

HFNC Excursion to Lake Kennedy in April 1961

Lionel Elmore

Several members walked around this lake. A rough count of Black Swans was made, and it was estimated that between 25,000 and 30,000 of these birds were on the lake on this day. This showed a substantial decrease since the early autumn rains had brought green grass, which means that there could easily have been from 50,000 to 70,000 birds here for the last 6 months.

The swans show an obvious preference for the weed at Lake Kennedy.

No nest remains were seen, the surroundings being completely unsuitable for nesting.

Other birds noted were Grey Teal, in several large flocks, perhaps aggregating 20,000 birds,

Two foxes were put up near the water's edge.

Weed on which the swans seemed to be feeding exclusively was later identified as Fennel Pond Weed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*). This is a valuable food of diving ducks in the USA where it is known as Sage Pond Weed, sheltering the larva of the Caddis Fly and others.

A similar seed-bearing water weed (Phaneogams) from Lake Linlithgow was later identified as Sea Tassel (*Ruffia maritima*) which abounds in brackish water near coast or island.

The fine seeds of both plants would be disturbed and spread by the propellers of speed boats, leading to extensive cover on lakes when conditions are suitable.



The treeless landscape of Lake Kennedy in Feb. 1982, as it was in 1961

(Photo provided by Rod Bird).