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FLEDGING SUCCESS OF EGRETS IN DRY AND WET SEASONS

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Fledging success for Great, Little and Intermediate Egrets at a breeding colony at Shortland (Newcastle, N.S.W.) was found to increase significantly between the wet 1982-1983 and the dry 1983-1984 breeding seasons, whereas for Cattle Egrets there was no significant difference. Evidence of diet changes obtained during the 1984-1985 drought season, coupled with observations of behaviour in the colony during breeding seasons, suggest the hypothesis that the relationship between seasonal food availability and lethal aggression between siblings is the critical factor at work in determining breeding success.