

Re-appearance in South Australia of the Swift Lorikeet (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*, Mathews).

BY EDWIN ASHBY.

The following are a few notes on the appearance of *Lathamus discolor* this year in our neighbourhood. The occurrence is particularly interesting in view of the fact recorded by Mr. M. S. Clark that the last recorded occurrence near Adelaide was in 1882.

Early in June my son, A. K. Ashby, told me that there were some strange grass parakeets about, but it was on June 23rd, 1914, when two birds flew swiftly over my head, showing the bright scarlet under the wings so characteristic of this species. I sent a memo. of the occurrence to the meeting of the S.A. Ornithological Association held on July 31st.

Since first noting this bird on the aforementioned date small flocks have passed over my property morning and evening daily.

They feed soon after sunrise, and also in the latter part of the afternoon, roosting in the thick leafy tops of the Peppermint (*Eucalyptus odorata*) quite near my house.

They have a variety of notes, none of them resembling the harsh squeaks of the Lorikeets. The most common note is a shrill whistle, reminding one of the note of *Olimacteris scandens* when heard at some distance.

When feeding in the Peppermints they sometimes utter a warbling note.

While I have not myself seen them feeding on the flowers of the Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucowlyon*), the only Eucalypt now in flower in our district, from all the specimens examined by me, large amounts of honey exuded from their beaks and nostrils immediately on being shot.

The crops and stomachs contained a variety of food, much triturated, including insects and seeds, and parts of the ovaries of the Peppermints. As far as I could ascertain their favourite food before sundown is the unripe seed vessels of *Eucalyptus odorata*. In an afternoon I have counted several score near my house, so we may conclude that there are many thousands of this interesting visitor scattered throughout our hill country.

The following are the measurements of the two finest specimens, male and female, that I examined:—

Male:—

Total length	10.6"	26.5	c.m.
Tail	5"	12.5	c.m.
Wing	5" ³ / ₄	12.5	c.m.
Tarsus	0.7"	1.75	c.m.
Culmen	0.6"	1.5	c.m.

Female:—

Total length	10.2"	25.5	c.m.
Tail	5"	12.5	c.m.
Wing	0.7"	1.75	c.m.
Culmen	0.5"	1.25	c.m.

While in most of the females the two centre tail feathers were nearly one inch shorter in a fully adult specimen the measurements of the female were identical with the male.

Adult Male:—Forehead deep red, lores yellow, forehead of crown deep blue, changing to rich green at back of crown; nape, back of neck, back and upper tail coverts being uniformly of the same rich green.

The lower portions of cheek, chin, and throat bright red, margined more or less definitely with yellow, this line joining the yellow of the lores.

Ear coverts—Upper portion of cheeks and side of neck, bluish green.

Underside—From red of throat, down to vent, yellowish green, the base of many feathers being almost a pure yellow.

In most of the more brightly coloured specimens there are some scattered bright red feathers. In one specimen before me the brilliant red of the underside of the wings is continued almost across the breast in a broad streak. Also many of the inside feathers of the leg and those of the abdomen are fringed with pink, giving the impression of narrow pink bars.

Wing—Primaries, outer webb deep blue, narrowly margined with yellow; inside webb dull black; fourth to ninth primaries have a white spot in centre of inner webb, which is also broadly margined with yellowish white.

Secondaries—Narrow marginal line of yellow, then broad band of rich green, centre and inner webb black. The inner webb of the four inner secondaries is bright rose red. (This appears to be a constant feature.)

Greater Wing Coverts—Rich green, changing to rich blue in the outer ones.

Median Wing Coverts—Rich green, bases black.

Lesser Wing Coverts—Bright blue, with black centres.

Spurious Wing—Deep blue.

Scapularies—Green.

Shoulders—Deep maroon red.

Under Wing Coverts—Crimson, mottled with blue and green at the margine.

Tail Coverts—Upper are in some cases tipped with blue, and other with rich green. Under tail coverts, pink, margined with yellow.

Tail—Two centre feathers one inch longer than the next. This was so in the case of the best male and best female skin under examination, but in the majority of females the four centre tail feathers were much of a length, and the general colouration more subdued. Two centre feathers for three-quarters of their length, and the outer webb of all other tail feathers for half their length, dull maroon. Inner webb, dull bluish black. Terminal portion of tail feathers, deep dullish blue.

Flank.—Splashed with bright red.

Feet and Legs.—Greyish flesh colour.

The bare skin round the nostrils is larger than is the case with most of the lorikeets, and is the same colour as the legs.

Beak.—Upper mandible, greyish white; lower, cream and white.
