

## BOURKES AT MARLA BORE

by Jack Marshall



BOURKE PARROT  
PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE  
WILD

In the 1960's with two others I went on an overland trip to Darwin and return. The purpose was mainly for sightseeing but we also had some mist nets just in case.

Apart from a few punctures the trip had been uneventful until two days before reaching Adelaide on our return when we came to Marla Bore which consisted of a windmill which was merrily pumping water into a trough.

We had had no opportunity to deploy the nets up till now, but Fred, who had been this way before, had us camp here for the night and put the nets up.

This was done but there was no sign of life until it was completely dark.

Suddenly there was a whirring and chattering and a stream of Bourkes came in, had a drink, and were gone almost as quickly as they had arrived. We were up early the next morning and just before dawn the same thing happened. When the flock had departed this time we found we had collected thirty-eight nice Bourkes. The nets were left up all morning but the only other capture was a Bronze-wing Pigeon.

I have to say here that the law governing the taking of birds from the wild was not enacted until 1972.

Bourkes have always been a favorite of mine and were one of the first birds I kept back in 1945 and I have kept them off and on ever since. They are easy to keep and I cannot find anything to fault with them apart from one thing...mutations.

Several years ago I acquired a normal pair which nested and had four young. However, all of the young were pink and to my mind simply were not Bourkes. If such mutations are allowed to perpetuate there simply will be no normal Bourkes.

This season (09/10) I had three pairs of normals all kept separately. All nested twice and I now have nineteen young. The pairs started to nest a third time, but enough is enough, so the logs were removed.

I trust it can be seen that Bourkes are one of the most rewarding birds it is possible to keep.



MARLA BORE

