
GRAY—Notes from Orroroo.

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By James T. Gray. 12/9/32.

A pair of Rufous Songlarks (*Cinclorhamphus matheusi*) stayed in my garden for several days from 26th August. We became most interested in the singing of the male bird. We "translated" its song as "wet your feet." In flight, the male never soared higher than about 20 feet (the windmill in the garden gave us a gauge for the measurement), and the flights were always short. The song ("wet your feet") was constantly repeated during flight and was always sung emphatically—stridently. When the bird came to rest it frequently trilled in a very much quieter and sweeter tone. I noticed that the trilling was done on four different notes, ranging from a high to a low mellow tone. The trills were quite equal to those of a canary. The trilling always followed the song, and there were never more than two trills in succession. When two

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trills were given they were on different notes and were separated by a short interval. The first trill was always on a middle note, the following one on either higher or lower note. The trilling was always preceded by the song and was only given when the bird was at rest. The Brown Songlarks (*Cincloramphus cruralis*) have returned and are nesting in the commonage around the town. I first saw them on 3rd September. A small flock of Budgerygahs (*Melopsittacus undulatus*), about 15 in number, flew over the town, and I first saw White-winged Trillers (*Lalage tricolor*) on the same date. I wrote last year that I saw a single specimen (which I took to confirm the species) of the Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalopus punctatus*). On 20th August, 1932, I saw a fair number of them. They were with Red-tipped Pardalotes (*P. ornatus*), and were very noisily singing as they fed in the outer foliage of the mallees. I wrote also (page 200) of the young broods of Chestnut-eared Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*) still using the nests as sleeping places up to the beginning of June. The nests were used until they became sodden by the end of June, and were then shapeless masses. The Finches are no longer in flocks and only a few separate pairs are now seen. There are usually four to six Little Black Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax ater*) about the Pekina Creek Irrigation Dam. They are very shy and, as there is not much cover on the banks, very difficult to approach. A few weeks ago one of them found its way to a tank on a homestead at the end of the dam, in which there are fish. The owner saw the bird take fish from the tank and swallow them. Not wishing to shoot the bird he tried to frighten it away, but it persisted in returning despite the fact that people were constantly about the yards by the tank. He had to shoot it to save the fish. I had a Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) ♀ brought to me. It was rescued from several Magpies (*Gymnorhina* sp.), who were savagely attacking it in a garden. The Magpies had it on the ground and would have killed it had they not been driven off. Its mate escaped by flying off and settling in a wheat field. The following species are to be added to the lists printed on pages 103, 135, and 201 of this Volume:—Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax ater*); Australian Goshawk (*Astur fasciatus*); Little Eagle (*Hieraetus morphnoides*); Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*); Black Honeyeater (*Myzomela nigra*); White-fronted Honeyeater (*Gliciphila albifrons*).