

**BIRDS OF ALAWOONA SCHOOL DISTRICT AS RECORDED
BY THE CHILDREN**

The names have been numbered and arranged according to the Official Checklist of the Birds of Australia (Second Edition).

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| 1. <i>Dromaius novae-hollandiae</i> . | 133. <i>Lobibyx novae-hollandiae</i> . |
| 7. <i>Leipoa ocellata</i> . | 174. <i>Burhinus magnirostris</i> . |
| 9. <i>Coturnix pectoralis</i> . | 222. <i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i> . |
| 18. <i>Turnix velox</i> . | 224. <i>Uroaetus audax</i> . |
| 20. <i>Pedionomus torquatus</i> . | 238. <i>Falco subniger</i> . |
| 34. <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i> . | 248. <i>Ninox strenua</i> . |
| 43. <i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i> . | 249. <i>Tyto alba</i> . |
| | 273. <i>Kakatoe roseicapilla</i> . |
| | 291. <i>Barnardius barnardi</i> . |
| | 295. <i>Psephotus haematonotus</i> . |

310. *Melospittacus undulatus*.
 313. *Podargus strigoides*.
 329. *Merops ornatus*.
 331. *Eurostopodus guttatus*.
 337. *Cuculus pallidus*.
 357. *Hirundo neoxena*.
 358. *Cheramoeca leucosterna*.
 364. *Rhipidura leucophrys*.
 369. *Seisura inquieta*.
 377. *Microeca fascians*.
 381. *Petroica goodenovii*.
 408. *Colluricincla harmonica*.
 415. *Grallina cyanoleuca*.
 423. *Pteropodocys maxima*.
 424. *Coracina novae-hollandiae*.
 443. *Pomatostomus temporalis*.
 448. *Epthianura albifrons*.
 449. *Epthianura tricolor*.
 450. *Epthianura aurifrons*.
 465. *Smicrornis brevirostris*.
 466. *Aphelocephala leucopsis*.
 478. *Acanthiza hamiltoni*.
 481. *Acanthiza uropygialis*.
 486. *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*.
 498.) *Hylacola pyrrhopygia?* or
 499.) *Hylacola cauta?*
 504. *Chthonicola sagittata*.
 508. *Cinchorhamphus cruralis*.
 527. *Stipiturus mallee*.
 540. *Malurus pulcherrimus*.
 544. *Artamus personatus*.
 545. *Artamus superciliosus*.
 547. *Artamus cyanopterus*.
 549. *Neositta chrysoptera*.
 565. *Pardalotus punctatus*.
 566. *Pardalotus xanthopygus*.
 567. *Pardalotus striatus*.
 583. *Melithreptus brevirostris*.
 617. *Meliphaga leucotis*.
 622. *Meliphaga ornata*.
 625. *Meliphaga penicillata*.
 634. *Myzantha melanocephala*.
 636. *Myzantha obscura*.
 637. *Anthochaera chrysoptera*.
 638. *Anthochaera carunculata*.
 640. *Acanthagenys rufogularis*.
 647. *Anthus australis*.
 692. *Corvus ceciliae*.
 693. *Corcorax melanorhamphus*.
 695. *Strepera melanoptera*.
 702. *Cracticus torquatus*.
 705. *Gymnorhina tibicen*.
 706. *Gymnorhina hypoleuca*.

BIRDS BELIEVED TO BE VISITORS ONLY
 BUT WHICH HAVE NESTED IN THE
 DISTRICT.

59. *Fulica atra*.
 62. *Podiceps poliocephalus*.
 319. *Alcyon azurea*.
 430. *Lalage tricolor*.

BIRDS BELIEVED TO BE VISITORS
 ONLY.

54. *Tribonyx mortieri*.
 97. *Phalacrocorax ater*.
 106. *Pelecanus conspicillatus*.
 144. *Charadrius melanops*.
 188. *Notophox novae-hollandiae*.
 202. *Chenoneitta jubata*.
 211. *Querquedula gibberifrons*.
 274. *Leptolophus hollandicus*.
 278. *Polytelis anthopeplus*.
 284. *Platycercus flaveolus*.

INTRODUCED BIRDS RESIDENT IN
 THE DISTRICT.

- Passer domesticus*.
Sturnus vulgaris.
Alauda arvensis.

Commentary by J. Neil McGilp.

Having had a good deal of experience with the birds of this State and particularly with those in the Murray Mallee Lands, the writer has been asked to comment on the list of birds compiled by the pupils of the Alawoona School.

It has so frequently been found that authentic records have been made of birds very "foreign" to the district being dealt with that one cannot be dogmatic in any claim that a bird does or does not occur in a particular district. It is therefore not desired that this review of the List should be taken as any attempt to decry or refute any records made by the scholars of the Alawoona School.

Many birds so closely resemble others that it is extremely difficult to identify them correctly by field observation alone, particularly when field work is aided only by books with the pictures of the birds drawn from "still" life. It takes much patience to determine, even if field glasses are available, the identity of a bird which is constantly on the move.

The List, most certainly, has been compiled only after much diligent and careful observation and study of the birds, and the scholars

can be excused for most of the apparent mistakes in the list. More than this, they should be heartily congratulated on a very fine result and should be encouraged to continue with their efforts in the study of ornithology.-

Included in the list are several birds which call for comment. They are as follows:—

Lobibyx novae-hollandiae (Spur-winged Plover).—This species is seldom seen in the Mallee Lands, whereas *Zonifer tricolor* (Banded Plover) is very plentiful in the cleared parts of the district. It would appear, then, that the bird observed was probably the Banded Plover, but it was incorrectly named in the List.

Accipiter cirrocephalus (Collared Sparrow Hawk) occurs in the district, but as *Falco cenchroides* (Nankeen Kestrel) is not included in the List, the writer, knowing that many people call the Kestrel the Sparrow Hawk and the great difficulty in identification in respect to the latter bird, is of opinion that the bird studied by the scholars was the Nankeen Kestrel. A list of Alawoona birds compiled on any day would include the Kestrel.

Pomatostomus temporalis should be replaced by *P. superciliosus*. The former bird, the Grey-crowned Babbler, does not inhabit the Mallee, whereas the White-browed Babbler is very common at Alawoona.

Is it any wonder that the scholars at Alawoona could not decide whether the Ground Wren there was *Hylacola cauta* or *H. pyrrhopygia*? It is impossible, without a full knowledge of the habits of both birds, to distinguish them by observation. The Alawoona bird is *Hylacola cauta*.

This criticism also applies to *Malurus pulcherrimus* and *M. assimilis*—the Mallee bird is undoubtedly the latter species.

Neositta pileata (Black-capped Sittella)
