

**Sizes and weights of Musk Ducks' Eggs.** The large, elliptical-shaped eggs of the Musk Duck, *Bizura lobata*, vary from dull greenish-white to light buff, colours which soon become nest stained. In weight they are approximately 8% of the average weight (1550 gms. or some 3½ lbs.) of the female; thus, a three-egg clutch would be about one quarter of the weight of the female.

Recorded clutch sizes vary from one to ten eggs, the normal number laid being either two or three. Sets of four are unusual while any in excess of that number are rare. In the case of clutches of six or more it is likely that more than one female has laid in the one nest. An example is quoted by H. J. Frith (1967), who mentions a clutch of nine eggs of two distinct groups of different shapes and states of incubation.

Three eggs in a nest near Armidale, New South Wales, examined on January 25, 1971, by Graeme Stevens, measured 81.5 x 53.4 mm.; 78.9 x 51.2 mm., and 80.0 x 54.0 mm., and weighed 120 gms. (4.23 ozs.); 109 gms. (3.84 ozs.), and 122 gms. (4.30 ozs.) respectively. H. J. Frith gives measurements of 68 eggs belonging to 32 clutches. The lengths of these eggs vary from 71 mm. to 88 mm. (average 79 mm.), and the breadth from 48 mm. to 58 mm. (average 54 mm.).

The weights of the three eggs found near Armidale average 117 gms., or about 4.33 ozs., which is close to that of two eggs from Mystic Park, Victoria, weighed by V. Lowe (1965); these two eggs averaged 127.58 gms., or 4½ ozs. The large egg mentioned earlier would probably weigh about 5 ozs.

An error in weighing is implied in the stated weights of "8 ozs." (226.80 gms.) for each of seven eggs of three clutches of 2, 2 and 3 given by Miss J. A. Fletcher of Tasmania and quoted by Gregory Mathews (1915). Eggs almost twice the normal weight would also be considerably larger, thus causing what could well be insurmountable difficulties in ovulation.

#### REFERENCES

Frith, H. J., 1967. *Waterfowl in Australia* : 317.

Lowe, V., 1965. *Emu*, 65 : 289.

Mathews, Gregory M., 1915. *Birds of Australia*, 4 : 148.

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