

## BIRDS IN THE FLINDERS RANGES

By A. JEFFERY

The writer spent a fortnight (August 19-September 1, 1954) hiking through part of the North Flinders Ranges. The route taken was as follows: Parachilna to Angorichina Hostel; climbed Mt. Falkland and proceeded down the Aroona Valley to Wilpena Station, crossing the Brachina and Bunyeroo Creeks; climbed St. Mary's Peak; spent two days in the Wilpena Creek area, and finally crossed the Pound and hiked cross-country to Mernmerna Railway Station. The following birds were recorded:

Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*).—Several flocks were seen; occurring all along the route.

Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia placida*).—Recorded in two localities: Aroona outstation and near Wilpena homestead. It was numerous at both places.

Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*).—Found in the open at Parachilna, Angorichina, Wilpena H.S., and Mernmerna.

Little Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*).—One bird seen at Parachilna. The hotel-keeper said that it had been blown in two days previously from the direction of Lake Torrens.

Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*).—A pair seen on Parachilna Creek and four birds on the Brachina Creek.

Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*).—Seen in open paddocks all along the route.

Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*).—Several birds on the Brachina and Bunyeroo Creeks.

White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*).—Several birds on the Parachilna, Brachina, Bunyeroo and Wilpena Creeks.

Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*).—One flock of these birds on the Brachina Creek and a pair on the Wilpena Creek.

Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*).—Near Mt. Falkland. Spotted undersurface; well defined fingers and elevated wings when gliding. One bird.

Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*).—Saw many of these birds. Usually circling over higher hills. Plentiful in the Wilpena Pound area.

Little Eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*).—A pair in the Wilpena Pound area. One bird, probably the male, kept folding its wings and dropping till it nearly reached the ground. Square-cut tail and short fingers also noted.

Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*).—One bird seen near Mt. Falkland. Large dark fingers and long, fairly thin tail. Whistled while flying.

Fork-tailed Kite (*Milvus migrans*).—One bird at Parachilna. About size of Raven,

Under dark brown with black markings on wings. Squarely-cut tail which forked when bird was soaring.

Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucus*).—Seen at Parachilna Creek, and near the Brachina Creek. A pair each time could have been the same birds. Light grey below with black tips to the wings. Back grey. Narrow, rounded tail.

Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*).—Common everywhere.

Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*).—One bird heard at night near Aroona out-station.

Pink Cockatoo (*Kakatoe leadbeateri*).—One pair seen on Aroona Creek, near the Brachina.

Little Corella (*Kakatoe sanguinea*).—Very common along the gum-lined creeks, especially Wilpena Creek, where it outnumbered the ever-present Galahs.

Galah (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*).—One of the commonest birds. More numerous than the preceding species.

Ringneck Parrot (*Barnardius barnardi*).—Abundant all along route, mainly in the vicinity of patches of mallee.

Red-rumped Parrot (*Psephotus haematonotus*).—A few birds in the open timber near Wilpena homestead.

Mulga Parrot (*Psephotus varius*).—Occurred all along the route. Fairly numerous.

Elegant Parrot (*Neophema elegans*).—Found at Parachilna Creek and also on the Bunbinyunna Creek, west of Wilpena Pound, where it was common. This identification was checked with a mounted specimen in the S.A. Museum.

Spotted Nightjar (*Eurostopodus guttatus*).—Flushed two, separately, in the Bunbinyunna Creek area. Both birds showed the white wing patches distinctly as they rose from the ground.

Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*).—Heard calling in several places along the Aroona Valley and in the Wilpena Creek area. One at Aroona out-station.

Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo (*Lamprolaima plamosus*).—Similar distribution to preceding species. They seemed to prefer the *Callitris* pine to other trees.

Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*).—Occurred, although not in great numbers, throughout the trip. Sometimes found in company with the following species.

White-backed Swallow (*Cheramoeca leucosterna*).—One bird seen on the Brachina

Creek. Forked tail and white throat and back.

Tree Martin (*Hylochelidon nigricans*).—Saw many large flocks, especially near the creeks.

Fairy Martin (*Hylochelidon ariel*).—Several birds on the Brachina Creek, and a small flock on the Wilpena Creek. Also found some nests in the latter locality. Tail slightly forked, and not as stumpy as that of Tree Martin.

Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura flabellifera*).—Only saw one pair in a dwarf sheoak on the Brachina Creek.

Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*).—Widely distributed, but not very common. Most birds seen in the vicinity of Wilpena Homestead.

Jacky Winter (*Microeca fascians*).—A couple on the Parachilna Creek and one in the *Callitris* pine near Wilpena homestead.

Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*).—Very common, especially amongst *Callitris* growths. Their calls were very often heard in the early morning. One male bird had the red on the breast coming up very high, reaching the lower throat. The cap of this bird was extremely bright.

Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*).—Common along the Aroona Valley from Aroona out-station to Wilpena homestead, and in the Wilpena Pound. This bird also seemed to have a preference for *Callitris* pine.

Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*).—The calls were heard all along the route, several identifications being made by sight. Common in the vicinity of Aroona out-station.

Magpie Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*).—One pair found on the Parachilna Creek and about six birds near Wilpena homestead were the only birds seen.

Wedgebill (*Sphenostoma cristatum*).—About six birds in some bushes along a watercourse near the Parachilna-Blinman road, at about 3 miles from Parachilna. One bird sang from the top of a dead boxthorn bush.

Ground Cuckoo-Shrike (*Pteropodocys maxima*).—In open timber near the Aroona out-station. Unusual long, harsh cry, and had a flight something like the Black-faced species.

Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina novae-hollandiae*).—One or two birds seen or heard in various localities all along the route. Most

often found in the red-gums, but some occurred in the *Callitris*.

White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*).—Common in *Callitris* growths in the Aroona Valley and in the Pound. Several nests were found around the woolshed at Wilpena. All were made in *Callitris* pines.

Chestnut-crowned Babbler (*P. ruficeps*).—Only one lot of birds were identified as belonging to this species. Distinct white-wing markings and chestnut crown. They were found at Aroona out-station.

White-fronted Chat (*Epthianura albifrons*). One group of about a dozen birds in undulating country, clothed with low clumps of grass, near Mt. Aleck, was the only record of these birds.

Brown Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*).—Common all along the route, especially in the growths of mallee eucalypts.

Eastern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*).—Occurred all along the route, and was commonest in the *Callitris* pines around Wilpena homestead and Aroona out-station. In the latter place I found a nest (August 21) with four young birds in it. It had been made with straw and feathers between the posts forming an old shed.

Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*).—In the mallee eucalypts on the slope of Mount Falkland and near St. Mary's Peak. Only a couple of birds seen on each occasion.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*).—Came across flocks of them in many places along the route.

Ground-Wren (? *Hylacola cauta*).—One bird in eucalypts a few feet from the summit of St. Mary's Peak. Had it in full view for half a minute. White patch very distinct on wing.

Brown Songlark (*Cinclorhynchus cruralis*).—There were many of these birds on the plain between the ranges and Mernmerna Railway Station.

Blue and White Wren (*Malurus leuco-notus*).—One group near Parachilna and another between Aroona out-station and the Brachina Creek were the only records. Each group contained one male.

Purple-backed Wren (*Malurus assimilis*).—Small parties seen at various places. One party on the Parachilna Creek contained four fully-plumaged males and approximately eight females (?).

Masked Wood-Swallow (*Artamus personatus*).—A mixed party of this and the following species was seen in the Aroona Valley, near Parachilna Creek, and a pair at the summit of Mt. Falkland. Both observations were made in eucalypt growths.

White-browed Wood-Swallow (*A. superciliosus*).—As stated for Masked Wood-Swallow.

Dusky Wood-Swallow (*A. cyanopterus*).—On the Parachilna plain, 2 miles from the town, and in the Wilpena Pound were the only localities where this species was found. Both parties contained approximately a dozen birds.

Brown Tree-creeper (*Climacteris picumnus*).—Common along the Bunyeroo, Wilpena and Bunbinyunna Creeks. Also saw several of these birds in amongst the red-gums in the Pound.

Mistletoe Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*).—Only found one pair in the grounds of Angorichina Hostel. Here they were feeding (?) in an introduced fruit tree.

Red-tipped Pardalote (*Pardalotus ornatus*).—Common along the gum-lined creeks and in the mallee on the hills. A few birds heard in *Callitris* pine.

Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*).—Several seen on the Parachilna plains, two pairs near Aroona out-station, and a number near Mernmerna were the only records. All seemed to be keeping to low bushes.

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater (*M. ornata*).—Recorded on the Brachina Creek in several spots, and on the Wilpena Creek. All times ground feeding in small mallee eucalypts. These birds were distinctly striated on the breast.

White-plumed Honeyeater (*M. penicillata*).—Recorded in many localities, usually in red-gums near the larger creeks. Not very numerous anywhere.

Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*).—Very common along all the gum creeks, and a few in the *Callitris* pines. This bird does not appear to be so rowdy and pugnacious as the Noisy Miner.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthogenys rufogularis*).—The calls of this species were often heard all along the route. The identification was checked by sight on several occasions. The bird was commonest near Aroona out-station and Wilpena Station.

Pipit (*Anthus australis*).—Common in all open fields and hillsides.

Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia castanotis*).—There was a large number at Parachilna, but they were recorded no-where else.

Raven (*Corvus coronoides*).—Common on the plains west of the Flinders Ranges, and distributed, although not numerous, throughout the range.

Little Crow (?) (*Corvus bennetti*).—Several birds, identified as Little Crows, seen at Mernmerna. Call, repeated several times, was short, and sounded more "nasal" than that of the Raven. The flight appeared slightly more rapid. Comparisons were made with Ravens which were also in the vicinity.

Pied Butcher-bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*).—Many Butcher-bird calls were heard on the trip. Definite sight identifications of this

species were made near Arøona out-station and also near Wilpena homestead. Birds identified had a black hood, i.e. head and throat and black wings and back.

Grey Butcher-bird (*C. torquatus*).—Definite sight identifications made on the Brachina Creek and near Wilpena homestead. Birds concerned had white throats and grey wings and back.

Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*).—All magpies seen were of this species. They were numerous near gum-lined creeks.

Three introduced birds were recorded. They were the House-Sparrow, Starling and Goldfinch. All were seen near homesteads only.