
MORGAN—The Birds of Paratoo.

The Birds of Paratoo, S.A.

By A. M. Morgan.

Thanks to the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Byron McLachlan I had an opportunity of spending a week, from 22nd to 28th September, 1931, at Paratoo, observing and collecting birds. Paratoo is situated 193 miles by rail N.N.E. of Adelaide, and the Head Station is 995 feet above sea level. The country consists partly of hills and partly of saltbush plains, with occasional patches of big mallee. The hills are for the most part either bare or clothed with low bushes, mostly acacias. The season is a good one, grass and herbage being abundant and the saltbush flourishing, but birds were not as plentiful as I expected to find them (considering the good conditions). I think because our northern parts are all so good this year that the birds are more widely distributed than usual. The following sixty-four species were identified, all such as would be expected in the district—

Coturnix pectoralis, Stubble Quail.—Not common. A few pairs were flushed from the grass and herbage. One pair had young on the wing.

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Turnix velox, Little Quail.—Only one individual seen.

Geopelia placida, Peaceful Dove.—Common on the gum creeks.

Geopelia cuneata, Diamond Dove.—About equal in numbers to the last and in the same situations. A pair seemed resident at the H.S.

Ocyphaps lophotes, Crested Pigeon.—Common.

Podiceps ruficollis, Little Grebe.—Two pairs seen on separate dams. One pair was constructing a nest in the floating weed. The usual northern species *P. poliocephalus*, Hoary-headed Grebe, was not seen.

Lobibyx novae-hollandiae, Spur-winged Plover.—Not common. Two pairs seen near dams.

Zonifer tricolor, Banded Plover.—Common. Young, from chicks to nearly full grown were seen.

Charadrius melanops, Black-fronted Dotterel.—A pair seen at nearly every dam and waterhole.

Peltohyas australis, Australian Dotterel.—A pair flushed from the roadside between Paratoo and Terowie. Mr. McLachlan told me they were very seldom seen in the district.

Erolia testacea, Curlew Sandpiper.—A bird collected at one of the dams, a second seen at another dam. Specimen.—26/9/31; ♀; iris very dark brown; legs and feet greyish black; bill and palate black; total length 20.4 cm.; spread of wings 39.5 cm.; weight 40 grammes; stomach contents insect remains.

Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae, White-faced Heron.—Two single birds seen at waterholes.

Casarca tadornoides, Mountain Duck.—A pair seen at a large dam had ducklings about a week old.

Querquedula gibberifrons, Grey Teal.—Single birds seen on two occasions on dams.

Circus assimilis, Spotted Harrier.—A single bird seen.

Hieraetus morphnoides, Little Eagle.—A pair had a nest about 40 feet up in a large swamp mallee from which Mr. McLachlan collected me two eggs.

Haliastur sphenurus, Whistling Eagle.—Only a single bird seen.

Falco longipennis, Little Falcon.—A single bird flew past the front of the motor car.

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Falco berigora, Brown Hawk.—Several pairs seen.

Falco cenchroides, Nankeen Kestrel.—Common. Four eggs were taken from an old crow's-nest from which a bird had been flushed.

Kakatoe sanguinea, Bare-eyed Cockatoo.—A pair seen at Manunda Creek. They are said to be very numerous at times.

Kakatoe roseicapilla, Galah.—Common. They were nesting in the hollow mallees. One nest examined contained two young almost three parts grown and an addled egg.

Leptolophus hollandicus, Cockatoo-Parrot.—Many pairs seen coming to water at the dams. They were nesting in the hollow mallees.

Barnardius barnardi, Ringneck (Mallee) Parrot.—Seen only in the mallee. Not common.

Psephotus haematogaster, Blue Bonnet. A few pairs seen coming to water at the dams.

Melopsittacus undulatus, Budgerygah.—Present in thousands and nesting freely in the hollow mallees. The male was observed to feed the female at the entrance of the nesting hollow with some substance which he regurgitated.

Aegotheles cristata, Owlet Nightjar.—Three birds were flushed from hollows. One of them was sitting on three fluffy white chicks.

Halcyon pyrrhopygius, Red-backed Kingfisher.—A pair was present on most of the watercourses. They were uttering their monotonous one-note call, but apparently had not started nesting.

Hirundo neoxena, Welcome Swallow.—Common about homesteads and dams.

Hylochelidon nigricans, Tree Martin.—Only a single bird seen.

Hylochelidon ariel, Fairy Martin.—Very common. Nesting in numbers in the banks of the creeks and in a concrete tunnel at a dam.

Rhipidura leucophrys, Willie Wagtail.—Seen daily mostly in pairs. Two pairs were nesting in a gumtree at the homestead.

Petroica goodenovii, Red-capped Robin.—Only one pair seen in an acacia scrub on a hillside.

Colluricincla harmonica, Grey Shrike-Thrush.—A pair resident near the homestead and other pairs in the gum creeks.

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Grallina cyanoleuca, Magpie Lark.—A pair at most of the dams and waterholes. One pair at the homestead had young out of the nest.

Oreoica gutturalis, Crested Bellbird.—Heard occasionally. Not common.

Coracina novae-hollandiae, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.—A flock of about ten flew over the homestead.

Lalage tricolor, White-winged Triller.—A few pairs seen in the scrub.

Pomatostomus superciliosus, White-browed Babbler.—Very common in all scrub country. Specimen; 22/9/1931; ♂; iris brown; legs and feet very dark grey; bill, upper black, lower white at base; palate flesh color; total length, 19.5 cm.; spread of wings, 25.5 cm.; weight, 42.5 grammes; stomach contents: caterpillar remains and small beetles.

Epthianura albifrons, White-fronted Chat.—Common in the saltbush.

Epthianura tricolor, Crimson Chat.—About ten birds seen in the saltbush.

Epthianura aurifrons, Orange Chat.—Only a single bird seen.

Aphelocephala leucopsis, Eastern Whiteface.—Common in the scrub and about the homestead.

Acanthiza uropygialis, Chestnut-tailed Tit.—Seen only in the acacia scrub of the hillsides.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa, Yellow-rumped Tit.—Not common. Only a few pairs seen.

Cinclorhamphus cruralis, Brown Songlark. — Common. Every grassed flat had a pair or two in occupation.

Cinclorhamphus mathewsi, Rufous Songlark.—Seen only once in Manunda watercourse.

Malurus cyanotus, Blue-and-White Wren.—Seen only once on a saltbush flat.

Malurus assimilis, Purple-backed Wren.—Only two pairs seen, the first had young out of the nest, and the second newly hatched young in the nest.

Artamus superciliosus, White-browed Wood-Swallow.—Two pairs seen in a patch of mallee scrub. Each pair had an incompleated nest. Specimen; 22/9/1931; ♂; iris very dark brown; legs black, feet mealy grey; bill, base light blue; tip.

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black; total length, 22 cm.; spread of wings, 36 cm.; weight, 35 grammes; stomach contents, a grasshopper.

The Masked Wood-Swallow was not seen.

Artamus melanops, Black-faced Wood-Swallow.—Common. Mostly in pairs or flocks of four or five. An incomplete nest was found in a small acaçia.

Climacteris picummus, Brown Tree-creeper.—Fairly common in the mallee scrub. Specimen; 22/9/1931; ♀; iris dark brown; legs and feet greyish black; bill black; palate dark horn streaked yellow; total length, 17.25 cm.; spread of wings, 27 cm.; weight, 29 grammes; stomach contents: triturated ants.

Pardalotus ornatus, Red-tipped Pardalote.—Common in the big gums of Manunda Creek. Specimen; 24/9/1931. Manunda; ♂; iris brown; legs and feet dark brown; bill black; palate white; total length, 11.3 cm.; spread of wings, 18.2 cm.; weight, 11 grammes; stomach contents: insect remains.

Meliphaga virescens, Singing Honeyeater.—Seen only once in some flowering tobacco bushes between Paratoo and Terowie.

Meliphaga penicillata, White-plumed Honeyeater.—Common in the gums of Manunda. A bird collected is midway between the dominant species and *M. p. leilavalensis*. ♂; 24/9/1931; iris very dark brown; legs and feet light brown; bill black; palate yellow; total length, 17.2 cm.; spread of wings, 25.2 cm.; weight, 19 grammes; stomach contents: insect remains.

Myzantha flavigula, Yellow-throated Miner.—Very common. Several nests seen in some "swamp mallee" growing in a water-course, most of the young were on the wing, but one nest contained newly hatched young. Specimen; 22/9/1931; ♂; iris dark brown; legs and feet dull brownish yellow; bill and palate yellow; bare skin around eye yellow; total length, 26 cm.; spread of wings, 38.5 cm.; weight, 55 grammes; stomach contents: one large fruit seed and insect remains.

Acanthagenys rufogularis, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.—Very common.

Anthus australis, Pipit (Groundlark).—Common on all open country.

Mirafra javanica, Horsfield Bushlark.—A pair was seen carrying food.

Taeniopygia castanotis, Zebra Finch.—Seen in hundreds. Nesting.

Corvus ceciliae, Crow.—Not very common. The young were out of the nests. Specimen; 22/9/1931; ♀ juv.; iris brown; legs black; feet black, nails white on right foot, black on left foot; bill black; palate horn color; total length, 46 cm.; spread of wings, 82.5 cm.; weight, 19 ozs.; stomach contents: white grubs and other caterpillars and a large centipede.

Cracticus torquatus, Grey Butcher-Bird.—Several pairs seen. One pair had young out of the nest.

Gymnorhina tibicen, Black-backed Magpie.—A few pairs seen, but not so common as the next species. A pair had a nest in a gum tree near the homestead.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca, White-backed Magpie.—Very common. Nesting.

A skeleton of a *Dromaius novae-hollandiae*, Emu, was found on the bank of a dam on Paratoo. A specimen of a *Melanodryas cucullata*, Hooded Robin, was obtained on 2nd July, 1931.

The following species were seen at Peterborough on 21st September, 1921.—*Cuculus pallidus* (Pallid Cuckoo), *Hirundo neoxena* (Welcome Swallow); *Cinclorhamphus cruralis* (Brown Songlark), *Cinclorhamphus mathewsi* (Rufous Songlark), *Meliphaga brevirostris* (Brown-headed Honeyeater), *Meliphaga penicillata* (White-plumed Honeyeater), *Myzantha flavigula* (Yellow-throated Miner), *Gymnorhina hypoleuca* (White-backed Magpie).
