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## A TRIP TO THE COORONG

By C. E. RIX

A loud piercing whistle rings over the mallee and echoes far out over the calm, land-locked waters—a wild, carefree whistle that rises in a series of short almost staccato notes to an explosive climax, and then trails away to little more than a sigh. Again it rises and falls—an abandoned vibrant call of an untamed nature.

On outspread wings a Whistling Eagle glides over the open grassy flat that nestles between the scrub and the water. Some kangaroos feeding on the flat raise their heads for a moment and then resume their meal. Across the water drifts a soft, rushing sound as a large flock of ducks pitches in among the countless thousands of ducks, swans, geese, and other wildfowl feeding and disporting there.

And then—No! not silence, for there is a hum of sound that never ceases. The babbling of the waterfowl, the twitter of birds in the scrub, and the dull, muted rumble of the surf from behind those tall sand dunes on the far side of the water, all combine to form a sound which, by its very continuance, becomes as nothing—its sudden cessation would strike the ears like a clap of thunder. It is the silence of the wilds that are never silent.

The leaves at a point near the edge of the scrub shiver as if a chill breeze had passed through them. But there is no breeze! An old kangaroo, warned by some indefinable sense, raises his head to gaze intently at the spot where the leaves had stirred. Again they stir, a little nearer the edge of the scrub this time, and in a moment the kangaroos have gone. The bushland starts at the sound as they crash through the undergrowth. The waterfowl nearest to the shore begin to swim

nervously, hurriedly, in circles, and back and forth, transmitting the alarm further and further across the water with each passing second.

Then, where the leaves had trembled, the bushes part and a lithe, black-brown form emerges. Clutched in one hand is a bundle of spears. Over his shoulder and hanging down his back is the carcass of a small kangaroo; dangling from his girdle are a couple of ducks, a parrot and a possum. His fierce eyes glance swiftly about across the island-studded waters to the gleaming white sandhills beyond.

He raises his face to the sky. There a flock of pelicans, wheeling, soaring, rise higher and higher above the islands where for centuries they, and a host of other birds, have bred and reared their young. The warrior gazes up at them and from his lips comes a clear, haunting call that rolls across the waters, echoing and re-echoing around the islands and rocky headlands—the call of a successful hunter.

With a roar that almost deafens, the teeming hordes of wildfowl rise from the water, flock after flock, until the sky is darkened and the air is filled with a medley of cries and a mighty rush of wings. Faintly, as the din begins to subside, comes the answering call. He moves forward and, entering the shallow water, sets out to rejoin his tribe at the midden in the sandhills beyond.

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More than one hundred years have passed since then. To-day? Well, The Coorong is still there and the journey described in the following pages was made with the object of obtaining some idea of the natural life still to be found there.

The Coorong! A soft, fascinating name that seems to flow from the lips like a call from the bushland—a name that quickens the pulse and stirs the imagination.

The Coorong—haunt of wildfowl—hunting ground of the aborigine—scene of early pioneering courage and adventure, and of shipwreck and tragedy. And, above all, The Coorong—a national heritage as yet unrecognised—a natural park and sportsman's paradise where, if prompt action is taken, the present can be retained for the future and be a monument to the stirring deeds of the past.

Our party, consisting of S. E. Terrill, H. E. A. Jarman and the writer, left Adelaide at about 4 p.m. (summer time) on Friday, November 12, 1943.

Few birds were seen as we passed through the Mount Lofty Ranges. Occasionally Adelaide Rosellas flew, screeching, across the road ahead of us. A Scarlet Robin, perched on the fence by the roadside, held our attention for a moment. It was only for a moment, for our thoughts were miles ahead, and the familiar birds of the ranges were more or less taken for granted.

Now and then the calls of Greenies drifted out of the bush. A male Blue Wren earned a fleeting glance as he sat on a low shrub just off the edge of the bitumen.

Willie Wagtails and Welcome Swallows, stationed at more or less regular intervals, patrolled the road and the air above it in search of insects. A knowing bird is the Willie Wagtail. If there is any wind he almost invariably moves to the leeward side of the road to collect the insects which, being stirred up by the car, are carried in that direction by the wind.

Between Littlehampton and Nairne two or three Kookaburras were seen, and some Black-chinned Honeyeaters called from a clump of gum trees beside the road.

Upon leaving Nairne, and passing out into the more open country, our interest in the surroundings quickened. We began to look for birds as we sped along.

With the advent of the open country Magpies (White-backed) assumed a dominant place in the list of birds seen. Our rising interest was spurred by the sight of one of the Black-backed species as we were nearing Kanmantoo. This is the farthest west that we had seen the species and, from then on, every Magpie was closely scrutinised to see if it had a black back. However, no further

Black-backs were seen throughout the trip. The bird seen was standing alongside the road and was in the company of a White-backed Magpie.

Kanmantoo was soon left behind, as were some Crows (or Ravens) and numerous Magpies. Two Galahs rose from a creek and flew ahead of us for a few moments before breaking away to disappear over a ridge. A Kestrel hovered over a grass paddock and, as we drew level, plunged downward to secure his quarry.

We were now in ideal Pipit country—open grassy plains and crops—but the Pipits were missing. A Brown Songlark came drifting down, on a wing and a song, into a crop. A pair of Chats surveyed us from the top wire of a fence. Over a distant rise a Kestrel hovered and a pair of Red-rumped Parrots flew away to our left.

On rounding a corner to run down towards Callington, we saw a Crested Pigeon speeding across our path. Some more Chats and another Kestrel broke a seemingly endless succession of Magpies.

Monarto South was now in sight ahead, and, as we drew near, a Black-shouldered Kite was seen hovering over a crop. A Willie Wagtail, some Welcome Swallows, and another Willie Wagtail were interspersed among the Magpies.

A fringe of mallee now lined the roadside and birds were more numerous, but many could not be identified. The loud call of a Grey Thrush determined the name of one. A Diamond Firetail was seen perched in a mallee. Some Eastern Whitefaces and four or five Zebra Finches flushed from the roadside and took up points of vantage along the top wire of a fence.

The sky ahead of us began to bear a threatening look. A large black cloud extended upward from the eastern horizon and we began to have visions of a wet trip. Several Crows passed over just ahead of us, and then two Masked Wood-swallows were noticed hawking over the tops of the scrub. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters dashed across the road at intervals, and two parties of Yellow-tailed Thornbills hurried out of the way of the approaching car.

Murray Bridge and the river now came into view, and the eastern sky looked more ominous than ever.

Murray Bridge at 6 p.m.—and we went in search of something to eat. A cafe displaying some such name as "The Travellers' Rest"

seemed appropriate to our situation. It was closed, however, and we had to try further afield. Our next try was successful and the necessary supplies were soon obtained.

### EAST OF THE MURRAY

The dark cloud was nearly overhead, and we expected rain at any moment as we crossed the bridge and turned south toward Tailem Bend. The vegetation, such as is left of it, undergoes a marked change on the eastern side of the River Murray. For some miles west of the river we had been passing through typical mallee scrub, but here clumps of Peppermint (*Eucalyptus odorata*) alternated with patches of Pine (*Callitris propinqua*). In a number of places along the road, the value of Pyp Grass (*Ehrharta villosa*) for checking and preventing wind erosion of sandy soils was amply demonstrated. Various sized patches of sand, which if neglected would be a constant menace to the road and the surrounding country, have been rendered stable by the introduction of this plant.

The storm clouds, though still centred in the east, were now extending over towards the western horizon, and the light was becoming poor in consequence. A strong easterly wind was blowing and it appeared to be raining heavily some miles away to the east.

Owing to the poor light, birds were rather difficult to recognise. A Pipit, the first identified up to this stage, perched on a fence post, and, as we passed a clump of Peppermint Gums, a pair of Hooded Robins were observed on a telephone wire. Then some Zebra Finches rising from the roadside alighted on a fence. Crested Pigeons were seen every now and then, and Magpies were still plentiful.

Two Eastern Whitefaces hurried across the road to pause and gaze at us from the fence, while another Hooded Robin looked down from the telephone wire.

Rabbits began to be seen in ones and twos, and before long in tens and dozens. As we passed out of a patch of scrub a paddock on our left seemed to be alive with them as, disturbed by our sudden appearance, they raced in all directions to their burrows. From this point onward, these pests were seen in very large numbers, and for miles on end it was rarely that we covered more than a quarter of a mile without seeing one or more—and it was usually more.

A Whistling Eagle circled over a small patch of trees in the centre of a paddock.

There were Crested Pigeons, Magpies and Crows (or were they Ravens? Goodness knows—we did not).

The water-towers at Tailem Bend were now sighted ahead. No rain had fallen as yet, but the light was very bad, though the sun was still well above the horizon.

Rabbits, rabbits, and still more rabbits—it seemed remarkable that any feed could remain in the country with such hordes of these hungry rodents. The expedition's arsenal had been opened up and all the firearms (one .22 calibre repeating rifle) taken out. As a result, enough grass to feed about half a sheep had been saved by the time Tailem Bend was reached. (It is said that twelve rabbits eat about the same amount as one sheep.)

Between Tailem Bend and Wellington East (about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles) the road, for much of the distance, is situated on the top of the cliffs overlooking the River Murray. For the first two miles or so the country is practically treeless. About half a dozen Silver Gulls, two or three Marsh Terns, and a Pied Cormorant were noticed flying over the river. Three Magpie-Larks were quarrelling on the crossbars of a telephone pole.

At a point about half-way between Tailem Bend and Wellington, we entered an extensive area of pine scrub. The darkness of the pines was accentuated by the extremely dull light and we seemed to be in a dark and dismal world. Even the birds were black—a Black-winged Currawong and several Crows. No other birds were seen, and we felt relieved that there were not miles of this type of country to traverse.

Wellington slipped by on our right. Numbers of birds could be seen on the swamp, but apart from a Pelican or two they were too far away to identify. A few drops of rain began to fall and with them some of our spirits, but shortly afterwards it could be seen that we were leaving the storm behind. The light began to improve considerably and soon became quite good again. The strong easterly wind had eased down to little more than a gentle breeze.

A Pipit, several pairs of White-fronted Chats, another Pipit and some more Chats were passed, and then a flock of about sixty Galahs were noticed in the middle of the road about 30 or 40 yards ahead. As they rose up with much screaming, two Magpie-Larks also rose and added their measure to the clamor.

The country through which we had passed since leaving Wellington had been more or less flat and all but treeless, with numerous and extensive areas of samphire. We now entered a more hilly landscape with scattered Sheoaks (*Casuarina stricta*) and occasional saline swamps. Teatree (*Melaleuca fasciculiflora*) fringed these swamps.

Rabbits played a big part in the composition of the landscape—or perhaps it should be the decomposition. Certainly the numbers present must be having a very harmful effect on the country generally.

A Brown Hawk circled a dead sheoak and then alighted thereon. Several Spurwinged Plovers and a pair of Banded Plovers were seen as we passed over a fairly extensive flat. White-fronted Chats were plentiful.

#### LAKE ALBERT

Suddenly we left the hilly country behind and ran out on to Waltowa Swamp. Waterfowl scurried in all directions as we pulled up on the causeway by which the road crosses the swamp.

As we wished to reach our destination as early as possible, we had not made any stops to observe birds. The sight of all these waterfowl was, however, too much for us to resist, and we spent ten minutes or so identifying all those within reasonable range. Pelicans, looking like galleons of old, sailed majestically across the open water. Their white plumage contrasted strongly with the plumage of three Black Swans which, with necks stretched upward to their full extent, uttered peevish, querulous calls. Five Royal Spoonbills rose from the edge of a patch of samphire and flew across the causeway to alight about a quarter of a mile away. Near at hand were Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Grey Teal, White-eyed Ducks, a pair or two of Black Ducks, some Hoary-headed Grebes, a White-faced Heron, a Greenshank, and several Spurwinged Plovers. We felt that a few minutes' ramble around the swamp would reveal other species, but time was drawing on. We glanced at the sun to find it on the point of setting and the beginnings of a fine sunset were spreading upward from the horizon.

Our way now lay over open, flat country, with Lake Albert, and an occasional Pelican, a few chains away on our right. Two or three Spurwinged Plovers were parading on the grassland between the road and the lake.

Just after leaving Waltowa we saw what

appeared to be a beautiful pink carpet covering the greater portion of a paddock on the left-hand side of the road. It was the massed flowers of the pigface (*Mesembrianthemum australe*) and in the last light of the sun they looked very fine indeed. We passed several smaller patches between there and Meningie, but, owing to their smaller size, these did not look quite so attractive.

Meningie was soon reached, and as we entered the township numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeets were screeching and squabbling in the pines on the camping reserve.

We stopped to stoke up the "producer" and purchase further supplies of charcoal and, between times, to gaze at the western skies which were now ablaze with red and gold. The broad waters of the lake stretching away towards Narrung assumed for a moment a burnished coppery appearance.

But the glory soon began to fade. The light once more commenced to fail, this time in earnest. Most of the remainder of our journey would be made in darkness. Birds would be safe from our prying eyes.

Upon leaving Meningie the Prince's Highway passes through a tract of undulating country with dense, low mallee scrub and occasional swampy flats and pipeclay pans. It looked likely bird country, and we resolved to have a look around on our return journey, which would be during daylight.

Plovers, both Banded and Spurwinged, a few Magpies and Crows, some White-fronted Chats, a Willie Wagtail or two, and several honeyeaters (species not determined) were noticed soon after leaving Meningie, but the light quickly became too bad to identify any but the larger and more conspicuous birds.

Our expectation of seeing a goodly number and variety of birds in these parts on our return was heightened by the fact that many of the mallees were flowering heavily and some of the teatrees fringing the swamps were covered with masses of white bloom. Rabbits continually crossed the road in front of us, some narrowly escaping death in the process, but no other life was seen as we wound our way on through the scrub.

The Coorong! As we topped a rise, a thin silver streak could be seen in the distance ahead where the water reflected the faint light still remaining in the western sky. It was only a momentary glimpse, for we dropped down on the other side of the rise. We did not obtain another view until we

suddenly emerged, almost on the shore, at a point just south of The Needles.

The sandhills of Younghusband Peninsula stood out in black relief against the faint afterglow lingering on the western horizon. Islands and nearby headlands loomed darkly against the waters, where breeze-ruffled patches were in sharp contrast to the silvery streaks of calm. It was an impressive scene, and an intriguing preview of The Coorong.

### THE COORONG

McGrath's Flat was soon reached, and, after passing the homestead of the late Mr. Thomas McCallum, we travelled for the next four or five miles out of sight of The Coorong except for one part where an arm of water extends in to the road.

Rabbits and more rabbits, and then a small flock of sheep gave a little variety to the visible life of the countryside. The eyes of the rabbits gleamed a deep ruby red when caught in the beams of the headlights.

The road now ran back near the water's edge and from this point onward rarely strayed very far therefrom.

Wood's Well—and our destination was only seven or eight miles further. A Black-tailed Waterhen flew through the beam of the headlights—the first bird that we had seen since darkness had fallen.

As we came over a small rise one of the party drew attention to the "lights of Policeman Point." There were quite a number of them, and they were of a peculiar green color. They seemed to be moving about as if the inhabitants were holding a torch parade. Suddenly we were among a herd of black cattle, whose eyes glared greenly at us from the scrub on each side and from the road ahead. The lights of Policeman Point were not yet in sight. Picking our way through the cattle, we continued our journey with rabbits dashing to and fro across our path. One left his dash a little too late, and a slight bump was felt as we sped onward.

A light and a signpost—several signposts and a small group of buildings with a multitude of signs, directions, warnings, advices, instructions, and a host of other information adorning them. Our destination for the night was reached.

As we turned in for the night, teal were calling from the nearby "soak" and the goose-like honk of a Mountain Duck drifted in through the window of our shack.

During the night rain began to fall and we felt a little dubious of what the morrow would bring. However, the dawn broke clear and bright, with a rather fresh easterly breeze. Down on the "soak" were numbers of Grey Teal, several small parties of Mountain Ducks and large flocks of both Sharp-tailed and Red-necked (Little) Stints. These "soaks," or "sucks" as they are also called, are really fresh water springs caused by the water from the inland swamps flowing underground through the limestone formations and appearing on the surface again at the points where the beds of limestone have been cut and eroded away by the action of the sea in times gone by. They are favorite feeding grounds for ducks and wading birds on account of the aquatic growth which occurs and which in turn supports forms of insect life.

Further out in the water were several Swans and half a dozen Pelicans, while in the bushes along the shore were Blue Wrens and Singing Honeyeaters. From the scrub-clothed ridge on the other side of the road came a continuous medley of shouts, whistles, calls, and screeches, from Red Wattle-birds, Singing, Spiny-cheeked, and Yellow-winged Honeyeaters, Thrushes, Purple-crowned Lorikeets, and other birds. As we moved down towards the "soak," to take a closer look at the birds there, an Elegant Grass Parrot flushed from a patch of tall grass. Several White-fronted Chats were feeding along the foreshore, and, as we turned to retrace our steps, two or three more Elegant Parrots were heard in some tobacco bushes nearby.

Having disposed of breakfast, we set out, accompanied by Mr. McCarthy, at about 6.30 a.m. to examine some of the islands in the vicinity. While making our way along the shore to where the motor boat was moored we noticed numbers of Welcome Swallows flying in and out under the decking of several dinghys and were told that they frequently nest in such situations. The ducks and teal had left the "soak," but the stints were still there in great numbers. A little further up the beach a Red-kneed Dotterel was seen among some rocks.

Entering the boat by way of a very rickety jetty, the outer end of which was standing remote from the rest of the structure, we set sail for an island known as Trevorra's Island. The easterly breeze had freshened somewhat and short steep waves soon began smacking

against the weather bow and sending occasional showers of spray over us. As we approached the island small flocks of Grey Teal rose from the water near the shore and several Silver Gulls and a number of Marsh Terns were circling overhead.

We landed on a water-fretted limestone reef, and, scrambling up a small cliff, approached the highest part of the island. The moment we began to move the air became filled with the cries of birds. Large numbers of Silver Gulls, Pied Oyster-catchers, Marsh Terns, Fairy Terns and a pair of Caspian Terns began circling overhead, apparently very disturbed by our trespassing on their realm.

Silver Gulls had recently nested in numbers, and many used nests and pieces of egg-shell were found. Two young gulls, still clad in mottled grey down, were found running about in the low bushes. When they were chased and caught it was found that, though very immature in appearance, they were fleet of foot and lusty of voice. One, when picked up, disgorged three pellets, which appeared to be largely composed of rabbit fur. Numbers of rabbits are killed along the road by cars, and probably the parent birds had found some of these and brought pieces over to feed their offspring.

A large brown snake was encountered in a depression in the centre of the island, but, as nothing more lethal or substantial than a blade of grass could be found, it escaped down a hole which was only a few inches away from where it had been sunning itself.

Continuing to comb the island we found the deserted nest of a Black Duck under a thick clump of rushes (*Scirpus nodosus*). The four eggs it contained were almost covered with sand.

As we approached the western side of the island the terns and oyster-catchers became very agitated. An almost fully-fledged young Pied Oyster-catcher was found in a miniature cave in some weather-worn limestone rocks.

Along the upper margin of a strip of sandy beach were numerous small, disused nesting places of terns, and further down towards the water small depressions in the sand showed where Pied Oyster-catchers had nested. One of these depressions was still in use and contained one beautifully marked egg which appeared to be heavily incubated.

The clamor of the Fairy Terns was continuous while we were near the nesting sites on the upper part of the beach, and it seemed that these nests had belonged to them.

It may be that there were young birds in the vicinity, but, if so, they were securely hidden in the dense patches of rushes (*Scirpus*) which fringed the beach in this part.

Having closely examined the whole of the island, we once more boarded the boat, to the obvious relief of the feathered inhabitants, and set out for some low islands to the north. En route we passed several small flocks of Grey Teal and White-eyed Ducks. A flock of Mountain Ducks approached us in Indian file, head on and low down, the white patches on their wings flashing in the sunlight. When only about forty yards in front of us, they suddenly swung away to our left. As our eyes followed them a bird was seen on the water about a quarter of a mile away. It was found to be a Great Crested Grebe and a ripple of excitement ran through the passengers.

Three Pelicans were sitting on a reef extending out from one of the islands as we approached, but otherwise these islands appeared to be devoid of life. Our guide informed us that the Pelicans and other birds had finished nesting there some weeks previously, so, after passing close to them, we turned for the mainland.

On our way shorewards another Great Crested Grebe was seen, this time directly ahead of us. It was engaged in diving, and we soon began to draw close to it. It moved away to one side as we came nearer and was about thirty yards away when we passed. During the brief periods that it remained on the surface quite a good view was obtained.

Arriving back at the jetty we disembarked and walked back to our camp, passing numerous Sharp-tailed and Little Stints on the way.

Lunch was packed and we set out for Salt Creek, where we intended to spend the rest of the day. It was now fairly warm, with a light northerly breeze, and birds began to seek the shelter of the scrub. Rabbits were as plentiful as ever, and a number of Sleepy Lizards (*Trachysaurus rugosus*) seemed anxious to explore the country on the opposite side of the road.

As we passed a large Boobyalla tree standing alone in an area of grassland a small bird was glimpsed, and we stopped to investigate. Upon walking in under the drooping branches of the tree, it was found to contain a very considerable bird population. At first, wary of the intruder, they kept to the thicker por-

tions of the foliage near the top. After a minute or so, however, they became curious and began moving closer and closer to see what was going on. Eight or nine Yellow-tailed Thornbills, five Brown Thornbills, and three Little Thornbills hopped quickly from twig to twig, while directly overhead a male Blue Wren trilled sharply as five uncoloured wrens moved towards the lower portion of the tree. A movement in some tall grass growing up among the low-hung branches attracted attention, and a moment or so later two White-browed Scrub-wrens were discerned. The making of the "kissing" sound caused pandemonium to break loose. Scolding and chattering in a perfect frenzy, every bird began fluttering to and fro so rapidly that the lower parts of the tree seemed to be filled with birds. The clatter became louder and louder, and, when suddenly augmented by the arrival of three or four Yellow-winged Honeyeaters and two Singing Honeyeaters, assumed rather astonishing proportions.

Leaving the thornbills to sort themselves out from the wrens and the honeyeaters, we continued on our way, but a few moments later a glimpse of a black bird as it disappeared into the scrub caused the brakes to be applied again. We set out in pursuit and soon discovered that it was a Blackbird. There were two of them. We did not expect to find this alien so far afield and were not pleased at our discovery.

The mallee scrub in which we were standing contained numerous other birds, however, and we forgot about the Blackbirds as we espied Chestnut-tailed Thornbills, Brown Thornbills, Little Thornbills, and Yellow-winged, Spiny-cheeked, and Singing Honeyeaters. A pair of Grey Fantails fluttered around us as we moved about, and a party of White-browed Babblers scolded loudly as they scampered through the undergrowth. Two or three White-browed Scrub-wrens came sneaking up, only to disappear in a flash as soon as they saw us. Unseen in the scrub nearby a Scrub Robin whistled peevishly and was answered by another some distance away. A Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo whistled "see-e-you! see-e-you!" Perhaps it could, but we couldn't see it. A Crested Bell-bird was momentarily seen as it rose from the ground and flew rapidly away.

As we returned to the car a party of Blue Wrens drifted across our path, trilling softly to one another.

Once again we moved on, successfully dodging Stumpy-tailed Lizards, and trying to prevent the rabbits from dodging us. We were not successful in the latter aim, however, and had to produce the rifle to show them that they could not dodge everything.

A shallow claypan between the road and The Coorong contained a number of birds, including a score or so of Banded Stilts. Four Wood Sandpipers ran along the margin of the pan nearest to us and displayed their white rumps as they rose and flew across to the other side, where they joined some Red-capped Dotterels, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, and a solitary Greenshank.

Moving on again, we saw a Grey Thrush and several Willie Wagtails. A male Grey Butcher-bird flew across our track and a Brown Hawk gazed at us from the limb of a dead tree on the top of a ridge. A few Magpies — White-backed — were about, but they were not nearly so numerous as in the early stages of the journey. Occasional Crows and Pipits, a Magpie-Lark or so, and numerous Singing and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds flew to and fro in front of us.

The road, since leaving Policeman Point, had passed through a succession of flats separated by limestone and sandy ridges. Actually the road from McGrath's Flat to Policeman Point was similar, but in the darkness of the night before we had not fully realised this.

These flats vary from a quarter to half a mile in width, with The Coorong on the western side and a fairly high mallee scrub-covered ridge on the eastern side. Their vegetation consists of open grassland, with patches of Tobacco Bush (*Nicotiana*), Rushes (*Scirpus*), *Olearia*, and occasional Booby-las.

In places the area between the road and the water merges into pipeclay pans fringed with Teatree (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*), while in others a narrow but dense fringe of Teatree lines the shore of The Coorong itself.

Two Goldfinches rose from the roadside and brought back the rather unpleasant thoughts engendered by the rabbits and the Blackbirds — alien birds and animals in the midst of virgin bush and natural Australian scenery where, apart from these invaders, practically the only signs of civilisation are the road, and here and there the remains of a fence that nearly blends with the broken and twisted stumps of dead Tobacco Bushes.

There are other signs of civilisation in the form of a rusty jam tin, an empty bottle, or a derelict tyre, the latter a relic of the days when the road was merely a series of tracks winding in and out among the Tobacco Bushes and coming together on the ridges. These small scattered signs do not intrude and one looks upon them almost as part of the road.

The sight of a large assembly of Swans, Mountain Ducks, and Grey Teal, floating on the calm waters of a teatree-fringed bay, took our thoughts off the intruders. There was some consolation in the thought that they will not compete with the waterfowl, however much they might displace birds in the scrub.

Two Banded Plovers sneaked quietly away from the roadside through some scattered clumps of rushes, and a little later on some Spurwinged Plovers rose from the water's edge to flap lazily along the shore, calling loudly.

Coming over a rise, we suddenly found ourselves at Salt Creek, and as we ran down towards the two bridges a Little Black Cormorant flew up out of a waterhole in the creek. The accommodation house was empty and deserted, and the only signs that there was anyone in the locality were some fishermen's nets hanging on the rails of the old bridge and a smudge of bluish-grey smoke that drifted up over the mallee about two hundred yards away.

### SALT CREEK

Numerous Welcome Swallows were flying in and out under the old bridge, and a pair of Black-fronted Dotterels were running along the sand at the edge of the waterhole beneath.

On the southern side of the creek the road ascends a scrub-covered rise. The mallees adjoining the eastern side of this rise have grown into fairly large trees, and there is little undergrowth. In the shade of one tree a compact flock of about twenty Crested Pigeons were feeding, and scattered round about were several pairs of Common Bronzings. It appeared that there was a plentiful supply of food suitable for pigeons on this ridge, for, just as we reached the top, a pair of Brush Bronzings started up from the roadside and flew into the scrub. Thus all three species of pigeons found in the southern parts of this State were present in an area of a few hundred square yards.

A halt was made on the flat on the southern side of the rise, and, after a consultation, we decided to return over the bridge and explore the creek from the bridge to the point where it enters The Coorong.

It was now quite warm and the breeze had switched back from the north to the east and had increased in strength. As we left the car, several Brown-headed Honeyeaters flew over, and others were heard calling in the nearby scrub. A party of Blue Wrens was moving about among the rushes on the margin of the creek. Further up the gully a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared high in the air.

When about a quarter of a mile downstream we heard a low quacking, and a few moments later a Chestnut Teal drake emerged from the rushes about twenty yards ahead of us and entered the water. He was quickly followed by his spouse and eight small ducklings. The family party presented a very pretty sight as, led by the duck, they set off downstream with the drake bringing up the rear. We were very pleased. Such concrete evidence of this beautiful and rather rare bird breeding in these parts was very gratifying.

Four Hoary-headed Grebes were swimming and diving in the creek. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, singly and in twos and threes, rose ahead of us as we moved along and, swinging out across the creek, they circled round to alight behind us.

On the long, scrubby ridge south of and parallel to the creek several Black-winged Currawongs were calling and occasionally the raucous voice of a Red Wattle-bird was heard from that direction.

As we neared The Coorong a Pied Cormorant flapped along the surface before taking off for some place less crowded with humans, and then a Greenshank with loud "Chew-chew Chew-chew" sped away in the same direction. At the mouth of the creek a solitary Avocet sidled warily along the sand and then it, too, sought the sanctuary of the broad waters.

The inner men were calling somewhat sharply, so we retraced our steps to the car and lunch. On the way several Silver-eyes were noticed and two or three Singing Honeyeaters slipped furtively across our path.

After lunch we decided to have a look over some of the scrub country a mile or so inland. Once again crossing the ridge south of the creek, we left the car and set off on foot. Adjoining the road was a large teatree-fringed

pipeclay pan containing a few inches of water. The water was of the same colour as the pipeclay and not until one was within a few feet could it be ascertained where the margin lay. After skirting the pipeclay for some distance we became conscious of a low hum of sound coming from the other side of the teatree. Slipping through the trees we emerged almost at the water's edge in a small bay. Here an amazing sight met our eyes. A flock of Banded Stilts numbering many hundreds were feeding about twenty yards away. They were closely packed, and only on those birds at the edge of the flock nearest to us could the chestnut chest-bar and the yellow legs be seen. As we gazed at the others their white bodies and heads seemed to merge with the milky water. Their wings became a confused jumble of disconnected dark patches floating in space—drifting in all directions with a smooth flowing motion, crossing and recrossing, disappearing and reappearing, to the accompaniment of a continuous, soft, musical chattering which rose and fell on the warm air like the excited but restrained conversation of a large audience waiting for the curtain to rise for the last act of some great opera.

It was with some reluctance that we moved away from this fascinating scene towards the high scrub-covered ridges which run parallel to The Coorong.

In order to reach these ridges it was necessary to cross several dry claypans, the surfaces of which had cracked into a most intricate mosaic. Many of the pieces displayed an almost unbelievable symmetry.

Several Red-capped Dotterels and some White-fronted Chats were the only birds we saw on or around these pans. Nor were there many birds in evidence when we entered the scrub at the foot of the first ridge. It was at that period of the day when few birds are moving about, and the rather sudden rise in temperature, compared with the preceding days, probably accentuated their desire to seek secluded spots.

We did, however, encounter a few, some of which were further additions to the list of birds seen on the trip. A party of wrens, which it was thought owing to the nature of the country would be the Purple-backed species, were pursued but were found to be the ordinary Blue Wrens. A Scarlet Robin, a Yellow-tailed Pardalote, a Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo, and some Brown Weebills were encountered in one small section of big

mallees after we had covered some distance without seeing any feathered life. A little later a party of White-browed Babblers and two or three Thrushes were seen.

A rather gruesome find, in the form of a human tibia, set our imaginations going. The bone was showing considerable signs of decay and obviously had been exposed to the weather for a long period of years. Did it belong to an aborigine? Or did it belong to one of the hapless crew and passengers of the brig *Maria*? This vessel was wrecked on the coast of Younghusband Peninsula in the year 1840, and all the passengers and crew were murdered by the blacks, who disposed of the bodies by burying them in wombat holes and other places.

While making our way along the top of the ridge, we came to a small natural clearing in the scrub from which a magnificent panoramic view of The Coorong greeted us. Stretching away to the northward lay miles of blue waters dotted with numerous islands of various shades of green, some dark from an overgrowth of bushes and small trees, others with the pale green of grassland. The eastern shore was bounded by a seemingly endless succession of rocky headlands and tree-lined bays. East again of these headlands and bays lay an undulating sea of virgin scrub rolling away as far as the eye could see. To the west extended the long line of snow-white pyramidal sandhills whose sunlit sands stood out against the blue sky like a long row of gleaming white teeth and were in sharp contrast to the dark green of the dense vegetation which crowded the sheltered gullies.

As we were about to leave this point of vantage a flock of seventeen Mountain Ducks passed over, heading in an easterly direction. Apparently they were flying to the large swamp that lies on the other side of the series of ridges upon which we were standing.

We made our way down toward The Coorong again, and as we emerged from the scrub a Caspian Tern was seen following the path of the flock of Mountain Ducks. On two or three occasions during the rest of the afternoon we saw flocks of Marsh Terns flying in and from the same direction.

Two Crows (or Ravens), circled excitedly over us, making a considerable noise and fuss as we crossed the open country between the scrub and the road. Their nest was discovered in a large gum tree nearby. Two fully fledged young were sitting on the nest,

while two more were perched on branches a few feet away. All attempts to induce the young birds to take flight so that we could endeavour to catch them to determine the colour of the bases of their feathers were without avail.

Back at the car again we commenced to move back toward the bridge once more when the call of the White-winged Chough was heard in the scrub. Upon investigation, three of these birds were seen, and shortly afterwards a nest was found in a mallee. It was about fifteen feet from the ground. The nest was in good order but was empty. More Choughs were heard calling from the opposite side of the road, so we crossed over and found nine more, as well as a number of birds of other species.

The patch of scrub which we had now entered had appeared to be devoid of bird life at about mid-day, but now that the afternoon was drawing on it was thronged with busily feeding songsters. Several large Yaccas (*Xanthorrhoea*) were flowering, and numerous Yellow-winged, Singing, and Brown-headed Honeyeaters were clinging to the tall spikes and extracting the nectar from the cream flowers. Nearby were Brush and Red Wattle-birds, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, White-browed Babblers, and a pair of Grey Fantails. Moving deeper into the scrub, we encountered several Scrub Robins, a Fantailed Cuckoo, and both Common and Brush Bronzewing Pigeons.

The afternoon was now drawing on, and we decided to do something towards the reduction of the rabbit population. Driving slowly along the road, it was evident that the said population was in urgent need of reduction. There were rabbits everywhere—grey rabbits, black rabbits, sandy rabbits, big rabbits, little rabbits—running in all directions. For nearly an hour we carried death and destruction among them, but, although our tally was high, the effect upon the multitude was indiscernible and we gave it up and returned to Salt Creek for tea. A Little Pied Cormorant was perched on a dead stump in the creek as we pulled up and opened our tucker box.

After disposing of the evening meal under the surveillance of two Blue Wrens and a pair of White-browed Scrub Wrens (and being nearly disposed of by swarms of sandflies in the process), we wandered off down to the mouth of the creek again. Fortunately the sandflies did not accompany us.

The Chestnut Teal and his family were still in the creek, although a couple of the offspring were missing. Whether they had come to an untimely end or were hiding in the rushes we were unable to determine.

The sun dropped below the coastal sand dunes, throwing for a moment a deep shadow across the waters. Then suddenly fiery fingers reached back to splash a low-hung bank of cloud with crimson and gold. The sky in the west turned a coppery hue, which paled to greenish blue and then to blue toward the zenith. The breeze had dropped, and the mirror-like waters of The Coorong and the creek, casting off the shadow, reflected the grandeur of the heavens which only the night could subdue.

Honeyeaters were calling loudly and merrily in the scrub behind us. A long line of Swans with necks outstretched were sharply silhouetted against the colourful sky as they made their way to their camping ground.

Then, as if the passing of the Swans was a signal, the colours began to fade—the gold to crimson and the crimson to pink—to purple—and then to grey. The distant landscape slipped from sight. Nearby objects became merely shapes against the fading light. The Honeyeaters' voices faltered and then were stilled. A Scrub Robin called once—twice, and then softly through the dusk came the mellow bell call of the Crested Bell-bird.

Night had fallen. Of the day that had gone only the vivid memories remained.

A rush of many wings, and a large flock of ducks, faintly discernible against the after-glow, swept by. Another rush of wings, and another flock passed over, this time unseen. Several more flocks followed in quick succession—one immediately overhead and so low that the disturbance of the air could be felt—and then almost silence. The surf still rumbled softly on the ocean beach along the other side of the line of sandhills. A cricket chirped. Something moved along the water's edge a few feet away. The beam of an electric torch revealed a Red-capped Dotterel, apparently quite undismayed at being detected on a night prowler.

A chill breeze rustled down along the creek, and as we returned to the car the moon rose over the eastern ridges to bathe the landscape in pale light. Far away in the distance a Spur-winged Plover called. From across the water drifted the chuckle of a teal.

We piled into the car and quickly returned

over the road (and an occasional rabbit) to Policeman Point and bed.

#### HOMEWARD BOUND.

The next morning the sun peeped over the ridges to watch us preparing for the homeward journey, and we were soon away to a farewell chorus from Singing Honeyeaters, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, and both Brush and Red Wattle-birds. Common Bronzewing and Brush Bronzewing rose from the roadside from time to time as we sped along. Rabbits were as numerous as ever.

After travelling some miles we paused to investigate a patch of scrub where many of the mallees (*Eucalyptus angulosa*) were flowering. Birds were very numerous, and in a short time we had listed Yellow-winged, Tawny-crowned, Purple-gaped, Brown-headed, Singing, and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Brush and Red Wattle-birds, Brown, and Yellow-tailed Thornbills, Blue Wrens, Thrushes, Butcher-birds, and Scrub Wrens. Four Budgerygahs flew over just as we were about to return to the car.

Moving ahead again, the record keeper was kept very busy jotting down the birds seen along the road. Both land and water birds were in abundance. Most of the species had been seen previously on the trip, but every now and then an addition to the list was made.

Waders and other waterfowl were particularly numerous on the flat reefs of rock left bare by the easterly breeze driving the water away from the eastern shore. Swans, Grey Teal, Mountain Ducks, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Little Stints, Hoary-headed Grebes and Greenshanks were plentiful. In lesser numbers than these, but seen with pleasing frequency, were Chestnut Teal. Usually they were in pairs, but several small flocks of as many as eight were observed.

Another Crested Grebe was noted, and among a flock of Little Stints, one Curlew-Sandpiper was identified. Shortly afterwards we made an unexpected observation in the form of three Little Whimbrels, and then a flock of Wood Sandpipers.

Banded Stilts, in flocks of from twenty to five hundred, were encountered at more or less regular intervals, with rarely more than a mile between flocks. Large groups of apparently white birds were seen in a number of places on the far side of The Coorong and on the shores of islands. In all probability some, if not all, of them were these stilts.

In one of the Tobacco Bush flats a pair of Spur-winged Plovers with two young sneaked away from the roadside, and we pulled up. After a considerable search, during which the parents, reinforced by four or five neighbors, flew excitedly and noisily around us, the young birds were discovered crouching at the base of clumps of rushes. They were clothed in mottled brown and grey downy feathers. Although they struggled and squeaked noisily at first, they soon quietly submitted to being handled. The adults continued their clamour until we released their babies and continued on our way.

We had hardly gathered speed when a pair of White-backed Swallows were seen hawking to and fro overhead. About half a mile further along the road we saw a pair of Banded Plovers with young, but we did not stop to pursue them.

Wood's Well was passed, and we went on towards McGrath's Flat. Nearing the latter place, where the country along the road is largely cleared, birds became less numerous and of a different type. Pipits, Brown Song-larks, White-fronted Chats, White-backed Magpies and an occasional Kestrel took the place of the scrub birds. The road was now too far from the water to see any waterfowl.

McGrath's Flat, and shortly afterwards the road turned away towards Meningie. We looked back to see The Coorong drop from sight behind a scrubby ridge.

After travelling through thick scrub for several miles a halt was made, but few birds were about and we soon moved on again.

About two miles further on we stopped again. Here a patch of the mallee (*Eucalyptus angulosa*) was flowering profusely. It was immediately evident that the honeyeaters were appreciative of this. As we moved into the flowering area, which was a depression roughly a quarter of a mile in diameter, the calls of these birds assailed our ears from all sides. Tawny-crowned, White-fronted, Purple-gaped, Yellow-winged, Brown-headed and White-eared Honeyeaters, Brush and Red Wattlebirds, and Silver-eyes, flitted to and fro singing, scolding, jostling, and quarrelling, as they fed among the honey-laden blossoms.

It was a gathering of honeyeaters. The only other birds seen in this section of the scrub were two Grey Thrushes and a Butcher-bird. When we moved only a few yards away from the flowering mallees there was

practically no bird life; the only birds seen or heard were two Scrub Robins. We left this spot feeling that our expectations (expressed on our outward journey) that this was good bird country had been fully justified.

Another pause was made a mile or so farther along and here we saw several Shy Heath Wrens. A pair of Purple-backed Wrens (the first seen on the trip) showed extreme agitation, and a short search revealed a nest containing two nearly fully fledged young, close to the ground in the centre of a low, scrubby bush.

We were now approaching Meningie, and signs of civilisation in the form of clearings in the scrub became more frequent. Just as we were beginning to think we would not see many more birds before reaching the township, two Emus were observed in some scrub about fifty yards from the road. Another was seen when we were only about half a mile from Meningie, which place we reached at 12.30 p.m.

#### LAKE ALBERT AGAIN

During lunch we were informed that Cape Barren Geese were very numerous along the shores of the lake towards Campbell Park. This news prompted us to digress from our path and we set off along the Narrung Road. For the first mile or more the road skirts the lake, and Coot, White-eyed Ducks and Black Ducks were numerous, while Pied, Black, and Little Black Cormorants were also noted.

The road then left the lakeside and for the next three or four miles we were out of sight of the water. A Kestrel or two and a few Crested Pigeons were the only birds seen as we travelled along this section.

We then came to a swampy arm of the lake where, to our delight, there were from forty to fifty Cape Barren Geese feeding on some grassland between the road and the shore. After allowing us to observe them for several minutes, they took to their wings and flew in the direction of Narrung.

Our attention was then turned to the swamp, which was of a rather broken nature, with large patches of samphire and occasional clumps of teatree. At first sight it appeared to contain few birds, but after a few minutes' close scrutiny the reverse was found to be the case. We were soon busy pointing out to one another some fresh discovery.

The first to claim attention were two Royal Spoonbills feeding in some shallow water.

They were moving their spatulate bills from side to side across the bottom with a peculiar sweeping motion as they stepped slowly forward. Two more were espied, together with five or six of the Yellow-billed species, feeding along the further side of a patch of tallish samphire. They could only be seen when they raised their heads. Amongst the samphire were a number of Spur-winged Plovers and a White-faced Heron. The end of a spit about a quarter of a mile away was adorned with a small party of Pelicans and Black Swans drowsing in the sunshine. Overhead a Brown Hawk and a Swamp Harrier engaged in aerial combat for a few moments before going their separate ways. On an expanse of open water on our left were several small flocks of Black Ducks and White-eyed Ducks, a number of Hoary-headed Grebes, four Pelicans, several Swans and Silver Gulls, and a solitary Avocet. A score or more Black-tailed Water-hens were feeding under a clump of teatree.

Having seen the Cape Barren Geese, we decided to return to Meningie and continue our homeward journey.

About half-way between Meningie and Waltowa we discovered that it had not been necessary to go out of our way to see Cape Barren Geese, for here were twenty or thirty of them feeding along the margin of the lake. We had no regrets, however. The sight of the two species of spoonbills and the numerous other birds had amply repaid us for the time spent.

Waltowa Swamp contained even more waterfowl than when we passed on our outward journey. Those whose plumage was predominantly white claimed first attention. We identified two Royal Spoonbills, four Yellow-billed Spoonbills, six White Ibis, two White Egrets, three White-headed Stilts, numerous Banded Stilts, Avocets and Marsh Terns, several Pelicans, and some Silver Gulls. All were busily feeding over various parts of the swamp, while numerous other white specks and patches could be seen at distances too great for identification.

Turning to the darker plumaged birds we listed Black Swans, Black Ducks, White-eyed Ducks, Grey Teal, and Mountain Ducks, in varying numbers—some swimming on the open water in the company of numerous Hoary-headed Grebes, others feeding amongst the samphire or sleeping head under wing along the edge of the water.

White-faced Herons stalked amongst the samphire, where there were also numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Little Stints.

A Greenshank rose from nearby and with a parting admonition to "Chew-chew! Chew-chew!" flew off across the swamp.

A Swamp Harrier flapped lazily over a patch of Cutting Grass (*Gahnia*). From posts along a nearby fence four Whistling Eagles cast speculative glances in our direction.

We had spent about a quarter of an hour gazing around the swamp when we discovered about forty Cape Barren Geese resting on the margin of the swamp a little more than a hundred yards away on the western side of the road. To look in this direction meant facing towards the sun, and in consequence we had spent most of the time scanning the swamp on the eastern side of the road. Birds were probably as numerous on the other side, but with the exception of those quite close at hand could not be identified. We felt that we could easily spend hours around this swamp, but time was going on and we still had about eighty miles to go. Welcome Swallows were flying in and out of the culvert at the northern end of the causeway as we passed over.

About four miles north of Waltowa we passed a large pipeclay pan, upon which was an enormous flock of Banded Stilts. There were between two thousand and three thousand birds packed close together like the flock we had seen at Salt Creek, and they presented a very fine sight. The pan was rather more than a quarter of a mile from the road. We would have liked a closer view, but time would not permit of this, so we put temptation, and the stilts, behind us and continued on our way.

Near Ashville we saw several Noisy Miners, and at one point four Brown Hawks were flying around over a clump of Sheoaks (*Casuarina stricta*), in one of which was a nest. Apparently they were a family party—two adults and two young.

Fairy Martins were flying about over a quarry about two miles north of Ashville. We stopped to investigate and found, at various points around the walls of the quarry, sixteen of their bottle-shaped nests which to outward appearances were complete, and a further eight in course of construction. Martins flew out of some of the apparently completed nests as we approached.

While we were stopped at this place we heard a Whistler, the only one for the trip.

It called two or three times but was some distance away in open Sheoak country and we did not stay to identify the species.

Between this point and Wellington the only birds seen were a Hooded Robin, a Whistling Eagle, and a few Pipits, Brown Songlarks and Magpies.

At Wellington we deviated slightly to have a look at the swamp adjoining the causeway leading to the punt. We walked along this causeway to the River Murray and were treated to the sight of one of the most concentrated congregations of swamp birds that it has been our fortune to see.

This swamp contains large patches of bulrushes (*Typha angustifolia*), and these, and the patches of open water intervening, were literally teeming with birds. Hundreds of Coots and Moorhens mingled with Hoary-headed Grebes, Black Ducks, Musk Ducks, Grey Teal, Blue-billed Ducks, Eastern Swamp-hens and Cormorants, while the air fairly throbbed with the warbling of innumerable Reed Warblers. It was impossible to estimate the numbers of this latter species. Dozens of them were seen close to the causeway, but they represented only a fraction of those present in the swamp. Not for a moment were they singing in numbers few enough for one to be able to say just how many were calling.

Little Grassbirds were in numbers probably little inferior to those of the Reed Warblers, and contributed their plaintive notes to the ringing refrain through which the babbling of the waterfowl came as but an undertone.

Several families of Blue Wrens flitted to and fro among the rushes, adding their elfin trills to this avian chorus.

As we neared the Willows (*Salix*) along the bank between the swamp and the river, a new note was heard. The mellow notes of scores of Peaceful Doves came like an obligato to the main theme. Then a flock of Red-rumped Parrots joined the "chorus" and a Grey Fantail danced in mid-air above the willows.

From the rocks along the sides of the causeway there came, at frequent intervals, deep, harsh, long-drawn croaks. Horrible sounds, quite different from the musical mutterings and calls of the frogs in other parts of the swamp, and yet not out of place in this haunt of wild things.

We paused for a moment on the bank of the river to gaze upon the mighty Murray. Within a mile of where we were standing, it

ceases to be a river, and the waters spread over the broad expanses of Lakes Alexandra and Albert before finding their way into the South Ocean. Waters from the southern parts of Queensland—from New South Wales—from Victoria—were flowing before our eyes.

Slowly we retraced our steps. A Kestrel swept across the swamp, causing momentary consternation among the waterfowl, some scuttling among the rushes, others diving beneath the surface of the water. Their alarm, however, passed almost as quickly as the cause of it, and in a few moments they were busily feeding and squabbling again as if nothing had happened.

Four species of Cormorants were present, namely Pied Cormorants, Black Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, and one Little Pied Cormorant. Practically every post and stump standing above the water had a Cormorant sitting on it and numbers were swimming and diving in the water.

Two White Ibis, quickly followed by three more, passed overhead to alight on the margin of the swamp about two hundred yards away. Shortly afterwards three White-headed Stilts flapped leisurely by with their long pink legs trailing.

About three hundred yards away in an extensive area of open water was a bird which puzzled us for some time. It was asleep with its head beneath a wing and drifted idly about, rising and falling on the small waves. The distance was too great to distinguish colours and the outline in that position meant nothing. It was not until, as if awakened by our stares, it raised its head that we could see that it was a Great Crested Grebe, the fourth that we had seen on the trip.

Back in the car once more, we paused for a few moments to take stock and bring our records up to date. We had seen a pair of Blue-billed Ducks close to the causeway. There may well have been more, for there were so many birds and they were so mixed up together that it was difficult to concentrate on individuals. Numerous Welcome Swallows and two or three Willie Wagtails flying about over the causeway and some Sharp-tailed Sandpipers on the shore near the car had almost escaped notice.

#### THE LAST STAGES

Returning to the main road we continued our way and, by comparison with what we had just left, birds were very scarce indeed.

Just before entering Tailem Bend we saw several Whistling Eagles, one of which was carrying a large piece of stick in its claws. A few Marsh Terns and Silver Gulls were noted over the river.

Tailem Bend was quickly left behind, and little of interest was seen until about half-way to Murray Bridge, when some Wood Swallows were seen flying over a patch of pine scrub. As we stopped to determine the species, a Red-tipped Pardalote called from a Peppermint Gum beside the road. The Wood-swallows were of the White-browed species.

During the rest of the journey to Murray Bridge practically the same species were listed as on the outward journey, and rabbits were just as numerous.

After crossing the Murray our interest in the surroundings began to flag, and after passing out of the scrub between the river and Kinchinnina we were content to sit back and talk over the results and incidents of the trip.

The sun was setting as we passed over the Mt. Lofty Ranges, and by the time the plains were reached it was nearly dusk.

Yes, The Coorong is still there. Much of the virgin scrub remains and a great many of the birds and other wild things are still there. Some have gone and unfortunately some aliens have established themselves there, but if proper action is taken now, this natural resort can be retained as a playground and a hunting ground for future generations of Australians—as a haunt of wildfowl—as a national park.

For the purposes of reference a complete list of the birds seen is here appended. In all one hundred and nineteen species were recorded, and this in itself speaks volumes for the wealth of bird life still to be seen in these parts, particularly when it is remembered that only fifty-two hours elapsed between the time of departure and our arrival back home.

The numbers of many of the species seen must have amounted to hundreds, and of some to thousands. The number of Banded Stilts distributed over The Coorong and the lakes probably totalled many thousands.

The figures in brackets after the name of each bird indicate the division in which they were seen. The localities of these divisions are as follows:—

No. 1—West of the River Murray.

No. 2—Between Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend.

No. 3—Between Taillem Bend and Meningie and around Lake Albert.

No. 4—Between Meningie and Salt Creek.

The number of species of birds recorded in each division was:—

No. 1.—30 species.

No. 3.—67 species.

No. 2.—23 species.

No. 4.—38 species.

1. <i>Dromaius novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	Emu (4)
2. <i>Geopelia placida</i> .. .. .	Peaceful Dove (3)
3. <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i> .. .. .	Common Bronzewing Pigeon (3, 4)
4. <i>Phaps elegans</i> .. .. .	Brush Bronzewing Pigeon (3, 4)
5. <i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i> .. .. .	Crested Pigeon (1, 2, 3, 4)
6. <i>Tribonyx ventralis</i> .. .. .	Black-tailed Native Hen (3, 4)
7. <i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i> .. .. .	Dusky Moorhen (3)
8. <i>Porphyrio melanotus</i> .. .. .	Eastern Swamphen (3)
9. <i>Fulica atra</i> .. .. .	Coot (3)
10. <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> .. .. .	Great-Crested Grebe (3, 4)
11. <i>Podiceps poliocephalus</i> .. .. .	Hoary-headed Grebe (3, 4)
12. <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> .. .. .	Black Cormorant (3, 4)
13. <i>Phalacrocorax ater</i> .. .. .	Little-Black Cormorant (3, 4)
14. <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i> .. .. .	Pied Cormorant (3, 4)
15. <i>Microcarbo melanoleucus</i> .. .. .	Little Pied Cormorant (3, 4)
16. <i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i> .. .. .	Pelican (3, 4)
17. <i>Chlidonias leucopareia</i> .. .. .	Marsh Tern (3, 4)
18. <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> .. .. .	Caspian Tern (4)
19. <i>Sterna nereis</i> .. .. .	Fairy Tern (4)
20. <i>Larus novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	Silver Gull (3, 4)
21. <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> .. .. .	Pied Oyster-catcher (4)
22. <i>Erythronyx cinctus</i> .. .. .	Red-kneed Dotterel (4)
23. <i>Lobibyx novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	Spur-winged Plover (2, 3, 4)
24. <i>Zonifer tricolor</i> .. .. .	Banded Plover (2, 3, 4)
25. <i>Charadrius ruficapillus</i> .. .. .	Red-capped Dotterel (4)
26. <i>Charadrius melanops</i> .. .. .	Black-fronted Dotterel (4)
27. <i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i> .. .. .	White-headed Stilt (3)
28. <i>Cladorhynchus leucocephalus</i> .. .. .	Banded Stilt (3, 4)
29. <i>Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	Avocet (3, 4)
30. <i>Mesoscolopax minutus</i> .. .. .	Little Whimbrel (4)
31. <i>Tringa glareola</i> .. .. .	Wood Sandpiper (4)
32. <i>Tringa nebularia</i> .. .. .	Greenshank (3, 4)
33. <i>Erolia testacea</i> .. .. .	Curlew-Sandpiper (4)
34. <i>Erolia ruficollis</i> .. .. .	Red-necked (Little) Stint (3, 4)
35. <i>Erolia acuminata</i> .. .. .	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (3, 4)
36. <i>Threskiornis molucca</i> .. .. .	White Ibis (3)
37. <i>Platalea regia</i> .. .. .	Royal Spoonbill (3)
38. <i>Platalea flavipes</i> .. .. .	Yellow-billed Spoonbill (3)
39. <i>Egretta alba</i> .. .. .	White-Egret (3)
40. <i>Notophox novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	White-faced Heron (3, 4)
41. <i>Cereopsis novae-hollandiae</i> .. .. .	Cape Barren Goose (3)
42. <i>Chenopsis atrata</i> .. .. .	Black Swan (3, 4)
43. <i>Casarca tadornoides</i> .. .. .	Mountain Duck (3, 4)
44. <i>Anas superciliosa</i> .. .. .	Black Duck (3, 4)
45. <i>Querquedula castanea</i> .. .. .	Chestnut Teal (4)
46. <i>Querquedula gibberifrons</i> .. .. .	Grey Teal (3, 4)
47. <i>Nyroca australis</i> .. .. .	Hard-head (Aust. White-eyed Duck) (3, 4)
48. <i>Oxyura australis</i> .. .. .	Blue-billed Duck (3)
49. <i>Biziura lobata</i> .. .. .	Musk-Duck (3)
50. <i>Circus approximans</i> .. .. .	Swamp-Harrier (3)

51.	<i>Uroaetus audax</i>	.. .. .	Wedge-tailed Eagle (4)
52.	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	.. .. .	Whistling Eagle (2, 3, 4)
53.	<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	.. .. .	Australian Black-shouldered Kite (1)
54.	<i>Falco berigora</i>	.. .. .	Brown Hawk (2, 3, 4)
55.	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	.. .. .	Nankeen Kestrel (1, 2, 3, 4)
56.	<i>Glossopsitta porphyrocephala</i>	.. .. .	Purple-crowned Lorikeet (3, 4)
57.	<i>Kakatoe roseicapilla</i>	.. .. .	Galah (1, 2, 3)
58.	<i>Platycercus adelaidae</i>	.. .. .	Adelaide Rosella (1)
59.	<i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>	.. .. .	Red-backed Parrot (1, 2, 3, 4)
60.	<i>Neophema elegans</i>	.. .. .	Elegant Parrot (4)
61.	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	.. .. .	Budgerygah (4)
62.	<i>Dacelo gigas</i>	.. .. .	Laughing Kookaburra (1)
63.	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	.. .. .	Fan-tailed Cuckoo (4)
64.	<i>Chalcites basalis</i>	.. .. .	Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo (4)
65.	<i>Hirundo neozena</i>	.. .. .	Welcome Swallow (1, 2, 3, 4)
66.	<i>Cheramoeca leucosterna</i>	.. .. .	White-backed Swallow (4)
67.	<i>Hylochelidon ariel</i>	.. .. .	Fairy Martin (4)
68.	<i>Rhipidura flabelliformis</i>	.. .. .	Grey Fantail (3, 4)
69.	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	.. .. .	Willie Wagtail (1, 2, 3, 4)
70.	<i>Petroica multicolor</i>	.. .. .	Scarlet Robin (1, 4)
71.	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>	.. .. .	Hooded Robin (2, 3, 4)
72.	<i>Pachycephala</i> sp.	.. .. .	Whistler (3)
73.	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	.. .. .	Grey Shrike Thrush (1, 3, 4)
74.	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	.. .. .	Magpie Lark (1, 2, 3, 4)
75.	<i>Oreoica gutturalis</i>	.. .. .	Crested Bell-bird (4)
76.	<i>Drymodes brunneopygia</i>	.. .. .	Southern Scrub-robin (4)
77.	<i>Pomatostomus superciliosus</i>	.. .. .	White-browed Babbler (4)
78.	<i>Epthianura albifrons</i>	.. .. .	White-fronted Chat (1, 2, 3, 4)
79.	<i>Smicrornis brevirostris</i>	.. .. .	Brown Weebill (4)
80.	<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>	.. .. .	Eastern White-face (1, 2)
81.	<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	.. .. .	Little Thornbill (4)
82.	<i>Acanthiza pusilla hamiltoni</i>	.. .. .	Brown Thornbill (4)
83.	<i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>	.. .. .	Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (4)
84.	<i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>	.. .. .	Yellow-tailed Thornbill (1, 2, 3, 4)
85.	<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	.. .. .	White-browed Scrub-wren (4)
86.	<i>Hylacola cauta</i>	.. .. .	Shy Heath-wren (4)
87.	<i>Cinclorhampus cruralis</i>	.. .. .	Brown Songlark (1, 2, 3, 4)
88.	<i>Megalurus gramineus</i>	.. .. .	Little Grassbird (3)
89.	<i>Acrocephalus australis</i>	.. .. .	Reed Warbler (3)
90.	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	.. .. .	Blue Wren (1, 3, 4)
91.	<i>Malurus assimilis</i>	.. .. .	Purple-backed Wren (4)
92.	<i>Artamus personatus</i>	.. .. .	Masked Wood-swallow (1)
93.	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>	.. .. .	White-browed Wood-swallow (2)
94.	<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>	.. .. .	Dusky Wood-swallow (1, 4)
95.	<i>Pardalotus xanthopygius</i>	.. .. .	Yellow-tailed Pardalote (4)
96.	<i>Pardalotus ornatus</i>	.. .. .	Red-tipped Pardalote (2)
97.	<i>Zosterops halmaturina</i>	.. .. .	Silver-eye (4)
98.	<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	.. .. .	Black-chinned Honeyeater (1)
99.	<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	.. .. .	Brown-headed Honeyeater (4)
100.	<i>Gliciphila melanops</i>	.. .. .	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater (4)
101.	<i>Gliciphila albifrons</i>	.. .. .	White-fronted Honeyeater (4)
102.	<i>Meliphaga virescens</i>	.. .. .	Singing Honeyeater (3, 4)
103.	<i>Meliphaga leucotis</i>	.. .. .	White-eared Honeyeater (4)
104.	<i>Meliphaga cratitia</i>	.... .	Purple-gaped Honeyeater (4)
105.	<i>Meliphaga penicillata</i>	.. .. .	White-plumed Honeyeater (1)
106.	<i>Meliornis novae-hollandiae</i>	.. .. .	Yellow-winged Honeyeater (1, 4)
107.	<i>Myzantha melanocephala</i>	.. .. .	Noisy Miner (1, 2, 3)

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108.	<i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i>	.. ..	Little Wattle-bird (4)
109.	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	.. ..	Red Wattle-bird (1, 3, 4)
110.	<i>Acanthagenys rufogularis</i>	.. ..	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (1, 4)
111.	<i>Anthus australis</i>	.. ..	Pipit (2, 3, 4)
112.	<i>Zonaeginthus guttatus</i>	.. ..	Diamond Firetail (1)
113.	<i>Taeniopygia castanotis</i>	.. ..	Zebra Finch (1, 2)
114.	<i>Corvus</i> sp., probably <i>C. coronoides</i>	.. ..	Crow or Raven (1, 2, 3, 4)
115.	<i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>	.. ..	White-winged Chough (4)
116.	<i>Strepera melanoptera</i>	.. ..	Black-winged Currawong (3, 4)
117.	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	.. ..	Grey Butcher-bird (3, 4)
118.	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	.. ..	Black-backed Magpie (1)
119.	<i>Gymnorhina hypoleuca</i>	.. ..	White-backed Magpie (1, 2, 3, 4)

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