

Birds of Florieton District.

By N. Hiles Pearse, The Gums Station, Florieton, S.A.

Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*). Mallee Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) apparently extinct here; ancient mounds, however, are still to be seen. Stubble-Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*); Little Quail (*Turnix velox*); Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia placida*). Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*)—Very shy; rises with a loud flapping of wings and whirring sounds; can be seen at dusk in numbers at dams in the mallee country. Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*)—A few years ago this species was

unknown, but now is seen in numbers, usually in flocks of 12 or more; they rarely settle in a green tree, preferring the clear view from a dead one. Black-tailed Native Hen (*Tribonyx ventralis*)—They appeared one year in thousands, and became a nuisance in the crops near the River Murray. Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*)—Through its distaste to flying in the daytime they are supposed locally to be carried by other birds. Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax ater*). Pied Cormorant (*P. varius*)—One was seen on an open iron tank. Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*); Silver Gull (*Larus novae-hollandiae*); Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*). Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*)—In great numbers; nests to be found in manure, also inside of the frame of old dead sheep; attacks savagely when nesting, and does the "wounded-bird" trick. Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*). Australian Dotterel (*Peltohyas australis*)—In good seasons these birds are to be seen in flocks; they have nested here. White-headed Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*); Red-necked Avocet (*Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae*); Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Erolia acuminata*). Southern Stone-Curlew (*Burhinus magnirostris*)—Very rare now; foxes have accounted for them. Bustard (*Eupodotis australis*)—Rare also through the depredations of foxes. White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*); White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*); White-necked Heron (*N. pacifica*). Maned Goose (*Chenonetta jubata*)—Very wary, and always post a sentinel on the bank of the dam. Black Swan (*Chenopsis atrata*); Plumed Tree-Duck (*Dendrocygna eytoni*), very rare; Mountain Duck (*Casarca tadornoides*); Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*), common in good seasons; Chestnut Teal (*Querquedula castanea*), rare; Grey Teal (*Q. gibberifrons*), common and in great numbers in good seasons; Blue-winged Shoveler (*Spatula rhynchotis*), rare; Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*), very quiet, easy game on dams; Freckled Duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*), very rare; Hardhead (*Nyroca australis*), rare; Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*); Australian Goshawk (*Astur fasciatus*); Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*). Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*)—On 28th July I saw one of this species flying off with a dead Magpie, and whilst in the air another Whistling Eagle clawed the dead bird. Fork-tailed Kite (*Milvus migrans*). Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucis*)—A beautiful pale-grey bird, lighter underneath and black wing tips; I saw three on 8th August; they are usually seen in pairs, threes or fours, and are very destructive towards Pigeons and small birds. Black Falcon (*F. subniger*), rare; Brown Hawk

(*F. berigora*) usually seen in pairs, and are killers of small birds; Nankeen Kestrel (*F. cenchroides*); Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*); Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*); Musk Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta concinna*), are seen in early summer in hundreds; White Cockatoo (*Kakatoe galerita*), destructive on gumtrees. Galah (*K. roseicapilla*)—Unknown here 25 years ago; now in great numbers. A flock of about 2,000 find sanctuary in a belt of gumtrees near the house, departing early in the morning for their feeding-grounds, the common star-thistle plots, and returning at night. They are aerial gymnasts, and cause me many uneasy moments at times when they hang in great numbers from the telephone line, or on the wireless antenna-wire. Strangely enough, contrary to Mr. Neil McGilp's experience, we have never found them any trouble at the stock-troughs. A neighbour recently poisoned hundreds, as they were a great nuisance in newly-germinated wheat. Major Mitchell Cockatoo (*K. leadbeateri*); Cockatoo Parrot (*Leptolophus hollandicus*); Ringneck Parrot (*Barnardius barnardi*), destructive to fruit; Blue Bonnet (*Psephotus haematogaster*), usually in flocks, make a queer clattering noise, and have a swooping flight; Red-backed Parrot (*P. haematonotus*), in flocks. Budgerygahs (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)—In the early summer they are in thousands. They fly blindly, and scores are killed or maimed through flying against telephone-wires. Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*); Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*); Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*); Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*); Fork-tailed Swift (*Micropus pacificus*); Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*); White-backed Swallow (*Cheramoeca leucosterna*); Tree-Martin (*Hylochelidon nigricans*); Fairy Martin (*H. ariel*). Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*)—One bird nested in an ivy creeper on the veranda of a summer-house, and another on top of a shower-rose in the shearers' bathroom. Restless Flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*); Jacky Winter (*Microeca fascinans*); Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*); Magpie-Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*); Crested Bellbird (*Oreoica gutturalis*); Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina novae-hollandiae*), usually found in mallee scrub, occasionally in flocks, but generally one bird only; White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*). White-fronted Chat (*Epthianura albifrons*)—Snug nests are found in cotton-bushes, and the species often do the "wounded-bird trick." Crimson Chat (*E. tricolor*); Orange Chat (*E. aurifrons*); Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*); Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*A. chrysorrhoa*); Shy Ground-Wren (*Hylacola cauta*); Brown Songlark (*Cin-*

clorhamphus cruralis); Blue - and - White Wren (*Malurus cyanotus*); Masked Wood-Swallow (*Artamus personatus*); White-browed Wood-Swallow (*A. superciliosus*); Dusky Wood-Swallow (*A. cyanopterus*); Brown Tree Creeper (*Climacteris picumnus*); Mistletoe-Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*); Red-tipped Pardalote (*Pardalotus ornatus*), one nesting site, a hole in the wall of a house, was used for several seasons; White-naped Honeyeater (*Melithreptus lunatus*); Black Honeyeater (*Myzomela nigra*); Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*); Yellow-plumed Honeyeater (*M. ornata*); White-plumed Honeyeater (*M. penicillata*); Noisy Miner (*Myzantha melanocephala*); Red Wattle-Bird (*Anthochaera carunculata*), a fruit-eater. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*), a fruit-eater; six were seen on 9th August busy picking berries in the tops of pepper-trees (*Schinus molle*). Pipit (*Anthus australis*); Chestnut-eared Finch (*Taeniopygia castanotis*)—In great numbers; flocks often nest under old thatched sheds. Raven (*Corvus coronoides*); Crow (*C. ceciliae*); Little Crow (*C. bennetti*); White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*), so tame this year that they enter cowsheds after chaff; Black-winged Currawong (*Strepera melanoptera*); Grey Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus torquatus*). Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), White-backed Magpie (*G. hypoleuca*)—Both species are here, but the Black-backed is in the minority.

In the cowyard on 23rd July I noted 50 in all of both species of Magpies, several Crows, a number of White-winged Choughs, three Noisy Miners, and one Magpie Lark, feeding on the dropped chaff, whilst sitting on a pipe-rail about five yards away were five Ringneck Parrots. The Magpie is periodically a flesh-eater; ordinarily he eats the usual bird fare, but in times of stress he feasts upon dead sheep, caul fat at the killing-place, etc., and sometimes kills small birds, not wantonly, as some people think, but as food. I have seen a Magpie in pursuit of a Groundlark chase it in circles, rising higher and higher into the blue until almost out of sight, and then, whether successful or not, make the most wonderful volplane to earth again.