
BROCKMEYER—Some Birds Seen in North-East.

Some Birds Seen on a Trip to the North-East.

By A. H. Brockmeyer.

On the 26th May, 1933, I left Adelaide, with five others, on a collecting trip in parts of the North-East, collecting mainly geological and plant specimens, though I hoped to have time to notice the birds in the districts through which we travelled. We left Adelaide at 5 o'clock in the morning in very heavy rain, with our spirits rather damped, but when near Gawler the rain had disappeared and for the remainder of the trip no rain was encountered. I drove one of the cars to our camp site, and did not have much time to note the birds en route. The White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) was heard and seen as dawn was breaking near Kapunda, its clear notes being distinctly heard above the noise of the motor-car. After leaving Eudunda I noticed many Red-backed Parrots (*Psephotus haematonotus*) flying ahead of us, and they were the only birds I saw until the Koomooloo district was entered, when the Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*) was first seen in

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the salt- and blue-bush country. In this district I also noted the Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*) just when we entered some scrub land. As may be expected, the *Corvus* species was common all over the country. The Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*) was now often seen soaring in the air, either singly or in pairs. We reached our camp site, situated in a deep gorge some miles from Yunta, a few hours before nightfall. Nothing of ornithological interest was observed until the next day, when the Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*) and the Harmonious Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*) were noted. I ought to mention that the country where we were camped was very dry, which probably accounts for the scarcity of bird life in this part of the world. The old Grampus Station was a few miles from our temporary home, and whenever we passed through we could be sure of seeing many Emus feeding in the high grass bordering a watercourse. On the 1st June we counted 162 at this spot, with others moving around far up the watercourse. We attracted them to within a few feet of us by waving a handkerchief from the side of the car. This aroused their curiosity and they gradually came closer and closer. After this we motored to Manunda Station, where a solitary Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*) was observed alongside the track. Mr. Hemmings, of Manunda, very kindly offered us some refreshments, and, during a conversation with him, I found that the Emu had become rather destructive to fences on his property. On the 30th May we motored to an out-station, and on the return trip a Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen flying over a nest. We motored to the spot and found a large nest situated in a high tree, which appeared likely to collapse at any moment. One of the party asked me whether I would like to climb up to this nest, but thinking it was far too early for nesting, and other things considered, I declined the kind offer. However, H. Kemp, one of our party, a very keen tree-climber, decided that the nest was worth further investigation, and I was surprised to see him draw two eggs from the nest. They were brought carefully to the ground and found to be quite warm, one being of a much lighter colour than the other. After this interesting event, all Eagles' nests were searched, and though several were examined only one more contained eggs, which were obtained near our camp in the hills, where another member of the party, B. Gee, found two nests close together, one containing two eggs. These were found at the end of our stay on the 3rd June. No other nests yielded eggs, and it

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appeared that the Wedge-tail was the only bird with home duties. On 1st June, near dusk, I noticed a few Elegant Parrots (*Neophema elegans*) feeding under some bushes, and a few minutes later three Ringnecks (*Barnardius barnardi*) were noticed making themselves comfortable for the night. The next day the Blue Bonnet (*Psephotus haematogaster*) and a flock of Pink Cockatoos (*Kakatoe leadbeateri*) was seen flying near the camp. In the afternoon the Mulga Parrot (*Psephotus varius*) was observed alongside a dry watercourse, and when near the plains a few Crested Pigeons (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), Groundlark (*Anthus australis*), Galahs (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*), and the Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia castanotis*) were seen and heard. The White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*) was common, and its peculiar call could be heard at any time when walking through the scrub. Spur-winged Plovers (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*) were heard, in the nights, flying over the camp. On 4th June we left for Adelaide, and nothing new was noticed on the return trip, excepting a few Wrens (*Malurus* sp.) and Murray Magpies (*Grallina cyanoleuca*). A call was made at Mr. Symon's home near Tiverton Station. He had motored to our camp and given us a pleasant surprise by bringing fresh food and water. He showed us a tame Major Mitchell (*Kakatoe leadbeateri*), which had its complete freedom, but never flew far from the house. About 30 miles further along the track a visit was made to Mr. Hatherley's house, where we were kindly asked to stay for lunch. I made a short tour on foot around part of his property, but only saw a few Crested Pigeons and Galahs. The country at this spot was exceptionally dry, and most bird life had apparently deserted it for a time. Mrs. Hatherley showed me a bird bath which she had arranged in her garden near the house. She told me that the bath was extensively used by the birds, and while we were talking a Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*) flew down and made a late toilet for the day. After leaving these hospitable people, we had an uneventful trip to Adelaide. An interesting fact that came to my mind is that I did not at any time notice a single Budgerygah (*Melopsitticus undulatus*), and the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was also conspicuous by its absence. Grey Teal (*Querquedula gibberifrons*) and Black-tailed Native-Hens (*Tribonyx ventralis*) were common, and some Black-fronted Dotterels (*Charadrius melanops*) were seen on most of the dams which we visited. The distance motored totalled 380 miles.