

MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

By BRIAN GLOVER

During the years 1951 and 1952 large numbers of birds usually considered inhabitants of the interior and northern portion of Australia were observed in the southern parts of South Australia.

Similar expansions occurred in south-western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and possibly also the upper Northern Territory, and at least two species reached Tasmania.

It is doubtful whether an extensive movement of such a large number of species of birds has been observed previously. There are frequent references in "*The South Australian Ornithologist*" to irruptions of certain species, mostly the Black-tailed Native Hen (*Tribonyx ventralis*), but rarely have these occurrences been widespread.

Owing to our meagre knowledge of the subject, and the desirability of correlating such movements with meteorological data, no attempt has been made to incorporate previous recordings of unusual numbers of birds appearing in South Australia.

The probable cause of the present influx is suggested from a study of official rainfall figures. After several good seasons up to 1950, in which year districts in the interior and Far-North of Australia had up to three times their average rainfall (in S.W. Queensland this being sufficient to send enough water down Cooper's Creek and other streams to fill Lake Eyre for the first time in recorded history), there followed a drought year in 1951, when most of these districts received only about half their average rainfall.

It is reasonable to assume that the bird population had been building up over several years, and the excessively wet year of 1950 would have caused record breeding, so that at the onset of the drought enormous numbers of birds would have had to leave these areas or die. Coupled with this the Lower-North of S.A. had an extremely favorable season. For example, Mr. Tom Brandon of Wilmington reported, "1951 proved to be the wettest year in this district for many years; I saw watercourses run water for

weeks where I had never seen it even for a few days before."

As a result of specific requests through various sources, information on the numbers of birds seen was received from many correspondents. There are very few records from certain parts of the State, viz., north and west of Pt. Augusta, Yorke Peninsula and the Murray Mallee, but those received suggest that these areas (except north of Pt. Augusta) had their share of avian visitors. No information was received from Kangaroo Island.

It must be remembered therefore that if there are no present records of various species from a certain area, it is not necessarily an indication that the birds were not present. Also, the latest information received from some country observers was up to three months old at the time this paper was written (July 1952), so that significant changes could have occurred within that period.

Records from the following observers are included in this account, and the writer wishes to thank these and others who gave information or advice: A. R. Attiwill, Claude N. Austin, H. B. Bakewell, John Bartlett, G. Beruldsen, D. M. Boehm, Erhard F. Boehm, Tom Brandon, Horace Brett, A. J. Bridges, E. A. Brooks, John Calaby, H. T. Condon, E. J. Crisp, G. B. Eggleton, L. J. Ellis, B. V. Fennessey, O. Fuller, Brian Glover, D. D. Hattam, J. C. Hawke, J. B. Hood, H. E. A. Jarman, Worsley C. Johnston, A. H. Lendon, Noel F. Learmonth, J. N. McGilp, R. W. McKecknie, J. A. R. Miles, H. J. Morton, I. L. Ophel, S. W. P. Osborne, Donald J. Overall, C. E. Rix, Saml. Saunders, Jun., R. Schodde, J. B. Schubert, G. B. Skinner, Michael Smyth, Glen M. Storr, J. Telfer, E. T. Vickery, A. V. Whiley.

Information on previous records and normal distribution is derived from "*The Birds of South Australia: Their Distribution and Habitat*," by S. E. Terrill and C. E. Rix (*S.A.O.*, XIX, pp. 53-100), with additional data from various correspondents.

SECTION A.

Birds which appeared in large numbers over a wide area.

BLACK-TAILED NATIVE HEN

Tribonyx ventralis

This species, notorious for its periodic irruptions, appears to be the first to have done so on this occasion. Few observers reported the time of arrival, but on the Adelaide Plains and in S.W. Victoria it may have been in May, 1951.

Great numbers were around dams in the Gawler Ranges at Hiltaba and Yardea up to December, 1951, and there were still small numbers at the end of April, 1952 (GS). At Pt. Augusta they were in considerable numbers in 1951, the last record being 9-10-51 (HB), and at Wilmington were in flocks during winter and until October, 1951. "First time seen here in more than twos and threes for many years." (TB.) On the Broughton River (south of Pt. Pirie) about 500 birds were seen over half a mile of country on 22-6-52 (JC). More than usual were around the dams at Salters Springs (between Riverton and Hamley Bridge) (MS), but only single birds were seen at Clare (June, 1952, JT), and Sutherlands (30-5-52, DMB).

There were many records of *Tribonyx* from the Adelaide Plains and the southern Mt. Lofty Ranges, but the majority of these are covered by the following summary by CER: "These birds were present in the area between Gawler and Cape Jervis-Victor Harbour during autumn of 1951 in fair numbers. Flocks varied in size from 10 to 12 birds to 40 or 50 birds. They remained in the area during the winter and spring, but I have seen only a few small parties of up to half a dozen since then." A flock of 100 was seen daily along the Patawalonga Ck. (Glenelg) from 25-5-51 to 26-6-51. The birds were absent until 3-8-51, when 50 returned and remained until 17-8-51. Since then the only records from the Glenelg area are of single birds between February and April, 1952 (BG).

The only locality near Adelaide where *Tribonyx* can be regularly found is on the coastal flats north of Adelaide, where small to large numbers are present most years. The arrival date of this season's contingent is not known, but from September, 1951, to January, 1952, they numbered many hundreds at Buckland Park. From then their

numbers dwindled rapidly until, on 16-3-52 when the lake was dry none was seen at this locality (BG). About fifty birds were seen at St. Kilda on 14-7-52 (HTC).

Metropolitan reservoirs were largely neglected by this species, being seen only at Hope Valley and Happy Valley Reservoirs in small numbers (BG).

Along the River Murray this species usually occurs in small scattered flocks. They appeared in large numbers in 1951. In the Mannum, Teal Flat and Purnong areas they were in hundreds between June, 1951, and January, 1952. At the end of March, 1952, several flocks of 20-30 were seen and by the end of April, 1952, only a few small flocks were present (BG). On 17-6-51 a fairly concentrated flock of about 300 birds was seen on the north side of Lake Alexandrina and on the following day a similar flock of about 150 at Lake Albert (JC). LJE first noticed them on 11-8-51, when a few birds were seen around a swamp near Meningie. Later they were seen in hundreds about Lakes Albert and Alexandrina and on the Murray swamps at Wellington and Tailem Bend. They were in great numbers until early May, 1952, when they began to disappear, but a few were still to be seen in June, 1952 (LJE). Many were seen between August and December, 1951, on swamps at Mulgundawa (flock of hundreds on at least one occasion) and Langhorne Ck. (HJM). No evidence of nesting (HJM).

At Naracoorte, which is periodically visited by this species, "nothing unusual" was noticed in 1951-52 (ARA & JBH), but small parties were observed in the Beachport and Kingston areas in October, 1951 (AHL, RWMcK & GMS), and a minor invasion of S.W. Victoria also occurred (CNA).

SUMMARY.—The Black-tailed Native Hen appeared in large numbers in northern Eyre Peninsula, throughout the flat country between Pt. Augusta and Adelaide, throughout the southern Mt. Lofty Ranges and the Lower Murray-Lakes area, and in smaller numbers in S.E. of S.A. and S.W. Victoria.

WHITE-NECKED HERON

Notophox pacifica

Except for odd birds, this species is not normally seen on the Adelaide Plains, and is rather rare along the River Murray.

It arrived on the Adelaide Plains in September, 1951, and almost every body of water, including the smallest dams, had one

or two of these birds until late in the year. As an example, 26 were seen between the outer suburbs of Adelaide and Buckland Park on 15-9-'51 (RWMcK). At this time it was not unusual to see a White-necked Heron flying over the suburbs of Adelaide. Only odd birds were seen on the Adelaide Plains in 1952, the writer's last record being of one on the Patawalonga Ck. (Glengel) at the end of June, 1952.

From September, 1951, until at least March, 1952, birds were seen by several observers on dams in many places throughout the Mt. Lofty Ranges. Strangely, large bodies of water were often neglected; a few only were seen at Buckland Park Lake between September, 1951, and 16-2-'52, and the birds were absent during many visits to the lake within this period (BG; HEAJ), and single birds only were seen on several metropolitan reservoirs (last record, Warren Res., 7-2-'52, BG).

On several occasions LJE saw 1 or 2 of these Herons at remote waterholes many miles from the River Murray, and these, with other records from dams at Sandleton (1 on 22-9-'51, BG) and Sutherlands (several records of 1 or 2 birds between 30-9-'51 and 31-10-'51, and 1 on 1-3-'52; EFB), indicate that this species was probably widespread throughout the Murray Mallee. Odd birds were seen along the main road between Tailem Bend and Pinnaroo in December, 1951 (HTC, JNMcG.).

A flock of 50 flew over the R.A.O.U. Camp at Lake Hattah, Victoria, in October, 1951 (BG), and along the Murray they were very numerous between Albury and Mildura (22-12-'51, GMS), and were reported in small numbers from Loxton (2 on 18-8-'51, HEAJ), Berri (1 on 18-8-'51, HEAJ), Morgan (1 on 4-11-'51, EFB), Teal Flat (10 on 5-1-'52, BG), Mannum, Purnong (odd birds, 5-1-'52, BG), and Murray Bridge (2 on 25-1-'52, BG). The species is a casual visitor most years to the Tailem Bend area, but "never in such great numbers as from September, 1951, until February, 1952" (LJE). A colony of 30 were seen settling for the night in gums at Langhorne Ck. (LJE). During the summer of 1951-52 small flocks periodically visited reclaimed land at Jervois (HJM). On 19-9-'51, 54 were seen between Milang and Finnis (9 miles); 17 being seen in one small paddock (CER).

Summarising his observations in the S.E.

of S.A., GMS reports, "Prior to 1951 I had seen only the White-necked Heron in the eastern section of the South-East, north to 12 miles south of Bordertown and south to Dismal Swamp, and then only sparingly. In October, 1951, it was much more plentiful and was seen in the western sector for the first time." At Naracoorte, where they are usually in fair numbers, many more than usual were seen in 1951 (ARA & JBH).

Flocks of up to 20 were seen on swamps near Pt. Lincoln and Coffin Bay (Eyre Peninsula) in October, 1951 (ILO), and White-necked Herons were also reported from Clare (1, sometimes 2, during winter and spring, 1951, and 1 in June, 1952), Wilmington ("a few to be seen any good season" TB; 1 in June, 1952, EJC), Salters Springs (MS), and the Victor Harbour district (up to 20 birds in summer, 1951-52, DJO).

SUMMARY.—The influx of this species was very widespread; reports indicate that the birds were in numbers in lower Eyre Peninsula, throughout the Adelaide Plains and Mt. Lofty Ranges, along the River Murray and throughout the South-East of S.A. and S.W. Victoria (CNA; NFL), and probably throughout the Murray Mallee, with smaller numbers in various other localities.

FORK-TAILED KITE

Milvus migrans affinis

During the years 1951 and 1952 the Fork-tailed Kite staged what is probably the most spectacular bird invasion of southern South Australia that has ever been recorded, being seen in great numbers over a large part of the State where the bird has never been seen before. (1)

The species is essentially nomadic and at irregular (but not infrequent) intervals visits the Lower North of South Australia, south to at least Jamestown, with occasional odd birds being seen as far south as Salters Springs on the Adelaide Plains (MS); and there is a fairly recent record from Naracoorte (1 in August, 1942, ARA & JBH). R. Crompton (*S.A.O.*, Vol. 2, p. 38, 1914) states that the species was occasionally seen "years ago" at Stonyfell, indicating that the bird has visited the Adelaide area previously, but apparently never in great numbers.

(1) The species has since been found breeding near Tailem Bend; in October, 1952, by LJE.—Eds.

There were possibly two-recent invasions by this species. The first in September, 1951, although small in numbers, penetrated as far as the South-East of S.A., and the second, probably in February, 1952, consisted of exceptionally large numbers of birds.

EAB has stated that Fork-tailed Kites were absent from the northern portions of the State in November, 1951, and the species was not seen at Hawker by JNMCG in early May, 1952.

At Pt. Augusta *Milvus migrans* was in quite large numbers from early September, 1951, and a flock of 30-40 were seen at the Stirling North slaughter yard on 25-5-'52 (HB). "In my opinion not generally met with so far south as Pt. Augusta, although common enough around the fettlers' camps on the Alice Springs Railway" (HB). Fork-tailed Kites were not seen at Wilmington in 1951, but were seen quite often later, e.g. 10 on 4-4-'52 (TB), and they were plentiful at Orroroo on 17-4-'52 (ILO) and at Broken Hill during Easter, 1952 (AVW). GMS did not see this species between Terowie and Broken Hill on 9-1-'52, but they were plentiful in this area early in May, 1952 (JNMCG). A flock of about 200 were seen about the Peterborough slaughter yard in early May, 1952 (JNMCG), this flock also being reported by EJC ("seen since Easter").

At Nelshaby a flock of 300 birds was seen at the end of April, 1952, after which they scattered throughout the district, a flock of 30 being seen at Crystal Brook on 10-6-'52 (JCH). "Large numbers have been seen around the slaughter yard at Pt. Pirie since Easter" (EJC). The Kites arrived at Salters Springs at about September, 1951, and "have been common for the last few months" (MS, June, 1952). A large flock of at least 200 birds which fed daily at the Two Wells slaughter yard and roosted in the gums along the Gawler River were still present in June, 1952 (EAB; HEAJ; HTC). Their arrival date was not reported. About 50 were feeding on crickets in an open paddock at Modbury on 7-6-'52 (RWMcK), and there have been numerous reports of smaller numbers in many places on the plains north of Adelaide since March, 1952. The closest records to the city were at Kingswood (3 on 22-3-'52, RS), and at the Sewage Farm, Islington (1 on 14-7-'52, BG).

A dead bird, apparently struck by a motor-

car, was found on the roadside near Wild Horse Plains on 28-9-'52 (HTC).

On the eastern fringe of the Mt. Lofty Ranges these birds were seen over Palmer Hill (small flocks March and April, 1952, BG), and over the Strathalbyn Reservoir (40 on 14-7-'52, AVW). Six were seen east of Strathalbyn on 14-5-'52 (BG), and 7 at Tucker's Lake, Strathalbyn, on 21-6-'52 (RW McK).

Along the Upper Murray they were plentiful from at least Swan Hill, Victoria, right down to the Lakes. As far as I am aware this species has never previously been recorded along the River Murray in South Australia. Large numbers were seen at Renmark ("appeared in mid-summer in flocks, still with us," GBE, June, 1952; SS), Loxton (1 flock of 20 plus other flocks over the local sheepyards on 27-6-'52, BVF; SS), Moorook ("up to 50," DDH; SS), Cobdogla and Waikerie (SS), and in smaller numbers at Loveday (7 on 24-5-'52, ETV).

Along the Lower Murray small numbers (up to 20) were seen in the Mannum (BG; ILO) and Teal Flat (BG) areas during March and April, 1952; and 2 flocks of 150-200 and 50 birds respectively were seen near Murray Bridge on 21-5-'52 (ILO). It was reported to RWMcK that large numbers were at the slaughter yards at Murray Bridge. In the Tailum Bend area they were in large numbers (LJE; HJM). "First recording was made when about a dozen birds were seen around the slaughter yards on 1-10-'51. Continually seen in district in gradually increasing numbers until early December, 1951, when flocks suddenly decreased to a few birds, remaining so until late in February, 1952, when the flocks began to increase again to hundreds, and they may be seen still around the slaughter yards (LJE, June, 1952). Eight were seen near Wellington on 12-10-'51 (AHL, RWMcK & GMS), and 7 feeding on rabbits killed by road traffic on the Langhorne Ck.-Wellington Road (HJM).

From reports given to LJE by train crews, flocks of this species occurred throughout the Murray Mallee. LJE vouches for the following: "The railway gang from Pinnaroo were working on the railroad 4 miles west of Pinnaroo when *Milvus migrans* appeared in such frightening numbers that their boss abandoned work at that point and returned to Pinnaroo." This occurred between April

and June, 1952. No birds were seen between Tailern Bend and Pinnaroo in December, 1951 (HTC; JNMCG). Also observed on the Pinnaroo-Loxton road (2 and 1 over farm-houses, 4 and 11 miles respectively from Pinnaroo on 27-6-'52, BVF), Elwomple and Moorlands (HJM), and near Coonalpyn (1 on 8-10-'51, RS et al; 2 in April, 1952, GB).

At Naracoorte 5 were seen regularly around the slaughter yards from February, 1952, and 6 or 7 were seen at Joanna from the same time (ARA & JBH). One was seen near Robe on 11-10-'51 (AHL, RWMcK and GMS). Small to large flocks (one of over 100 individuals) were reported from S.W. Victoria (CNA; NFL).

Fork-tailed Kites were also recorded at Sutherlands (1 on 20-5-'52, EFB) and Clare (2-6-'52, JT). Although there were no correspondents on Yorke Peninsula, a newspaper cutting (June or July, 1952) forwarded by JB, which states that "large black hawk-like birds seen lately in the areas at the foot of Yorke Peninsula are now about Port Victoria in hundreds," without doubt refers to this species. JB saw small flocks (up to 14) on Yorke Peninsula during Easter, 1952.

A note from LJE of Tailern Bend (20-6-'52): "I have noticed several times this week that birds of this species are pairing off. I have seen several pairs lately over the town area," suggests that the Fork-tailed Kite may have bred in the district. Since the bird is so widespread in both southern South Australia and in Victoria (R. Wheeler) and numbers have shown no tendency to diminish (July, 1952), many observers have expressed the hope that it may remain either as a permanent resident or as a periodic visitor to southern South Australia.

SUMMARY.—The Fork-tailed Kite was reported as being in large numbers throughout the area south of a line drawn between Pt. Augusta and Broken Hill (with the possible exception of the South-East, where only small numbers were reported).

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

Elanus notatus

There appeared to be no increase in the Pt. Augusta (HB) and Clare (JT) districts, but at Wilmington, where the species had not been seen for several years, a few were seen this season and they were still present in April, 1952 (TB). Single birds were seen at Red Hill (10-3-'52, RWMcK) and

Eudunda (12-3-'52, 4-6-'52, EFB), and hawks probably this species from their description by ATB of Cunliffe, via Kadina, who had not seen them before, were seen frequently in this area. EJC saw "an isolated Black-shouldered Kite here and there, up as far as Pt. Germein and down to Dublin."

On the Adelaide Plains, where there appear to be a few resident pairs with other odd stragglers from time to time, the increase seemed marked. First records appear to be in November, 1951 (1 at Hope Valley area, 3-11-'51, GB, BG & RS, and 2 at Klemzig, 7, 14, and 21-11-'51, RWMcK).

Records which are far too numerous to reproduce show that single birds and pairs are spread throughout the area from Pt. Wakefield (1 on 10-3-'52, RWMcK) south to Brighton (GMS) and Noarlunga district (HTC). The following examples should indicate the extent of the influx. On 28-6-'52, 14 were seen in the Gawler, Hamley Bridge and Tarlee areas during a motor trip of less than 100 miles (BG & RS), and this was probably only a small proportion of those present, as JARM had seen 8 between Hamley Bridge and Gawler (20 miles) two days previously. CER, who previously knew of 2 pairs in the area between O'Halloran Hill and Willunga, reported that there are now at least 8 and possibly 11 pairs in this area. He recently saw 17 of this species in one day between Adelaide-Aldinga-Willunga-Adelaide (61 miles), and saw pairs at Yankalilla, Second Valley and Mt. Compass where he had not previously seen this species. GB has seen the birds frequently between Victor Harbour and Adelaide since about October, 1951, it being more plentiful between Willunga and Adelaide. A number of other observers reported the species from within this area, but the only record from elsewhere in the southern Mt. Lofty Ranges is from Gumeracha (1 on 24-4-'52, BG). Black-shouldered Kites have frequently been seen flying over, or perched on telegraph poles in the suburbs of Adelaide (BG; RWMcK; RS).

This species was "quite common" at Victor Harbour (DJO) and was seen at Middleton (1 on 13-4-'52, HEAJ).

At Loveday *Elanus notatus* was seen on 1-6-'52 for the first time in 10 years' residence by ETV, and was recorded along the Lower Murray from Teal Flat (1 on 5-1-'52, BG), Mannum (1 on 27-4-'52, BG), Tailern Bend

(LJE), Jervois (HJM), Langhorne Ck. (LJE) and Narrung 2 on 10-5-'52, "first time seen," (HBB). On rare occasions previously an odd pair has been seen at Jervois (HJM), Mulgundawa and Langhorne Ck. (LJE), and a pair can be seen at Murray Bridge most years (LJE), but since late September, 1951, "hardly a day has passed without seeing a bird of this species flying or hovering over the township (Tailem Bend)" (LJE), and they have been fairly numerous in the Jervois area (HJM). LJE and HJM suspected that the species nested in the Langhorne Creek and Jervois areas, but no nests were found.

Several birds, including juvenals, were seen just south of Mannum on 23-8-'52 (HTC).

Four were seen hovering over the wheatstacks in the railway yards at Cooke's Plains on 20-9-'51 (LJE), and 2 at Pinnaroo on 8-10-51 (BG).

At Naracoorte, where single birds have been recorded over a period of years, at least 2 have remained over the last year (ARA and JBH, April, 1952), and at Beachport a single bird was seen on 11-10-'51 (AHL, RWMcK & GMS). A considerable influx occurred in S.W. Victoria (CNA; NFL).

Numbers are undiminished, on the Adelaide Plains at least, in July, 1952.

Many observers have commented on the fact that pairs of this species could be seen regularly of late in the same small areas.

SUMMARY.—Reports suggest that an influx of this Kite took place throughout the flat country from south of Pt. Augusta to Adelaide, and throughout the southern Mt. Lofty Ranges, along the Murray, and probably throughout the Murray Mallee and the South-East.

SECTION B.

Birds which appeared in smaller numbers or over restricted area.

BLACK CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax carbo

A large influx of this species occurred on Adelaide metropolitan reservoirs, the only one of which has a normal population being Millbrook, with a flock of about 50. During January, February and March, 1952, several hundred Black Cormorants were present at Millbrook (ILO), Warren, Barossa (a flock of 500 reported by the caretaker during March, 1952), and Happy Valley, (BG), after which they disappeared completely from these four reservoirs. During this period

small flocks (up to 20) were present on Hope Valley and Thorndon Park Reservoirs, and odd birds were still present in July, 1952 (BG), during which month about 50 birds were again seen at Happy Valley Reservoir (23-7-'52, AVW).

A flock of 47 was on the River Onkaparinga between Noarlunga and Pt. Noarlunga in October, 1951, and possibly on several later occasions (CER). Large flocks, probably of this species, were seen at Aldinga, Noarlunga and Largs Bay in June, 1952 (HTC).

No increase in numbers were reported elsewhere, although their numbers appeared to be much greater than normal during March and April, 1952, in the Mannum and Teal Flat areas, where very few had been seen on previous visits (BG).

DARTER

Anhinga novae-hollandiae

All recent records are from the Adelaide Plains, metropolitan reservoirs and the River Murray. Normally confined to the Murray (where it is rarely reported) and the northern parts of the State.

On the Adelaide Plains, the first record of the present invasion was of 1 bird at Buckland Park on 24-10-'51 (HEAJ), at which place Darters were seen on several later occasions, the highest number being 7 on the last day observed, 6-2-'52 (BG, HEAJ and RS).

Along the Torrens Lake, Adelaide, one male was seen from March, 1952, until at least June, 1952 (HEAJ, OF).

Darters were recorded in small numbers from all metropolitan reservoirs except Thorndon Park from January to March, 1952, and 3 to 5 birds were still present at Hope Valley (BG) and up to 20 at Mt. Bold (AVW) in July, 1952, in which month a single bird arrived at Thorndon Park (BG), another at Millbrook (BG), and up to 20 were seen at Happy Valley (23-7-'52, AVW).

Along the Upper Murray they were very numerous at Barmera, Berri, Renmark and Mildura during the last week of December, 1951. On a boat trip 8 miles upstream from Renmark, 250 to 300 Darters were seen on the upward journey (CER). By contrast, during the R.A.O.U. Campout in October, 1951, only single birds were seen on the Hattah Lakes, Victoria (BG).

Odd pairs are usually observed along the River Murray from Tailem Bend to Welling-

ton, but the species was much more numerous in April, 1952 (HJM). Large numbers were seen at Wellington on 15-9-'51, and later in large numbers all along the Murray from Tailém Bend to Mypolonga. Numbers lessened from March, 1952, but odd birds were still present in June (LJE) and July, 1952 (BG).

Small numbers were seen in the Mannum (BG; CER), Teal Flat and Purnong areas (BG) from January to April, 1952, and at Swan Reach on 28-1-'52 (CER). A few were still at Mannum in July, 1952 (BG).

BUSTARD

Eupodotis australis

At Wirrulla (Eyre Peninsula), Bustards were "more plentiful than I've known for at least 35 years. Have been simply slaughtered" (GBS). Small numbers at Pt. Augusta ("heavily persecuted," HB), Wilmington ("none in 1951; small parties often seen at present" TB, April, 1952), and Sutherlands (2 on 27-12-51, JBS). Records of a single bird at Buckland Park (16-3-'52, BG) and a small party present at a locality well south of Adelaide (JNMcG) are unusual.

GLOSSY IBIS

Plegadis falcinellus

There are few previous records of this species for South Australia (see Terrill and Rix, S.A.O., XIX, p. 69).

A flock of 16 were seen at Buckland Park by HEAJ on 16-1-'52, and from then until 16-2-'52 these birds were seen by a number of observers.

Six were seen at Moorook in April, 1952 (DDH).

LJE's first record for Tailém Bend since January, 1942, was of 120 birds on 25-10-'51. They were reported by dairy farmers at Jervois and elsewhere on the Lower Murray to be feeding in numbers on the reclaimed swamplands (LJE). Last record by LJE was of 5 at Wellington on 10-3-'52. HJM reported that small parties were present for several months at Jervois, where he has observed this species on rare occasions previously.

In the Naracoorte area, 30 were seen at Bool Lagoon during November, 1941, since which time only stray birds have been seen until February, 1952, when about 20 were disturbed by duck-shooters (ARA & JBH).

WHITE EGRET

Egretta alba

Although the apparent increase of this species on the Adelaide Plains was not significant enough to be considered a definite influx, at Naracoorte, where usually they are in small numbers, flocks of 30 to 50 were common throughout the district during 1951 (ARA & JBH). A similar increase perhaps occurred in S.W. Victoria (CNA; NFL).

PINK-EARED DUCK

Malacorhynchus membranaceus

This species is more frequently met with in the northern parts of South Australia, but occurs on the River Murray and on marshes near Adelaide.

"At Buckland Park there are a few pairs in spring and summer each year. However, from 4-8-'51 they were in great numbers, possibly 500 to 1,000. Two nests were found, each with 6 eggs (13-9-'51 and 24-10-'51). One or two nests are found most seasons, so it seems that the 1951-52 influx was mainly of non-breeding birds" (HEAJ). The birds were present in decreasing numbers throughout the summer, and about 20 were still present on 6-2-'52, when the lake was almost dry (BG). "Many hundreds" were seen on pools in the Virginia area (RWMcK).

Small numbers were on the Warren (April, 1951), Barossa (June, 1951), and Hope Valley Reservoirs (May, 1952) (BG), and Pink-eared Ducks were numerous at Tucker's Lake (Strathalbyn) on 29-9-'51, and were heard in association with other ducks at the same lake on 21-6-'52 (RWMcK).

Also reported from near Naracoorte (October, 1951, RWMcK), Goolwa ("Occasionally seen or shot last season," DJO), Sutherlands (1 on 13-9-'51, EFB), Clare (6 on 8-6-'52, JT), and Salters Springs (occasional birds since October, 1951, MS).

FRECKLED DUCK

Stictonetta naevosa

This species is not normally present on the Adelaide Plains, and it occasionally visits the Lower Murray-Lakes area in small to large numbers. (Was numerous in 1937 and was seen in small numbers in 1948, LJE.)

On 13-9-'51 over 50 were seen at Buckland Park lake (HEAJ), and the flock remained in gradually decreasing numbers until the end of January, 1952 (BG). "Behaviour of

a single bird suggested young hidden." (RWMcK.)

Several large flocks (50 to 100 birds) were seen on the reserve near Paringa Bridge, Renmark, during the last week of December, 1951, and several small flocks were in the vicinity during the same period (CER).

In the Lower Murray-Lakes area, although only a few were seen by LJE of Tailem Bend, this observer reported, "Evidently this species was very plentiful in the district this year, as I had numerous reports of it being included in duck-shooters' bags."

SPOTTED HARRIER

Circus assimilis

This species occurs principally in the northern parts of the State, with occasional records from the southern portion.

Present records of this species are rather scattered, but are sufficient to indicate that an influx took place.

Records are from Sandleton (3 on 7-6-'52, BG, HEAJ, JARM), Waterloo (between Kapunda and Burra) (1 on 9-1-'52, GMS), North Glenelg (1 from 27-2-'52 to 30-4-'52, BG), Buckland Park (1 on 27-5-'52, HEAJ), Tapley's Hill (1 on 30-3-'52, HTC), Pedlar's Creek (1 on 30-3-'52, HTC; 1 on 14-4-'52, BG), Aldinga (1 on 8-6-'52, JARM). CER saw single birds between O'Halloran Hill and Aldinga on several occasions during the year 1951. Prior to this he had only seen 1 of this species in this area—about 3 years ago. Moorlands (nesting, 20-9-'51, LJE), between Mannum and Murray Bridge (2 on 16-7-'52, BG), Tailem Bend-Jerovois area, seen recently on numerous occasions (LJE; HJM). First seen in district at Moorlands and Naturi in 1949 by LJE and R. Richter, but was not seen in 1950 by LJE; Langhorne Ck. (nesting, 21-10-'51, LJE), Wellington (nest with 4 eggs just hatching, October, 1951, HJM), Wilkawatt (1 on 9-10-'51, BG), Pinnaroo (1 on 20-10-'51, HEAJ), Beachport (1 on 11-10-'51, GMS), Joanna (1 on 21-2-Naracoorte area in 1934" (ARA & JBH).

In the foothills of the Flinders Ranges near Pt. Augusta, where the species is resident, no marked increase was noted by HB, and at '52, ARA & JBH), and Naracoorte (1 on 22-3-'52). "Single birds seen previously in Wilmington, TB reports "Spotted Harriers are always here in small numbers during the spring of good seasons, and several pairs were noted this season; probably a few more than usual."

BLACK FALCON

Falco subniger

Although this bird occurs throughout most of the State, it is rarely reported from the southern portion, and the present records, together with records of a definite influx of these birds in Victoria (R. Wheeler) would indicate the occurrence of a minor invasion of southern S.A. As with the previous species, the Black Falcon was possibly seen, but not identified, by other observers.

CER reported (July, 1952): "I have seen single birds and pairs of this species on a number of occasions in the area south of Adelaide over the last 6 or 8 months, as far south as Second Valley. On 29-6-'52 I saw one being chased by Magpies in my garden at Glandore (near Adelaide)." A single seen all over the town of Red Hill on 10-3-'52 (BG, HEAJ & RS), and 2 at Clare in May, 1952 (JT).

LITTLE CORELLA

Kakatoe sanguinea

"Countless hundreds" of these birds were seen all over the town of Red Hill on 10-3-'52 (RWMcK). Red Hill is some distance south of the known normal range of this species.

A pair of "Corellas" was observed in October, 1951, at Langhorne Ck. examining a hollow 70 feet up in a huge Red-gum (HJM).

COCKATIEL

Leptolophus hollandicus

This species pays irregular but not infrequent visits to the southern portions of S.A. but very rarely reaches the South-East, and did not do so on this occasion.

Many flocks were seen up to November, 1951, but not since, at Wirrulla, where they are not normally in such numbers (GS); and the species was numerous at Wilmington, this being normal for a good season (TB).

On the Adelaide Plains small flocks were seen at West Beach (29-9-'51), Buckland Park (13 on 30-9-'51) and Waterloo Corner (12 on 6-2-'52, RS). A large flock was seen at Chance's Line in January, 1951 (RWMcK), and at Sandleton, 5 were seen on 23-9-'51 (BG).

A few were noticed at Elwomple (HJM), and in the Tailem Bend (12 on 24-10-'51, LJE) and Langhorne Ck. areas (LJE; HJM). The species bred in the Tailem Bend area in 1948 (R. Richter, via LJE), and probably bred at Langhorne Ck. in 1951 (HJM—his

first records of this species for Elwomple and Langhorne Ck.).

MASKED WOOD-SWALLOW

Artamus personatus

and

WHITE-BROWED WOOD-SWALLOW

Artamus superciliosus

Terrill and Rix state that these species migrate to the southern part of the State in large numbers in the spring and early summer at irregular intervals.

Great flocks were seen throughout the mallee country between Tailem Bend and Pinnaroo in October (BG) and December (HTC, JNMCG), 1951, and flocks of *Artamus superciliosus* were seen as far south as Kepocho (15 miles north of Naracoorte) on 6-10-'51 by GMS. This is probably not unusual, but large flocks still remained at Elwomple on 22-4-'52, when the normal migration occurs in late January or early February from this locality (HJM).

BLACK HONEYEATER

Myzomela nigra

The Black Honeyeater pays periodical visits to the Murray Mallee and occasionally reaches and breeds in the Mt. Lofty Ranges close to Adelaide.

This season the species was numerous and breeding in nearly all the dense scrubs around Tailem Bend, and at Naturi from September to November, 1951 (LJE, HJM), where they had been observed but rarely before. Small numbers were seen at Sandleton in September, 1951 (BG), and in the Kulkyn Forest (Victoria), breeding in October, 1951 (BG). The species was also breeding at Pinnaroo in December, 1951 (HTC).

WHITE-FRONTED HONEYEATER

Gliciphila albifrons

This species also pays periodic visits to the Murray Mallee and was present and breeding in the same localities, and during the same period, as the Black Honeyeater. In the Tailem Bend and Naturi areas it was quite numerous from September to November, 1951 (LJE; HJM). "Have only seen the species once before, and then odd pairs (November, 1948)." (HJM.)

SECTION C.

Odd records of other interior birds.

GULL-BILLED TERN

Gelochelidon nilotica

This species is essentially a bird of the

interior, and has rarely been reported from the Adelaide and Lower Murray areas. It occurs normally in the South-East.

Two were seen on a swamp 2 miles south of Milang on 19-9-'51 (CER) and at Buckland Park 2 on 19-1-'52 and 27-1-'52 (BG and RS).

In the Naracoorte district, where they are usually present in small numbers during wet seasons, none was seen in 1951-52 (ARA and JBH).

PLUMED EGRET

Egretta intermedia

The only previous records of this species for S.A. are from St. Kilda and Lowbank.

At Buckland Park 2 small Egrets were seen on 16-1-'52 (HEAJ) and 4, thought to be *Egretta intermedia*, were observed on 19-1-'52 (BG & RS). At Outer Harbour two birds believed to be this species were seen by HEAJ on 26-3-'52.

PIED GOOSE

Anseranas semipalmata

There are few previous records of this species for South Australia (see Terrill and Rix, loc. cit., p. 71).

Fifteen to 20 birds were seen 3 to 4 miles north of Meningie in January, 1952 (SWPO).

WHISTLING TREE DUCK

Dendrocygna arcuata

The only previous records of this species for South Australia are from the River Murray (1 specimen in the S.A. Museum) and Cooper's Ck.

The species was recorded at Buckland Park (2 seen twice under good conditions 27-1-'52 AHL & RWMCK) and Maäoupe Station (Naracoorte area) (4 in July, 1951, ARA and JBH).

LJE reported that "from descriptions given by local shooters, Tree Ducks (*Dendrocygna* sp.) have been bagged on several occasions both from the Lake and the swamps at Tailem Bend."

LETTER-WINGED KITE

Elanus scriptus

There are very few previous records of this species from South Australia, and all are from the northern portion of the State.

One flew over Netherby (a suburb of Adelaide) in December, 1951, and was seen under excellent conditions by RS. Three were seen at Butler (Eyre Peninsula) on 11-3-'52 by WCJ.

GREY FALCON

Falco hypoleucos

This is a northern species rarely recorded from southern South Australia.

"In company with R. Richter on 15-9-'51, a bird of this species was flushed from a nest about 5 miles from Langhorne Ck. The nest was lined with soft bark, but contained no eggs. Further investigation a fortnight later revealed that the birds had deserted the nest and were not seen again." (LJE.)

SECTION D.

There were a number of species which were reported as being actually or apparently in larger numbers than usual in certain areas, but being normal inhabitants, or generally plentiful in nearby areas, it is possible that the increase in numbers was due to local movements. Of these, the following are possible additions to Section B:—

Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*); Pied Cormorant (*P. varius*); Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*); Straw-necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*); Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*)—a definite influx of this species occurred in S.W. Victoria (CNA; NFL); Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*); White-eyed Duck (*Aythya australis*); Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*).

SECTION E.

Birds which did not irrupt.

The following information from Erhard F. Boehm refers in particular to the Sutherlands area, but may apply elsewhere in southern South Australia:—"... some species of birds usually seen here in favorable seasons—and that one could reasonably expect to see in numbers, particularly in view of drought in the Far North Interior, had not appeared or were so scarce as to escape notice—and the following species come into this category: Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*), Rainbow Bird (*Merops ornata*), Ground Cuckoo-shrike (*Pteropodocys maxima*), White-winged Triller (*Lalage sueurii*) (scarce), Crimson and Orange Chats (*Ephthianura tricolor* and *E. aurifrons*), Rufous Songlark (*Cinclorhamphus mathewsi*), Black-faced Wood-swallow (*Artamus melanops*) (scarce), Pied Honeyeater (*Certhionyx variegatus*) and Horsfield Bushlark (*Mirafra javanica*). Those marked 'scarce' are normally more numerous than they were last season."

(The Triller and Songlark were reasonably plentiful in Adelaide area in spring of 1951.—BG.)

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED.

The 1951-52 invasion of birds has not yet ended. Some species have disappeared, but others are still (July, 1952) present in large numbers. It is hoped that a supplement will be published later, when the remainder of the birds have either disappeared or appear to have become permanent residents.

A complete picture of this invasion can only be obtained if members co-operate and report as thoroughly as possible on bird movements in their areas. If any member has noticed any birds not normally occurring in his area, or any marked change from the normal in the population of any bird during 1951-52, I would appreciate any information that could be offered, including, if possible, dates, numbers, normal status, etc. Any information on previous southerly movements of northern birds would also be appreciated.

Especially wanted are:—

(a) Records from areas in which there are few or no records in the present paper (especially areas north and west of Pt. Augusta, Yorke Peninsula, the Murray Mallee, the South-East, and Kangaroo Island).

(b) Reports at approximately 3-monthly intervals from country areas until normality has returned.

Records and reports may be sent to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. H. Jarman, Royal Society's Rooms, North Terrace, Adelaide, or to Mr. Brian Glover, Kauri Road, Hawthorndene, Blackwood.

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