeater (Tas)



Yellow-throated Miner (WA)



Black-eared Miner



Yellow Wattlebird



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater



Zebra Finch



H.L. White's massive oological collection in Museum Victoria, Melbourne –

Pictured on following pages are a mere portion of the egg clutches from the F.C. Morse Oological Collection, as displayed in trays in the Museum Victoria (Ornithology Department), Melbourne.







Genus..... *HALIASTUR*
Species..... *SPHENURUS*
..... WHISTLING EAGLE
Locality..... MIOKIN SIN GARAH
Collector..... F.C. MORSE
Date..... 11 - 8 - 18 Incubation..... . 4
Clutch..... 2 Set Mark..... 228



A specialist working on the oological collections at the Museum Victoria, Melbourne.

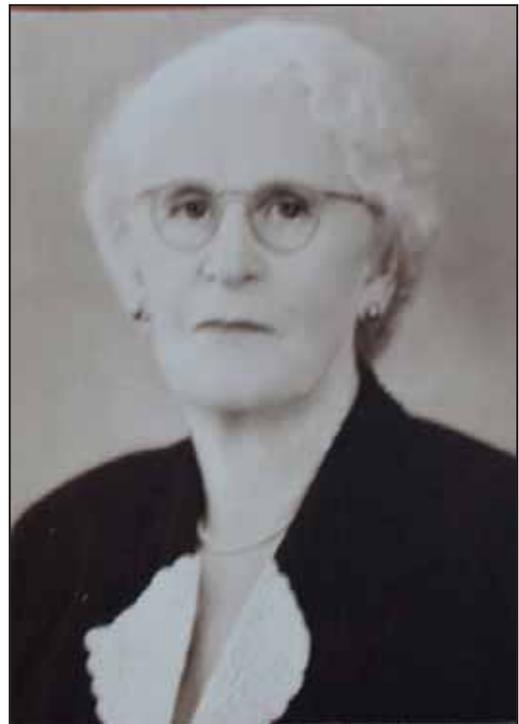


CHAPTER 14

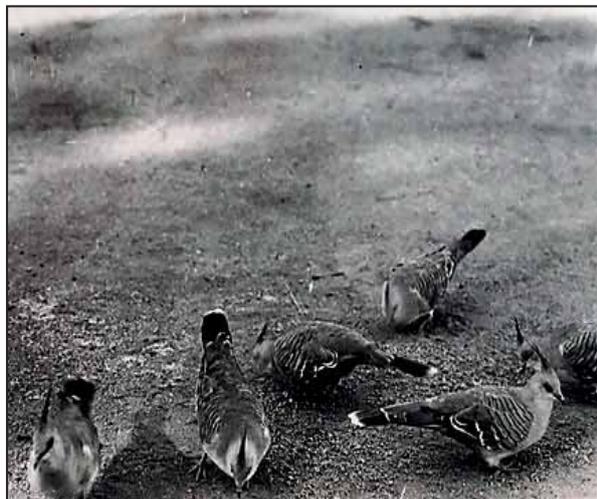
THE LATER YEARS

Granny Morse became the matriarch after our grandfather ‘Fred’, died in 1924. His wife, Laura Olive Morse [*nee* Tourle], created the family company L.O. Morse and Sons. Just prior to his death Fred had sold the property *Coocalla* and moved his family to *Banarway*, a grazing property on the banks of the Barwon River at Collarenebri. It must have been a difficult time for her, as a mother with four young children, to lose her husband. Grandfather’s younger brother Basil came from Armidale to manage the property until such time as the eldest son, Sydney, was old enough to take over. Uncle Syd was always called “The Boss” so we can assume he took up the responsibility of managing the family properties.

From *Banarway*, L.O. Morse and Sons grew into a number of other properties all managed by her sons Henry (my father) on *Franxton*, Bruce on *Nariel* in Queensland and Sydney remaining on *Banarway*. Before my father married and took over management of *Franxton* he served his apprenticeship at the famous property, *Haddon Rig*, near Warren NSW. All the Morse men were expert riders and their father would have spent much of his time riding on the property looking for nests and birds. Frederick took many photographs during his time at *Banarway*, photographing many simple and common birds around the homestead. The grape vine and the orchard provided many favourite spots for birds and nests. Being situated beside the Barwon River provided a plentiful supply of water for the extensive garden. The photographs reproduced on the following pages are almost 100 years in age, so the quality has deteriorated somewhat.



Banarway had been the nucleus of L.O. Morse and Sons until after granny died, and then the partnership was dissolved in 1959. At that time each sibling took their equity giving Sydney Morse *Banarway*, Bruce Morse *Nariel*, Henry Morse *Franxton* and Olive Wood (Morse) *Newent*.



F.C. Morse's photographs taken around *Banarway*. *Bower birds' playground, top nots and butcher bird and young*



Banarway homestead



Above photos: top X marks the entrance to the nest; bottom X marks the nest

Below: among the old photographs from *Banarway* are many that show the Bora Bora aboriginal circle. In addition, some photos show life on a western wool-growing property in the 1930s.⁶¹



F.C. Morse's son Sid (back left) with his children, Pam and Brian (with an unidentified man back right).



Sid Morse

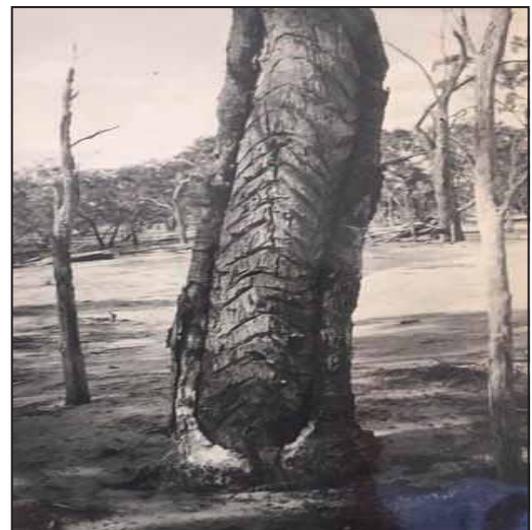


Transporting *Banarway* wool⁵⁴

⁶¹ From Elouise Morse's collection



In 1949, an expedition was arranged to take the Bora Bora trees, most very old and decaying from *Banarway* station on the Barwon River, near Collarenebri, NSW, to reside in the National Museum in Melbourne and the Adelaide Museum. The Bora Bora circle is where the aboriginal young men were initiated; it was a secret ceremony and has been described as greatly feared by the young men. They were taught the laws and culture of their tribe and often stayed away from the women and their families for several months before returning from their initiation. My understanding is these artefacts have been returned. In late 1949, 52 trees were removed from *Banarway* and the garden at *Collymogle*. Only the carved sections of the trees were taken, both whole trunks and fragments, and then split up: 25 to the South Australian Museum, 25 to the Museum of Victoria; and two to the Anthropology Museum at the University of Queensland, where they all remain in storage.⁶²



(left and right) carved trees in their natural surroundings at *Banarway*

⁶² <https://www.anbg.gov.au/aboriginal-resources/Carved-Trees-Guide-State-Library-NSW-3449.pdf>



Aboriginal God



Spear Tree



Bora Bora trees on *Banarway*



Bora Bora trees on *Banarway*



Serpent tree in situ at *Banarway*



Bora Bora carved trees in *Collymongle* garden.

The origins of the Morse family can virtually be traced along the Gwydir River from its source in Uralla (New England) to Collarenebri, in Northern NSW. The river flowed west and over time the Morses ended up in the west. The Morse pastoral properties started in Uralla with *Balala* and ended in Collarenebri with holdings of *Banarway* and *Franxton*.

My lasting memories of *Franxton* are the homestead's long hallway, leading from the lounge room to the bedrooms, with numerous framed black and white bird photographs lining the walls. We savour the memories of our father who had a lifelong fascination for birds. He was so knowledgeable about all the species and their scientific names.

The memory never fades of a country lifestyle of hard work, horses, sheep and cattle; of birds flying from the grass when we mustered – quail, zebra finches and so many others. I remember, too, the Stone Curlew eyes caught in the headlights of the car and the sighting of ducks, herons, galahs, budgerigars, magpies, mud larks, crows, eagles and kites. I recall the wonderful lush Mitchell grass in the good seasons; and shearing and the wool clip loaded on trucks. My family experienced the world of the shearing shed full of bustling men and the cook preparing meals for them, milking cows, bringing in the horses; jackaroos, governesses, cooks and workmen – all making up an amazing life on the land in the 1950s and 1960s. And, of course, any amount of gum trees, scrub and grass.

Both of my brothers, Rick and Christopher, managed *Franxton* after our parents retired to the coast. Eventually, *Franxton* was sold and became stripped and ploughed for dry farming which meant the end of a productive, wool- and meat-producing property resulting in what is now a barren wasteland. It is utterly heartbreaking to compare what it was to what it is today. It is a tragic loss of pasture, trees, grass and a lifestyle – they're gone forever. Yes, there have been droughts. Yes, the temperatures have risen. However the tragedy starts higher up the river and higher up the political chain. Currently the Barwon river at nearby Walgett is reduced to a muddy pond. Interestingly, the Aboriginal name 'barwum' or 'bawon', means "great, wide, awful river of muddy water;"⁶³



Barwon River



Gwydir River

⁶³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barwon_River_\(New_South_Wales\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barwon_River_(New_South_Wales))



The Family of Henry & Nancy Morse
Back row standing, l to r: Rick, Dad, Diana, Christopher and Sandy;
Middle row l to r: Peter, Richard, James, Mum, Andrew and Simon;
Front: Katherine, Michael and Mary Jane.



Franxton in 2019 depleted, depressed and drought stricken.



The author with Richard Willis at *Franxton* in the 1960's. Plenty of grass, plenty of sheep, plenty of trees



CHAPTER 15

THE GWYDIR WETLANDS – WATERWAYS TO WASTELANDS

F.C. Morse spent thirteen years at *Coocalla* station, where he made constant observations of the seasons through both drought and flood, and where he spent much of his time in the wetlands. He suggested in 1917 that the Gwydir Wetlands area be made into a sanctuary because ‘the area is not suitable for grazing and it held by four separate property owners.’ It took many, many years for his suggestion to be implemented.

The delicate nature of Australian topography and soil has been dramatically affected by land clearing, introduction of hard-hoofed animals and many other farming strategies.

A newspaper article published on 3rd February 2007 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* was headlined: **“Death, destruction as wetlands expires”**⁶⁴. This article went on to illustrate dramatically the effects of water depletion on the country. The author, Daniel Lewis, stated that “drastic intervention is needed to save our river flows.” He went on to say: “Ramsar is not another clunky environmental acronym but a city in Iran on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where an international convention to protect the world’s most significant wetlands was signed on February 2, 1971.” RAMSAR is an international treaty for the protection of wetlands.

Richard Kingsford, a scientist who has spent decades studying Australia’s wetlands, “iconic sites such as the Macquarie Marshes, Gwydir Wetlands and Narran Lakes in western NSW are now in worse shape than when Australia signed up to Ramsar. They are all part of the beleaguered Murray-Darling river system.”⁶⁵

Many irrigators say the situation is simply due to the worst drought on record. For many others, it is a long-term condition caused by far too much water being given to agriculture instead of the environment; they hope that the state governments agree to give control of the Murray-Darling Basin to the Federal Government. The river systems are dying of thirst, bird numbers are depleted, and river gums are dying.

⁶⁴ <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/death-destruction-as-wetlands-expire-20070203>

⁶⁵ <https://www.mdbrc.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net3846/f/mdbrc-submission-prof-richard-kingsford-nsw.pdf>

Cotton farming has contributed to the massive use/overuse of water to the detriment of the river and water courses downstream. By building massive dams to provide water for their crops they extract the water from the rivers. These dams do not replace an environment for birds, there are no marshes, no trees and the cleared land is a disaster for bird life.

Cotton has been grown in Australia since the 1800s. However, once large dams were constructed in northern NSW such as Copeton and others in Queensland, the lifecycle of water going downstream changed forever. Australian cotton growers apparently provide the highest yield in the world. Cotton growers' use of pesticides and fertilisers is a constant source of concern about their possible entry into waterways and their effect on fish, birds and humans. Although cotton growers have a Best Practice Program this amounts to little when their continued expansion and invasion of land by the building of massive dams still impacts heavily on our country's water sources.

Over the decades the Gwydir wetlands have been subjected to floods and drought. However, they come back to life with natural water inundation. The birds return in their thousands but, gradually, constant depletion and fair distribution of water has seen the numbers of birds returning to nest has been dramatically reduced. From my grandfather's time in the wetlands in the early 1900s there have been significant changes to the river systems. They have always been affected by droughts and floods. Extreme conditions seem to occur on a regular basis and these natural occurrences affect the farmers and the bird life, although they have little effect on cotton farmers.



CHAPTER 16

HOWARD BLACKBURN'S DIARY

In 2009, I met Harold Blackburn on his property *Crinolyn*, 88km west of Moree and bordering on the Gingham Channel – here was a man incredibly dedicated to the area and one who had a passion for recording the events around the wetlands.

A Gwydir Wetlands bird count was conducted by Harold Blackburn of *Crinolyn* in 2005 - these are his findings:

BIRD COUNT IN THE GWYDIR WETLANDS (2005) – Howard Blackburn

Common Name	Scientific Name	Breeding
Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	B
Stubble Quail	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	B
Brown Quail	<i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>	B
King Quail	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	
Magpie Goose	<i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	B
Plumed Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna eytoni</i>	B
Wandering Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna arcuata</i>	B
Blue-billed Duck	<i>Oxyura australis</i>	B
Musk Duck	<i>Biziura lobata</i>	B
Freckled Duck	<i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>	B
Black Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>	B
Australian Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornidae</i>	B
Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	B
Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	B
Australian Shoveler	<i>Anas rhynchotis</i>	B
Grey Teal	<i>Anas gracilis</i>	B
Chestnut Teal	<i>Anas castanea</i>	B
Pink-eared Duck	<i>Malacorhynchus membranaceus</i>	B
Hardhead	<i>Aythya australis</i>	B

Australasian Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>	B
Hoary-headed Grebe	<i>Poliiocephalus poliocephalus</i>	B
Great-crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	B
Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	B
Little Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	B
Pied Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	B
Little Black Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	B
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	B
Australian Pelican	<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	
White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	B
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	B
White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>	B
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	B
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	B
Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	B
Nankeen Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	B
Little Bittern	<i>Exobrychus minutus</i>	B
Australian Bittern	<i>Botarus poiciloptilus</i>	B
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plagadis falcinellus</i>	B
Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiernia molucca</i>	B
Straw-necked Ibis	<i>Threskiernia spinicollis</i>	B
Royal Spoonbill	<i>Platalea regia</i>	B
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	<i>Platalea flavipes</i>	B
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	
Osprey	<i>Pandion Haliaeetus</i>	
Pacific Baza	<i>Aviceda subcristata</i>	
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	B
Square-tailed Kite	<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	
Whistling Kite	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	B
White-bellied Sea-eagle	<i>Haliaseetus leucogaster</i>	B
Spotted Harrier	<i>Circus assimillis</i>	B
Swamp Harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>	B
Brown Goshawk	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	B
Grey Goshawk	<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	
Collared Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>	B
Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>	B
Little Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	
Brown Falcon	<i>Falco berigora</i>	B
Australian Hobby	<i>Falco longipennis</i>	B
Grey Falcon	<i>Falco hypoleucus</i>	
Black Falcon	<i>Falco subniger</i>	B

Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Nankeen Kestrel	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	B
Brolga	<i>Grus rubicunda</i>	B
Buff-banded Rail	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	B
Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	B
Australian Spotted Crake	<i>Porzana fluminea</i>	
Spotless Crake	<i>Porzana tabuensis</i>	
Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	B
Dusky Moorhen	<i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>	B
Black-tailed Native-hen	<i>Gallinula ventralis</i>	B
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	B
Australian Bustard	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	
Painted Button-quail	<i>Turnix varia</i>	
Little Button-quail	<i>Turnix velox</i>	B
Red-chested Button-quail	<i>Turnix pyrrhothorax</i>	B
Red-Backed Button-quail	<i>Turnix maculosa</i>	B
Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwicki</i>	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnercilis</i>	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularis</i>	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	
Australian Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i> = <i>Rostratula australis</i>	B
Comb-crested Jacana	<i>Irediparra gallinacea</i>	B
Bush Stone-Curlew	<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>	B
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	B
Banded Stilt	<i>Cladorhynchus leucocephalus</i>	
Red-necked Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra novaehollandiae</i>	
Red-capped Plover	<i>Charadrius ruficapilla</i>	
Inland Dotterel	<i>Charadrius australis</i>	
Black-fronted Dotterel	<i>Elsyornis melanops</i>	B
Red-kneed Dotterel	<i>Elsyornis cinctus</i>	B
Banded Lapwing	<i>Vanellus tricolor</i>	B
Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	B
Silver Gull	<i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	
Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	B
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Common Bronzewing	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	
Crested Pigeon	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	B
Diamond Dove	<i>Geopelia cuneata</i>	B

Peaceful Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	B
Bar-shouldered Dove	<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	B
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii</i>	
Glossy Black Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	B
Galah	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	B
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cactus galerita</i>	B
Cockatiel	<i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	B
Red-winged Parrot	<i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i>	B
Eastern Rosella	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	B
Pale-headed Rosella	<i>Platycercus adscitus</i>	B
Australian Ringneck	<i>Barnadius zonarius</i>	B
Blue Bonnet	<i>Northiella haematogaster</i>	B
Red-rumped Parrot	<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	B
Mulga Parrot	<i>Psephotus varius</i>	
Budgerigah	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	B
Turquoise Parrot	<i>Neophema pulchella</i>	B
Pallid Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>	B
Brush Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis Variolosus</i>	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	B
Black-eared Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx osculans</i>	
Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx basalis</i>	B
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx lucidus</i>	B
Channel-billed Cuckoo	<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	
Barking Owl	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	B
Southern Boobook	<i>Ninox novaehollandiae</i>	
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	
Grass Owl	<i>Tyto capensis</i>	B
Tawny Frogmouth	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	B
Spotted Nightjar	<i>Eurostopodus argus</i>	
Australian Owlet-nightjar	<i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>	B
White-throated Needletail	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	
Fork-tailed Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	
Azure Kingfisher	<i>Alcado azurea</i>	
Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	B
Red-backed Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus phrrpopygia</i>	B
Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	B
Rainbow Bee-eater	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	B
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	B
Brown Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris picumnus</i>	B
Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	B
Splendid Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus splendens</i>	B
Varigated Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	B

White-singed Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus leucopterus</i>	B
Spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	
Straited Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	B
White-browed Scrub-wren	<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	B
Weebill	<i>Smicrornis brevirostris</i>	B
Western Gerygone	<i>Gerygone olivaces</i>	
Inland Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza apicalis</i>	B
Chestnut Rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>	B
Buff Rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>	B
Yellow Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	B
Southern Whiteface	<i>Aphelocphala leucopsis</i>	
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	<i>Acanthagenys rufogularis</i>	B
Striped Honeyeater	<i>Plectorhyncha lanceolata</i>	B
Noisy Friarbird	<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	
Little Friarbird	<i>Philemon citreogularis</i>	B
Blue-faced Honeyeater	<i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i>	B
Noisy Miner	<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	B
Yellow Throated Miner	<i>Manorina flavigula</i>	B
Singing Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>	
White-plumed Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus penicillatus</i>	B
Black-chinned Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	B
Brown-headed Honeyeater	<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	
Brown Honeyeater	<i>Lichmera indistincta</i>	B
Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	B
Black Honeyeater	<i>Certhionyx niver</i>	
Pied Honeyeater	<i>Certhionyx variegatus</i>	
Crimson Chat	<i>Epthianura tricolor</i>	B
Jacky Winter	<i>Microeca fascinans</i>	B
Red capped Robin	<i>Petroica goodenovii</i>	B
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullate</i>	
Eastern Yellow Robin	<i>Eopsaltrai australis</i>	B
Grey-crowned Babbler	<i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>	B
White-browed Babbler	<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>	B
Crested Shrike-tit	<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	
Crested Bellbird	<i>Oreoica gutturalis</i>	B
Golden Whistler	<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	
Rufus Whistler	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	B
Grey Shrike-thrush	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	B
Leaden Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	B
Satin Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	
Restless Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra inquieta</i>	B

Magpie Lark	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	B
Rufous Fantail	<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	
Grey Fantail	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	B
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	B
Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>	
Black-faced Cuckoo	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	B
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>	B
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina maxima</i>	
White-winger Triller	<i>Lalage sueurii</i>	B
Olive-backed Oriole	<i>Oriolus satittatus</i>	B
White-breasted Woodswallow	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>	B
Masked Woodswallow	<i>Artamus personatus</i>	B
White-browed Woodswallow	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>	B
Black Faced Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cinereus</i>	B
Dusky Woodswallow	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>	B
Artamus Woodswallow	<i>Artamus minor</i>	
Grey Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	B
Pied Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	B
Australian Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	B
Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>	
Australian Raven	<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	B
Little Crow	<i>Corvus bennetti</i>	
Torresian Crow	<i>Corvus orru</i>	
White-winged Chough	<i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>	B
Apolstlebird	<i>Struthidea cinerea</i>	B
Spotted Bowerbird	<i>Chlamydera maculata</i>	B
Singing Bushlark	<i>Mirafra javanica</i>	B
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	B
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
Zebra Finch	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>	B
Double-barred Finch	<i>Taeniopygia Bichenovii</i>	B
Plum-headed Finch	<i>Neochmia modesta</i>	B
Red-browed Finch	<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	
Diamond Firetail	<i>Steganopleura guttata</i>	B
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	<i>Longchura castaneothorax</i>	
Mistletoebird	<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	B
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	B
Tree martin	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>	B
Clamorous Reed-warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stencoreus</i>	B
Little Grassbird	<i>Megalurus gramineus</i>	B
Rufous Song lark	<i>Cinclorhamphus mathewsi</i>	B
Brown Song lark	<i>Cinclorhamphus cruralis</i>	B

Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	B
Silvereye	<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	
Bassian Thrush	<i>Zoothera lunulata</i>	
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	B



66

⁶⁶ <http://www.birdlife.org.au/bird-profile/silvereye>

Blackburn's photographs on the following pages show the dramatic change from drought to flood. Thus, reminding us of the power of water, to turn a dustbowl into a paradise and without it to see the reverse happen so quickly.



Parched wetlands



Drought-stricken land



The floodwater begins to creep into the parched land



Cattle looking for feed

The whole area comes to life after the devastating drought and water begins to creep slowly into the wetlands. It is a miraculous transformation when parched earth meets water and, in next to no time, the green shoots begin to sprout, the birds begin to return and nest in the area and the chicks start to hatch.

It is a new beginning, a new lust for life that nature understands so well. Without water there is nothing; with water a whole new life begins. The bird life returns, the frogs appear, the whole area is bursting with activity and a new cycle of life commences.



A mass of birds on the watercourse



Wetlands alive with activity



Nesting birds



Sea of green after the drought



Sacred Ibis nesting



Ibis aloft



Rufous Night Herons



Reviewing the water depth



An astonishing abundance of bird life



The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has listed some of the 26 threatened waterbird species in NSW “including the Australian Painted Snipe, Australian Bittern, Brolga, Eastern Curlew and Freckled Duck.” It goes on to state that many species are threatened by the loss and degradation of wetland habitats and says this can be caused by:

- clearing and draining wetlands for agricultural and urban development;
- alterations to flooding patterns due to river regulations and climate change;
- disturbance of feeding and roosting habitats by recreational users such as fishing or walking particularly with dogs, or by feral animals such as foxes and pigs;
- in 2016 waterbird numbers in Eastern Australia were at their lowest level since records began 34 years earlier as part of the Eastern Australian Aerial Waterbird Survey. This was despite the period of May to September 2016 being the wettest on record.⁶⁷

The ongoing debate about the protection of a natural environment, the protection of species, the number of endangered species and depletion of water, water licences, and commerce versus natural habitats is ongoing, with no resolution in sight. High finance and productivity, money and power take precedence over the natural issues at stake.

Records have been taken over many years by different individuals, who have historically charted the course of the Gwydir Wetlands and their bird counts show significant declines in populations. The first were those observations made by F.C. Morse.



A devastating sight seen on the wetlands when in drought.

⁶⁷ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Threat to lake birds averted by adding water

Marian Wilkinson
Environment Editor

THOUSANDS of ibis chicks are fledged and flying out of the wetlands at Narran Lakes after the largest bird-breeding event in the Murray-Darling in almost 10 years. About three-quarters of the chicks survived after the Federal Government bought \$2 million worth of water for release into the wetlands to prevent their parents abandoning the lakes when water levels fell alarmingly in March.

"Unfortunately, some chicks have been abandoned by their parents, but that still leaves us with a huge, historically successful breeding event - the first since 1999," Wendy Craik, the head of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, said yesterday. About 30,000 pairs of straw-necked ibis came to breed in the internationally recognised wetlands in north-western NSW over January and February following drought-breaking rains.

With much of the water re-



Saved ... straw-necked ibis chick.

whose University of NSW team was monitoring the breeding, raised the alarm with state and federal governments. The Murray-Darling Basin Commission bought 11,000 megalitres of water over Easter from a Queensland irrigator to increase the flows to the lakes.

"Without that water, we certainly would have seen a much higher mortality of chicks," Professor Kingsford said. "But I am not disappointed because the environmental flows that got there really showed a commitment by all governments to ... get this

megalitres of water to be transferred for off-river storage by irrigators upstream from the lakes.

Two colonies of ibis bred this season, in January and February. Almost 15,000 nests were built by each colony, with each producing two chicks. But February breeding suffered from lower water levels.

"Our data tells us we lost up to 50 per cent of the 50,000 chicks in the first breeding event. We were finding dead and dying chicks everywhere," Professor Kingsford said.

The release of the water only saved many ibis chicks but also supported a huge number of other birds arriving at the wetlands.

A grazier charged in the largest cases of illegal clearing in NSW failed to appear at the Land and Environment Court in Sydney yesterday. Ross Hudson, owner of a property near Moree where a bird-breeding wetland was cleared last year, will be sentenced in June. He has been ordered to appear in court.

68

Blackburn's diary gives us a fascinating account of the ebb and flow, the inundation after drought, the devastation of a rookery after a hailstorm and the observation with stakeholders, media and interested parties, in the life of the Gwydir Wetlands, Gingham Channel and Big Leather. It is so interesting to read these encounters as this is exactly what F.C. Morse was discovering when he was the first to find these rookeries about 100 years ago. In 2007, Howard Blackburn kindly gave me permission to reproduce his photographs and diary written between December 1995 and May 1996.



Water starts to spread across the dry land

15/12/95

Went to *Lynworth* and *Yarrol* to investigate areas where large congregations of birds had previously been observed from the air. Discovered a rookery of Glossy Ibis and Sacred Ibis in river cooba trees in *Lynworth* adjacent to the *Yarrol* boundary. There appeared to be about 300 nests in scattered river cooba trees over an area of 5ha.

A massive and very noisy congregation of Straw-necked Ibis was observed on lignum clumps nearby. These birds were engaged in courtship and mating activities. The noise created at this site was quite amazing, as was the density of the Ibises on the lignum bushes. The air above was also filled with birds, including quite a number of the smaller Glossy Ibis. Around 10,000 birds were confined to an area of less than 1ha at this rookery.

Proceeded into *Yarrol* and walked through lignum and river cooba for some distance that was alive with birds. These included Great Egrets, Intermediate Egrets, a small number of Cattle Egrets, Rufous Night Heron, Sacred Ibis, Glossy Ibis, and Little Pied Cormorants, which were constructing nests and laying eggs in river cooba trees, while Straw-necked Ibis occupied lignum bushes underneath. The entire rookery covered approximately 40ha of dense river cooba and lignum scrub. It was a sight to behold for the sheer number of birds present, from the ground up through the trees and circling above. The noise was a constant roar with courtship and mating rituals taking place.

Egret represented, by far, the majority of birds, with the second most abundant being Rufous Night Herons, which comprised approximately 20% of total numbers. In all, possibly 60,000 birds were present in this rookery.



Whistling-ducks in their thousands

Then proceeded to Gingham Waterhole and observed a colony of Egrets nesting in belah trees on higher dry ground on the northern side. The rookery was more advanced than the others, with birds mostly quietly sitting on nests. This was in stark contrast to the dull roar of noise witnessed in the other rookery areas. About 1300 nests were concentrated in an area of 2ha.

The nearby Gingham Waterhole was alive with Ducks, Teal, Grebe, Coot, Pelicans and Swans. Also observed eight Magpie Geese in or near thick cumbungi along the main stock and domestic channel while proceeding between rookeries in *Yarrol*.

18/12/95

Accompanied Allison Hall, reporter from *Moree Champion*, on an inspection of the Ibis rookery in *Lynworth* and nearby multi-species rookery in *Yarrol*. Allison was quite impressed as she had not witnessed anything comparable to this event previously. She wrote an article which appeared on the front page of the *Moree Champion* the following day (19/12/95).

19/12/95

Visited the rookery with Leslie Blackburn, Shane Murphy, Ken Dillon, Vaughan Houlahan, Simon Smith (EPA), Jacky Thompson (EPA), Randall Hart (DLWC), Rick Stevens (*Sydney Morning Herald*), Bob Beale (*9SMH*) and Damien Ryan (*Prime TV*). Disappointed when *Prime TV* reporters pack up and go home before even getting their feet wet. The rest of the group waded on into the wetlands and Ibis rookery area. There being a need for minimum disturbance, photographers moved ever so slowly to get closer photographs of this amazing event, while the rest of the group observed from a distance. Every member of the group seemed suitably impressed by the event they were witnessing.



Black Swans arriving on the wetlands - photograph by Robert Seitre

An obvious drop in water level had occurred since my last visit. Concern was expressed to Randall Hart about this and that time was critical to prevent any further drop, which may cause abandonment of nests.

The group then paddled on into the large multi-species rookery on *Yarrol*. Quite a lot of discussion about the density of the bird population and the area they are currently occupying. Water flows and water requirements were also discussed extensively.

Toward the end of the day, Randall Hart suggested it may be possible to extract a little more water from the system in the next week or two to send down to the wetlands. Howard Blackburn suggested that this would be far too late and action was required immediately if the current Straw-necked Ibis breeding event is to be successful.



21/12/95

An article in *Sydney Morning Herald*. I was surprised at the amount of support coming from Moree townspeople following article on front page of *Moree Champion* about birds.

23/12/95

Installed water depth gauge on *Lynworth/ Yarrol* boundary fence in wetland on southern side of channel. Gauge set at 10cm, which was average depth of water in vicinity of the rookery area.

Further drop in water level observed since last visit on 19/12/95. Installed earth bank across stock and domestic channel west of Gingham Waterhole in an attempt to mimic natural water depth at the large rookery site east of the Waterhole. Still plenty of activity in vicinity of the rookeries.

Gauge depth: 10cm

24/12/95

Ted Murphy and Toby Blackburn take Marvin (BBC wildlife film producer) to *Yarrol* rookery. Marvin is impressed and agrees that this is a very significant event occurring in this quite unique area. Toby reported that Straw-Necked Ibis appear to be leaving their nests.

Gauge depth: 8.5cm

27/12/95

Noticed thousands of Ibis scattered through wetland country on *Crinolyn*, *Windella* and *Townberry* feeding on water couch meadows. All three species well represented, with a surprising number of Glossy Ibis (listed under CAMBA). Large numbers of Egrets, a sprinkling of Spoonbills and five Pelicans also observed.



Below: Dam at Eucalinda



28/12/95

Noted Straw-necked Ibis rookery depleted to about 300 pairs. Initial estimation was of around 10,000 birds at this site.

Noted hail damaged trees and other vegetation while moving toward large mixed species rookery and then devastation from the previous day's hailstorm became apparent. Numerous birds of all species could be seen dead and injured throughout this huge rookery area. Some were dead on their nests, while others were dangling precariously from trees and scattered about the ground.

Others still quite shell-shocked, while quite a lot were getting on with life. It is difficult to estimate the mortality rate, but 30% is probably not unrealistic. A large number of birds were feeding north of the rookery area. A dead emu and kangaroo were also observed presumably killed by the hail.

Gauge depth 13cm



After the hailstorm – dead birds everywhere

31/12/95

Crinolyn – noted White-faced Heron, Pacific Heron, some Marsh Terns and hundreds of Ibis between channels and bore drain in ‘pig paddock’.

31/12/95

Yarrol – some Glossy Ibis. Also, some Egret chicks at Waterhole, site, but no chicks apparent in main rookery.

Gauge depth: 15cm

05/01/96

Yarrol – definite identification of Little Bittern male. Straw-necked Ibis have all left the large nesting site. Counted 1400 abandoned nests in an area less than 1ha. Also an absence of Straw-necked Ibis in main rookery area

Gauge depth: 16cm

06/01/96

Boyanga – Observed at least 800 Rufous Night Heron in belah clump near Glossy Ibis rookery, which was in scattered river cooba trees toward western boundary of *Boyanga*.

Many nests in the rookery had been abandoned, however a small number of chicks evident. Of 110 nests counted, only 11 contained chicks.

Proceeded down the Gingham Channel through *Brafferton* and *Townberry* to the back of *Crinolyn*. Counted 18 Swans, 12 Pelicans, 16 Spoonbills, large numbers of Coot, Teal, Pink-eared Ducks and Hard Head Ducks on one small open water body near *Crinolyn* boundary.

A large flock of Straw-necked Ibis observed flying overhead, which landed some distance away in *Townberry*. Also observed three Brolgas.

08/01/96

Yarrol – Quite a lot of Straw-necked Ibis present again. Also many Rufous Night Heron and Egrets appear to be going into another breeding event. Some large Egret chicks now and some nests appear to have fresh eggs. Noted three pairs of Great Crested Grebe on Gingham Waterhole and four Magpie Geese along the stock and domestic channel, one hanging about a patch of thick cumbungi east of the Waterhole, as if nesting.

Gauge depth: 16cm

09/01/96

Flight over the Gingham Watercourse. Very few birds evident outside the rookery area. Only all white birds observed, with no Straw-necked Ibis apparent. These observations did not give a true indication of bird numbers present. On the ground inspection would give a totally different picture as it is known that there are still thousands of birds in the area.

11/01/96

Yarrol – Large rookery has become noisy again. Large numbers of Straw-necked Ibis back at rookery area, as well as large numbers of Rufous Night heron. Maybe a new breeding event is about to occur.

Gauge depth: 17cm

13/01/96

Late afternoon, *Glen Idol* – noticed a large number of Straw-necked Ibis flying east

14/01/96

Late afternoon, NE corner of *Crinolyn*, large numbers of Straw-necked Ibis flying to the north-east. Noted at least 50 Australian Magpies roosting in dead tree near *Crinolyn* cottage, after they harassed a similar number of Straw-necked Ibis, causing them to leave the tree.

15/01/96

Large flocks of Straw-necked Ibis flying about the local area. Hundreds just north of Gil Gil Bridge on Woodlands Road. Large numbers apparently feeding on grasshoppers at *Swanley*.

17/01/96

Allen Grogan, Leslie and Howard Blackburn go to *Yarrol*. Most pleasing to see Straw-necked Ibis starting to nest again in their original rookery area NE of dam in *Yarrol*. The noise coming from this area is a continuous roar which can be easily heard half a kilometre away. We did not go very close so as to minimise disturbance of this rare and unique event. However, there are obviously many thousands of birds here.

Also noted the usual Rufous Night Herons, Egrets etc., at least 15 Magpie Geese, several Bitterns and 1 Australian Bittern. Allen Grogan camps the night at the Gingham Waterhole in order to get late afternoon and early morning photos.

Water depth: 25cm



Gingham Waterhole filled with water and Egrets

18/01/96

Andrew Ley, his wife and Howard Blackburn go to Gingham Waterhole to inspect Egret rookery nearby. Andrew estimates 1300 pairs at this spot. Note Egrets carrying nest building material. Grey Teal with 12 chicks swimming at Waterhole and Magpie Geese east of Waterhole. Moving east, we hear the roar from area Ibis had been the previous day. From the dam in *Yarrol* we can hear a continuous load roar as we observe this amazing event. The Ibis appear less settled than during the previous event and I suggest that we retreat in order to minimise disturbance of this fragile occurrence. I suspect this this is a bigger even than the previous failed Ibis nesting attempt.

Egrets in this area seem to be at various stages, some with eggs and others still building nests.

19/01/96

Noticed large flocks of Ibis moving about *Crinolyn* area late afternoon.

24/01/96

Bill Johnson and Ray Jones (National Parks and Wildlife Service) go to *Yarrol* with Shane Murphy, Leslie Blackburn, Toby Blackburn, Jen Southeron and Rob McCosker. Bill estimates 1500 pairs of Egrets at Gingham waterhole rookery and possibly 2500 at *Yarrol* dam rookery. He claims that the importance of this Egret nesting event cannot be overstate because Egret numbers have declined rapidly in recent years, both along the coast and inland. Bill suggests that the Gwydir Wetlands and Macquarie Marshes are the most important Egret breeding wetlands in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Former Straw-necked Ibis rookery areas now occupied again. Bill estimates 10,000 to 15,000 pairs of nesting Straw-necks.

Glossy Ibis chicks now scrambling and flying between trees. They appear ready to fledge.

Noted three pairs of Great Crested Grebe on Gingham Waterhole and several Magpie Geese. One goose, in particular, perched in a tree and closely watching a nearby area of cumbungi. Assumed to be nesting in this area.

Water Depth 35cm

04/02/96

Rob McCosker and Howard Blackburn go to *Yarrol*. We are both amazed at the increase in numbers of Straw-necked Ibis. The rookery now extends in *Lynworth* as far as we can see and there is quite an incredible roar. The Straw-necked Ibis event is now growing far larger than we had previously anticipated.

More water about than during my last visit. Fitted another gauge to same post as the old gauge and read 43cm depth of water. Level had been 12cm higher a few days earlier, judging my marks on fence and vegetation. A most interesting afternoon.

05/02/96

Noted numerous small flocks of Straw-necked Ibis about. It is interesting to note that Ibis flocks are now smaller than at the beginning of the flood in December, but there are far more flocks.



⁶⁹Straw-necked Ibis

69

By JJ Harrison (jjharrison89@facebook.com) - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15717602>

07/02/96

Numerous small flocks of Ibis feeding on *Crinolyn* They are becoming more difficult to see when on the ground now due to the tall growth of grass and other vegetation.

08/02/95

Rod McCosker arrives for breakfast and promptly paddles off into 640 paddock to record frog calls.



Author's note: Howard Blackburn also has a large list of frogs recorded in the Gwydir Wetlands.

Large group of Sacred Ibis now nesting in River Cooba trees west of the dam. Many Egrets also observed here. Rufous Night Heron nesting in a group in belah trees south of dam and randomly through other nesting areas.

Pied Geese, two pairs of Musk ducks, some Blue billed Ducks, heaps of Hardhead Ducks, Australasian Coot etc. Very few Glassy Ibis were seen. Assume they have move away from the rookery area now, with chicks having successfully fledged.

Water depth: 30cm

⁷⁰ <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/topics/wetlands/database/pubs/50-ris.pdf>

13/02/96

Noted flocks of Straw-necked Ibis and variety of Ducks, particularly east of the house.

15/02/96

Liz Savage, Peter Huhter (DLWC), Jim Napier (Tasmania) and Howard Blackburn visit Gingham Waterhole and the nearby Egret rookery. Noted Egrets carrying sticks and other nest building material. The birds in this area are quite settled. Jim notes Small, Intermediate and Great Egrets and Rufous Night Heron.

Gingham Waterhole has a large number of Ducks, Grebes and Water Hen, two Black Swans, Crested Grebe, small and Large Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant and Darter.

Moved on to *Lynworth* west dam. We are all amazed at the vast number of mainly Straw-necked Ibis extending as far as the eye can see to the East. There must be hundreds of thousands of birds in this section now. Noted several Magpie Geese, Blue-Billed Duck, Musk Duck, Crested Grebe, Royal Spoonbill, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, juvenile Glossy Ibis in Black Wattle (*Acacia stenophylla*), also Sacred Ibis. Some Egrets nesting North of the dam. The sky is filled with birds and the area is just a spectacle that has to be seen to be appreciated. Mere words cannot describe this event.

Water level: 28cm

17/02/96

Fly over Macquarie Marsh and note precious little water and few birds. Fly over Macquarie-Barwon junction area which is flooded with surrounding countryside looking rather dry. Heading further North to Narren Lake. Lake bed flooded, with only small number of Pelicans and smattering of other birds on open water. Proceeding North over channel country on inflow side of the lake we could see large numbers of Straw-Necked Ibis soaring below. We could not fly safely below 2,000 feet because of the birds, also observed many white birds on the ground through this channel country, and quite a few groups of Pelicans. A most enjoyable and enlightening flight.

19/02/96

Mark and Shane Murphy, Jenny Black (*ABC radio*), John O’Gorman, David Dutailis, Katherine Ferguson (EPA), Jim McDonald (GEFC Chairman) Katrina Dixon and Howard Blackburn go to *Yarrol*, *Lynworth* rookeries. From *Lynworth* west dam the group looked for ages at the vast number of birds all around them and as far as the eye could see to the East. No one is bold enough to suggest a figure, but ‘hundreds of thousands’ is a popular comment. The Straw-necked Ibis are simply everywhere and are now nesting on cumbungi which they have trampled down to form a platform for nest building. The noise is quite incredible and has been likened to city traffic noise at peak hour.

Jenny Black records the noise for a radio program. Noted a few Pied Geese, hundreds of thousands of Straw-necked Ibis, scattered Glossy and Sacred Ibis, all the Egrets, Rufous Night Heron colony nesting in belah trees south of *Yarrol* dam. Glossy Ibis nest noted on lignum bush amongst Straw-necked Ibis nests. Straw-necked chicks hatching, Egret chicks at all stages of development. Straw-necked Ibis nests on old fallen logs and other small bushes and just about anywhere that will support a nest.

Water Level 28cm

21/02/95

Crinolyn

Note a large number of Straw-necked Ibis feeding over most of the wet country. Some Sacred and Glossy Ibis scattered amongst them. Groups of these birds tend to be larger again now. About 500 Whistling Ducks on spider dam as well as some others. Lots of Water Hens, Coots etc in sorghum. Also a lot of Whistling Ducks and others in Mill Paddock.

29/02/96

Bruce Southeron and Howard Blackburn go for flight along Gingham Watercourse and note water pretty well confined to channel east of *Wayholme* fairly wet in central area, as is *Tillaloo*. Open water approximately 150 metres north and south of *Tillaloo* bridge. Water spread across *Westholme*, *Bunnor*, *Goddard's Lease*, *Lynworth* and *Yarrol*.

Straw-necked Ibis noticed on from Eastern side of *Lynworth*, when a sudden change of colour is seen on lignum bushes. Lignum changes from healthy green to quite brown where birds are nesting. Straw-necked Ibis the dominant species in this rookery which stretches to *Yarrol* dam with virtually every bush occupied. Egrets and other white birds are much easier to see from the air than the Straw-necks. There is a sprinkling of white birds throughout the rookery.

Crinolyn – several hundred Whistler Ducks, hardheads and Teal in Mill paddock. Hundreds of Straw-necked Ibis in corner paddock near woolshed road. Large number of mixed ducks in central area of *Crinolyn*. Quite a lot of Coot and other waterfowl in sorghum.

03/03/96

Jubrail Kahn and family, Lyn Gunthorpe and children, Shane Murphy, Leonie Doran, Helena and Chris Morse and son Peter, Howard and Leslie Blackburn meet at *Yarrol*. Are shown bird photos taken in 1921 in Gwydir wetlands by Chris Morse's grandfather. (F C Morse) These photos are absolutely amazing, very clear and close up of birds and habitat.



The group moves to *Lynworth* dam and much excitement is shown when Straw-necked Ibis chickens are seen hatching. Proceed to *Yarrol* to look at larger Straw-necked Ibis chicks. These chicks are now chirping loudly and aware of disturbance and our presence. Large Sacred Ibis chicks really filling the rather flimsy nests in Black Wattle north of the dam.

Water level 22cm

04/03/96

Bruce Rickard, Burny Redden (Gunnedah), Riki Davidson (EPA Armidale) Neil McLennon (Barraba) and Howard Blackburn visit rookery.

Quite a few more Straw-necked Ibis chicks at *Lynworth* dam. Had a good look at larger chicks at *Yarrol* dam and noticed a large Rufous Night Heron chick sitting in a nest in Black Wattle.

This chick appeared to be larger than the parent feeding it. Many thousands of Straw-necked Ibis chicks at various stages from 'just hatched' to 'fat little wandering bundles' staggering about on the lignum bushes.

At the Egret rookery noticed a lot of juvenile birds clambering about and jostling for space Smaller chicks scattered through the area, including Rufous Night heron chicks.

⁷¹ Bird life Australia

05/03/96

Crinolyn: An amazing number and variety of birds feeding and moving about on the wet country. Vegetation is now quite high and thick. An enormous number of ducks right through the wet area. Also, countless thousands of Straw-necked Ibis feeding through the entire area. Everywhere one moves in the lower reaches of the Gingham floodplain there are Straw-necked Ibis feeding, which are sometimes difficult to see until disturbed. Water level now dropping at Woodlands Road, which raises doubts about adequacy of feeding area for the huge rookery to the East.

06/03/96

Alison Hill (Moree Champion) and Howard Blackburn visit rookery area. All the usual birds and chicks etc.

Quick change of groups, with arrival of Gunnedah Landcare Group led by Stuart Bray and including Chris Howarth, Bruce Pealrey, Rob Albert, Ian Mead, Glenn Lyons, Jim Thompson, Tim Watts, Patrick Miller, Susan Gunter, Des Lang, Paul Ying and John Lemon. Do not have enough bikes for 13 people so we walk and paddle to Egret Rookery at Gingham Waterhole and then to *Yarrol* dam.

Noted 15 Magpie Geese. 2 Musk Ducks at Gingham Waterhole, Small and Large Black Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorant, Black Swans, Pink-eared Ducks and lots of Coots, Water hens, 2 Crested Grebes and smaller Grebes. No chicks in Sacred Ibis rookery west of *Yarrol* dam yet but quite large ones North of the dam. Thousands of Straw-necked Ibis chicks chirping and inclined to move about North-east of the dam. One Glossy Ibis nest in arch of lignum bush just above water level.

Water Level 21cm (Continuing drop in level is a bit of a concern.)

07/03/96

Damien Ryan, Alex Novak (*Prime TV*) Kayleen Southeron and Howard Blackburn go to the rookeries. *Prime TV* crew do a good job this time with no time limit. They should get some good footage as they spend much time getting in suitable locations for filming chicks near *Yarrol* dam. Kayleen is amazed at the sights and has not seen this place wet before. She has been in there mustering cattle before and is surprised at the difference.

Noted all usual birds.

Water Level 21 cm

Andrew Ley visits *Crinolyn* in late afternoon and talks about birds, etc.

08/03/96

Noted thousands of waterbirds in Pig Paddock. Straw-necked Ibis everywhere, sometimes difficult to see until disturbed because of large bulk of vegetation now in this area.

Andrew Ley reported seeing Freckled Duck at Gingham Waterhole.



72

Freckled Duck

09/03/96

Randall and Linda Hart and three children (DLWC Barwon Region, Neil, Sarah and Tom Greentree, Howard Blackburn, Shane and Andy Murphy and two children and Andy's sister visit rookery. All are suitably impressed by what they witness at the usual three sites. All the usual birds noted, with more Glossy Ibis apparent than on previous visits.

Mike Rival and Tracy Blackburn arrive at 3pm to have a quick look at the rookeries. Mike comments on the health of the birds and lack of dead ones considering the total number of birds in the area.

During the day noted 20 Magpie Geese as well as Musk Ducks, Crested Grebe and all the other usual species.

Water level 21cm.

11/03/96

At the nearby property of *Yarrol*: Bruce and Jen Southeron take Peter Constable and Maria Taylor (NPWS film crew) to rookeries.

Volunteer Hyacinth working bee crew discover previously unknown Glossy Ibis rookery at *Tillaloo* consisting of approximately 1,000 nests.

14/03/96

At *Wongeiw*: Noted 57 Black Swans, two Magpie Geese, thousands of ducks and other waterfowl and Straw-necked Ibis on Gingham Channel about 1km East of Woodland Road. Countless numbers of waterbirds can be seen a next paddock to the East where water is receding.

⁷² <https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/animals/birds/freckled-duck/>

16/03/96

Yarrol: Peter Strang, his wife and two children (Moree) Peter Taylor and Lesley Carol with daughter Haley (Moree) and Howard Blackburn visit the usual three rookery sites. Noted Pink-eared Duck, Musk Duck, Blue-billed duck as well as Black Swans and all the usual waterbirds. However, did not see any Magpie Geese.
Water level is 23 cm.

19/03/96

Yarrol: Peter Birch and family, Peter Weal; Will Kirkby, David Ward, Ross Beasley, Mick Brosnan, Howard Blackburn attend bird rookeries. Noted all the usual waterbirds including Magpie Gees, Blue-Billed Duck, Pink-eared Duck, and Musk Duck

The group go to the three usual accessible sites at *Lynworth* west dam, *Yarrol* dam and Gingham Waterhole. All see suitably impressed and amazed at the sheer number of birds present and Straw-necked Ibis in particular.

Noticed about 30 dead Straw-necked chicks several hundred metres north of *Yarrol* dam. There was no apparent reason for the deaths and large numbers of healthy chicks all around the dead group. The chicks had been dead for some time, so specimens were not collected for analysis.

Water level 23cm.

20/03/96

Phil Spark (TCM Tamworth) Mike Peatey (Land Photographer) go to Gingham Waterhole and Egret rookery, then to *Lynworth* dam. Phil's quadrunner stop so three of us go on Blackburn's quadrunner which then has flat tyre. Phil has to walk back to the Gingham Waterhole. Mike should have some really good photos from this trip.

Meet up with Liz Savage (DLWC Moree) and group of Moree schoolgirls. This group walks around Gingham Waterhole and Egret rookery. This was an interested group of girls who had formed an environmental school group. A beaut bunch of kids keen on their surroundings.

Water Level: 23cm.

22/03/96

Yarrol: Judy Little (Brisbane), Eric and Helen Favell (Sydney) and Howard Blackburn go to *Lynworth* dam. This group is amazed at masses of waterbirds that can be seen from the dam bank. The group moves on to *Yarrol* dam and the three visitors appear overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of birds and the noise that is all about this amazing area. Much discussion about bird habits, their habitats, progress of this event and water management practices. The group moves onto Gingham Waterhole, running a bit late. Visit Egret rookery which is very active, quite a lot of Rufous Night Herons scavenging about the ground. Egret juveniles flying short distances now.

Water level: 23cm.



Straw-necked Ibis nesting - photograph by Harold Blackburn

23/03/96

Crinolyn: Judy Little (Brisbane), Howard Blackburn go to Pig Paddock. Amazing amount of vegetation and birds in the area. Noted Pacific Herons, White Faced Herons, Magpie Geese, thousands of Straw-necked Ibis, Sacred Ibis (one dropped a European Carp about 15cm long), Pelicans, Swans, Egrets, Purple Swamp Hens, various ducks etc. Judy is amazed at the wildlife.

Yarrol – Jim and Kayleen Southeron visit rookeries with a group of visitors. Howard Blackburn and Phil Sparks discuss Phil's visit. He was a bit disappointed with trap results, (small mammals), however is absolutely amazed at the bird life.

Water Level:23 cm

24/03/96

Yarrol: Tod Nickolas, Sui-Limm White, Cathy Gibson, Sally Morse, Jordan Millyuel (Moree school teachers) Toby Blackburn, Howard Blackburn attend the usual three rookery sites. Teachers were impressed by the sights and sounds of this area. All the usual waterbirds observed.

Water level 23cm

27/03/96

Jen Southeron, Toby Blackburn and Howard Blackburn leave home in the dark to meet *Channel 7* crew Emma Rossi, Pat Wallar and David Ollier at 5pm at Gingham Waterhole.

Channel 7 crew has van load of mobile studio gear including satellite dish and phone to transmit straight to air. Early morning session not very successful. Grew goes to *Lynworth* dam and did some footage, then back to van at Gingham Waterhole.

Straw-necked Ibis chicks now quite mobile and tend to run off when humans approach nest sites.

Water Level: 24 cm

28/03/96

Yarrol: Liz Savage, Peter Huhta (DLWC Moree), Chris Etheridge (MPSC), Toby Blackburn, Howard Blackburn and Courallie High School group go for hike around Gingham Waterhole and Egret rookery. This is a noisy group and it has to be explained that the more noise they make the less they will see. Late afternoon – Terry Picone,

Chris Picone, Toby Blackburn, Garry Cosh, Howard Blackburn go for a look at the usual three sites.



Straw-necked Ibis rookery – photograph by Harold Blackburn

31/03/96

Mike Fleming (NPWS Dubbo), Anne Karle (Mike's wife) and daughters Catherine and Allison arrive about 9am. The Flemings and Howard Blackburn go to dam in Bennett's Ridge paddock; note hundreds of Whistler, Black and Wood Ducks on dam. Scattered Straw-necked Ibis and Egrets feeding in couch pasture nearby.

Yarrol: Fleming family go for walk about Gingham Waterhole. Annabelle Hoskins, Jenny Norton, Jane Pims, Louise Baker, Howard Blackburn go to *Lynworth* dam.

Ladies from Gunnedah get very excited at spotting Freckled Duck. Return to Gingham Waterhole and swap groups. Fleming family really enjoy nature and the girls take great interest in all that is around them.

They all take great interest in the spectacular sight of many thousands of birds seen from *Lynworth* dam bank. Flemings set up camp at the Gingham Waterhole.

Noted Musk Duck, Blue-billed Duck, Freckled Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Magpie Geese and all the usual common waterbirds.

01/04/96

Brian and Sally Vinson and three children (*Eulindra*) and Howard Blackburn visit rookeries. Meet up with Fleming family and go off to pull up hair traps and pit traps of hil Sparks. Not much excitement in Phil's traps. Group goes to *Lynworth* dam, *Yarrol* dam and Gingham Waterhole. All the usual birds present.

02/04/96

Yarrol: Tim and Jenny Phelps and children, Ron and Maree Greentree and children (Rowena) and Howard Blackburn visit rookeries. Group visited usual three sites and observed all the usual waterbirds.

Water level: 25cm

03/04/96

Yarrol: Steve and Enid Blackburn and family (Quambone), Merren Freeth (Collie), Howard Blackburn, Cath Webb (IRN), Liz Savage, Ken Dillon inspect the rookeries and all are quite amazed at the whole thing. Ibis chicks now large and very active, a few flying, some attempting to fly, a few crashing. Egrets at the Waterhole are flying about, some have left nests and now hanging about waterhole or getting flying experience. An odd one crashing.

Water Level: 25cm

05/04/96

Yarrol: Ken and Sheila Donaldson and family, Marshall Family, Mark and Vickie Murphy and family, Howard Blackburn visit usual three sites. The entire group were all fascinated by the sheer numbers of birds seen in the area and all seemed suitably impressed.

Water Level: 25cm.

07/04/95

Leslie and Tracey Blackburn, Maree Gelch and Col and Glenda Mulquiney visit rookeries

08/04/96

Yarrol: Garry McKay, Scott Mitchell, Peter Crawford (Cessnock) Warwick, Margaret and Thomas Scofield (Moombi) and Howard Blackburn visit usual three sites. Noted Magpie Geese flying at Gingham Waterhole. Huge numbers of various ducks and one very large European Carp. The group showed great interest in the area and were amazed at the number of birds everywhere we went.

Water Level: 26cm

11/04/95

Yarrol: Irrigation Association of Australia busload of people from all over the country arrive. Shane Murphy and Howard Blackburn meet the group at 10am to look at wetlands. They do not have time and are not suitably dressed to have a good look, so end up having a quick peep over *Lynworth* fence and short stroll about the waterhole. What a shame they can't see more.

Rob Small and family (Warialda) come prepared for anything and armed with video camera. They have a good look at the three usual sites and are very impressed.

Water Level: 26cm



Ducks on the watercourse – photograph by Harold Blackburn

12/4/95

Yarrol: Andrew Ley, Michael Hutchison, Mark Murphy, Mary Onus, Alex Onus, Nic Onus, Janelle Lawson and Howard Blackburn visit rookeries. Noted all the usual waterbirds, quite a few juvenile Ibis around Yarrol dam, sighted a Sea Eagle. Michael Hutchison suggests 1,000 ducks on *Yarrol* dam, Whistling Kites, Swamp Harriers, and Magpie Geese, etc.

Cumbungi nesting platforms used by Straw-necked Ibis now disintegrating and very waterlogged. The chicks from these collapsing platforms have made off for higher accommodation on nearby lignum bushes, logs and anything above water that is dry. This has caused some lignum platforms to become very crowded and some appear to have standing-room only. There does not appear to be any problem with the arrangement.

Water Level: 26 cm



Whistling Ducks by the 1,000's – photograph by Harold Blackburn

13/04/95

Yarrol: Hugh and Pam Barret and two Children, Brian Adams and Howard Blackburn visit usual three sites. Meet Andrew Ley and Michael Hutchinson on the way. They mentioned having seen three Freckled Ducks and a Sea Eagle. The present group are keen observers, noting several hundred juvenile Egrets near Gingham Waterhole, several groups of around 50 juvenile Rufous Night herons. These adolescents are flying quite well for short distances.

Night Heron juveniles still quite grey with specked colouring, quite different from the adults. Still some juvenile Egrets at the rookery site in trees, flying about and on the ground. Some learner flyers have crashed.

19/04/96

Yarrol: Leslie and Tracy Blackburn, Kayleen Southeron, Terry Farmer, Mark and Vickie Murphy, Leonie Doran, Jake Madden, Emma Pearson, Paul Francisco, Mungindi Catholic School Group go to *Lynworth* dam and then for quick look at Gingham Waterhole. Noted all the usual waterbirds. One boy could not understand why we needed so many birds to look at and suggest one would be enough.

21/04/96

Crinolyn: Noticed mixed groups of around 20 juvenile Royal Spoonbill and Sacred Ibis feeding in various locations on northern side of *Crinolyn*.

27/04/96

South Midkin: Mick Montgomery, Jim Costello, Mark and Shane Murphy, Jim and Kayleen Southeron, Peter Constable, Liz Savage set off in canoes at 9.30am heading west along Gingham Watercourse. The group run into numerous obstacles and could not see much from canoes for most of the day because of high banks in the upper reaches of Gingham channel. They arrive at *Tillaloo* eastern boundary at 8.30pm after a long and tiring day. During the half hour before their arrival the air was alive with ducks and other waterfowl heading west, obviously startled by the group canoeing along the waterway.



Waterbirds taking flight



Water beginning to recede

28/04/96

Tillaloo: Liz Savage, Mark Murphy, Jim Costello, Mick Montgomery, Peter Constable and Howard Blackburn set off in canoes at 9.30am heading west along Gingham Watercourse. Quite a few small groups of young Glossy Ibis in *Tillaloo*, a few Egrets and Straw-necked Ibis also observed.

Peter Constable got some good footage of a group of Spoonbills west of the bridge. Paddling on into *Bunnor*, the bird life became intense. The birds in this area have to be seen to be believed. An incredible number of ducks taking to the sky in clouds and creating a loud roar as thousands of flapping wings carry their owners skyward leaving a heavy shower of water returning to the surface below. This is a spectacle one cannot help to feel privileged to witness. This spectacle continues for kilometres as wave after wave of birds take to the air while we make steady progress westward.

In *Goddard's Lease*, an unusually large duck was observed with a dark head and thick collared neck, brown body with white wing tips. None of our group could positively identify this duck. Hopefully, Peter has some good footage of the bird.

A group of 40 Magpie Geese was noted north of channel in more open area in west end of *Goddard's Lease*. Large number of ducks were encountered in *Lynworth*, also a group of swans with small cygnets. Some horses came close to check the group out.

Straw-necked Ibis rookery area in *Lynworth* still very active with thousands upon thousands of birds and large chicks on lignum platforms. Cumbungi in the channel prevented passage of canoes in *Yarrol*, so the group walked to the Gingham Waterhole (about 2 kms).

Paddling into *Westholme*, came across a small group of ducks, coots etc. Had lunch at *Westholme* Bridge. Trevor Kirkby came along on quadrunner going to visit cattle north of the channel.

29/04/96

Yarrol: Peter Constable walks from Gingham Waterhole to Gingham Bridge, with camera. Howard Blackburn retrieves canoes left at *Lynworth* boundary the previous evening.

Gingham Bridge – midday. Peter Constable and Howard Blackburn take small canoe and paddle west into *Boyanga*. Note huge numbers of ducks and various types similar to flocks seen on previous day in *Goddard's Lease*. Group of swans with large grey coloured cygnets unable to fly but good swimmers. Peter had a great time with his camera. Leave canoe in south west corner of *Boyanga* and walk back to the vehicle at Gingham Bridge.

30/04/96

Boyanga: Following some discussion about showering rain, Peter Constable and Howard Blackburn decide to continue canoe trip. Weather is still uncertain as the canoe heads west into *Mooardree*. The bird life is quite amazing. Huge flocks of various ducks on water, groups and individual Egrets and herons, quite a lot of Rufous Night Herons and clouds of ducks filling the sky. The whole area is alive with birds. Reed Warblers in cumbungi, numerous Swamp Hens, Coots and Ibis everywhere.



Finding nests everywhere – photograph by Harold Blackburn

Moving west into *Mooladree*, we observed several small flocks of Magpie Geese. We observed 18 from one spot. Peter should have some excellent footage of Geese. Swan on nest north of channel as we passed through *Currangundi*. The nest was on a quite large mound of cumbungi and other vegetation about 60cm high and 3m across. The nest contained 4 eggs and was much larger than the one seen previously at *Lynworth*. We ran out of suitable canoeing water in *Currangundi* and had to walk and drag the canoe through *Eulindra* to bore drain. From there we returned to *Crinolyn* via freshwater drain, dragging the canoe. It was raining lightly and we were both quite exhausted but it had been a fabulous day with an incredible number and variety of waterbirds posing for Peter's camera.

08/05/96

Mark and Jenny Morrison (Canberra), Tracy and Howard Blackburn go to rookery. Ibis chicks now quite mature and flying well. They can still be identified quite easily by shorter bill, tail and wing feathers, as well as being greyer around the neck.

Noted 20 Magpie Geese. Egrets have left rookery site at waterhole, as have Rufous Night Herons. Quite a lot of Egrets standing about *Yarrol* dam. Still a huge number of Straw-necked Ibis in the area.

Water Level: 29cm

10/05/96

Gingham: Noted 20 swans at Gingham saltbush patch.

Lynworth: still vast numbers of Ibis at east end of rookery area.

11/05/96

Noted young egrets in small groups and individuals about the area. These birds seem rather quiet and it is presumed they are products of the Gingham Waterhole rookery. Ducks on the other hand fly off with only slight disturbance.

16/05/96

Yarrol: Shane Murphy, Howard Blackburn, Dayle Green, Tim Entwistle, Pradelp Sharina and Geoff Podger (DLWC- IQQM) visit rookery. Note numerous Magpie Geese, heaps of Straw-necked Ibis, scattered Egrets and Glossy Ibis.

Howard Blackburn's diary has regular entries for five months during a wet season 1995/1996 in the Gwydir Wetlands. He captures the extraordinary event of thousands of birds nesting and breeding in the area. He visits the rookeries constantly noting the water levels and the devastation caused by rising of water levels, hailstorms and other natural events.

In 2010, Bruce Southeron made his point as soon as the then Environment Minister, Frank Sartor, stepped out of the helicopter on his western NSW property. "It took nature thousands of years to develop this wetland and its taken man 25 years to totally destroy it." From the air, it is clear where the cotton farms have chewed into the wetlands, green paddocks are next to the barren earth harvested the year before.

The end of Howard Blackburn's account.

In 2012, an article entitled "Waterbirds Return as the Gwydir Floods" was published by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. They used one of my grandfather's photographs to illustrate how it looked in earlier times.⁷³



Our grandfather's legacy lives on, often quoted in studies and reviews. His egg collection is in the safe hands at Museum Victoria, Melbourne. His photographs are all in the hands of F.C.M.'s grandchildren and is part of our heritage

⁷³ http://archive.ils.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/495714/archive-waterbirds-return-as-the-gwydir-floods.pdf

In the early 1920s my grandfather floated the idea of turning the wetlands into a sanctuary.

Almost 100 years later, a small portion of the Gwydir Wetlands is now open to the public as a National Park. The Gwydir Wetlands is a unique ecosystem reliant on water to generate food, and in times of plenty to produce ample for the large colonies of waterbirds to feast on to enable them to successfully rear their young for the next generations to follow. Without water there will be nothing.

To quote the words of the great Indian nationalist and spiritual leader, Mahatma Gandhi: *“Earth provides enough for every man’s need but not every man’s greed.”*



The question is can we look forward to a flourishing watercourse full of the natural wonders my grandfather appreciated and loved or are we destined to turn it into a desert. We have the choice; we can make a difference - or will greed and need be the dictators of our future?



CHAPTER 17

THE LEGACY CONTINUES

My family have all taken an interest in our grandfather's legacy and his photographs. My brother Christopher has been a keen photographer of birds and below are some fine examples showing he has followed in his grandfather's footsteps.



White-faced Heron



Tawny Frogmouth



Wedge-tailed Eagle



Superb Fairy-wren



Kookaburra



White-browed Woodswallow

In conclusion *Treasures of the Gwydir* started out as a way for my father to get to know his father who had died at such a young age. When my Dad read the first few chapters of the book, he had tears in his eyes. Sadly I was not able to finish *Treasures of the Gwydir* before he died. I hope that this trip down the Gwydi and down memory lane will encourage others to keep their family records and not lose sight of their heritage.

I am sure my grandfather would echo the words of David Attenborough “*It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living.*”⁷⁴

The end

⁷⁴ <https://www.wwf.org.au/news/blogs>

