

ADDITIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RECORDS

By BRIAN GLOVER and R. SCHODDE

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*)

A single bird of this species was seen by us at Outer Harbour on November 6, 1954. Either perched on top of mangroves or in flight the bird was under observation for almost half an hour. The size was approximately that of a White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*), and the black beak and wholly black legs were clearly visible. In flight a distinct buff tinge to the underwings and rump was noticeable. This is said to be a characteristic of this species, the

buff becoming more extensive on the breeding plumage. The bird seen by us was not in breeding plumage, there being no trace of ornamental plumes on the back.

This confirms several previous suspected records of this species (unpublished).

(1) R. Schodde and Howard Jarman saw two small black-billed Egrets at Buckland Park on January 16, 1952.

(2) Brian Glover saw a small Egret at Outer Harbour on April 16, 1952, which

in the fading light of late afternoon appeared to have a black bill.

(3) R. Britten-Jones saw what was apparently the same bird at Outer Harbour during the same period of 1952. It had a black bill and he believed it to be a Little Egret.

(4) R. Schodde saw a small Egret with black beak and wholly black legs flying close overhead at Buckland Park during the R.A.O.U. visit to the area on September 21, 1952.

Thus all three Australian species of *Egretta* have now been recorded for this State, and the following key will aid in their identification.

EGRETS (*Egretta*)

Entirely white, swamp, river and lake frequenting birds, with *long, thin necks and long legs*. In breeding plumage develop ornamental plumes on back. *Beak straight and sharp-pointed*, much shorter than those of other all-white swamp birds, the Spoonbills (*Platalea* spp.:—beak long, expanded into a wide spoon shape at end) and the White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*:—beak long, strongly down-curved.)

Flight heron-like with legs trailing; head tucked back on shoulders in sustained flight. (Spoonbills and Ibis fly with necks extended.) Heron-like in shape and habits. Largely solitary; not usually found in flocks.

WHITE EGRET (*Egretta alba*)

Large (30 to 35-in.). Much larger than White-faced Heron. Pure white. Beak yellow (largely black in breeding season). Legs black.

Voice:—A slow grunting "arrrk".

Range:—Occurs throughout most of the State, on swamps, margins of lakes and rivers, and tidal flats near river mouths.

PLUMED EGRET (*Egretta intermedia*)

Small (length 24 in.). About size of White-faced Heron. Pure white. *Beak yellow*, legs black below the "knee" and yellow to flesh-colored above. This latter characteristic is not always obvious in the field and the legs often appear entirely dark.

Range:—Occasional visitor. Has been recorded from St. Kilda, Lowbank, Buckland Park and Bool Lagoon.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*)

Small (length 22 in.). Slightly smaller than White-faced Heron. Pure white. *Beak and legs black*. Often shows a variable amount of buff in plumage.

Range:—Occasional visitor. Records from Outer Harbour and Buckland Park.

The only other Australian birds with which these Egrets could be confused are the white phase of the Reef Heron and the Cattle Egret, neither of which have been recorded in this State.

REEF HERON—White phase (*Demigretta sacra*)

24 to 28 inches. Pure white. Beak yellow; *legs yellowish-green* and relatively shorter than those of the White Egret. Frequents rocky coasts and reefs.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulus ibis*)

20 inches. White; slightly smaller than Little Egret, *much stockier and thicker necked*, and with long buff tufts on crown, throat and mantle in breeding season. *Bill and legs look pinkish*.

Juvenile lacks buff tufts; has yellow bill, greenish-brown legs.

Has a characteristic habit of perching on cattle. Flight and actions like *Egretta* spp.

NOISY FRIAR-BIRD (*Philemon corniculatus*)

During a visit to Moorook in October, 1954, we were informed by the resident member, Mr. Saml. Sanders, Jr., an experienced and reliable observer, that he had observed this species in the Cobdogla and Overland Corner areas a number of years ago. Mr. Sanders is familiar with the Little Friar-Bird (*P. citreogularis*), a resident species in the Moorook area, so confusion with this species is hardly likely.

Subsequently Mr. J. N. McGilp has informed us that he observed the Noisy Friar-Bird at Chowilla Station, in big river eucalypts near the State border in 1931 or 1932, and that one of his correspondents, Max S. Kuss, reported this species to him as being seen at Lowbank, also on the Murray.

We found this species to be numerous farther up the Murray (Moama and Echuca) in January, 1954.

Other Eastern Australian species such as the Blue-faced Honeyeater (*Entomyzon cyanotis*) and Little Friar-Bird (*Philemon citreogularis*) have worked their way down the Murray River system into South Australia; others such as the Eastern Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*), Shrike-Tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*) and Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) occur along the Murray

River system in Victoria and/or New South Wales, and, like the Noisy Friar-Bird, these may occur, in small numbers, or as irregular visitors to, the Upper Murray in this State. The Apostle Bird (*Struthidea cinerea*), of which there is only one record (Chowilla) from the Murray River area in South Australia, also comes under this category.

The following notes will serve as an identification key to the Friar-Birds (genus *Philemon*).

Large, slender Honeyeaters, rather like Wattle-Birds in size and shape, but differing in being plain colored with no conspicuous barring or streaking, and in having square-cut tails with inconspicuous fine white tips. Long, downcurved bills. Sexes similar. A variety of unusual calls. Flight direct to undulating. Principally tree feeders.

LITTLE FRAIAR-BIRD (*Philemon citreogularis*)

10 inches. Head and upper parts brown; collar round hind neck, under parts whitish, unmarked. Breast pale grey. Tail square-cut with inconspicuous fine white tip. *Patch of bluish black bare skin about and behind eye.*

Juvenile:—Marked greyish on back; throat yellow.

Voice:—Varied, unusual. "Wheoo," "Whee-ee-chow," "Whee-oo-ar-y-cow," cat-like "Yow" or "Meow"; "Wook-yow wook-yow," "Choo-wee-coo choo-wee-coo," "Ar-chi-ca-coo," etc., etc.

Range:—Pairs or small flocks in big gums (Red Gum and Box), lining the Upper Murray River, downstream to about Morgan. Not common.

NOISY FRIAR-BIRD (*Philemon corniculatus*)

13 inches. Upper brown; collar round hind neck, under parts pale grey; white lanceolate feathers on throat; *entire head naked, black, with a knob on bill.* Tail square cut with inconspicuous fine white tip.

Voice:—Varied unusual loud calls. "Er-walk," "Er-a-ok," "Ok ok ok ok," "Awk," etc., etc., ("Poor soldier," "Pimlico," "Four o'Clock.")

Range:—The Upper Murray River. Apparently an occasional visitor from the Eastern States. Sight records from Cobdogla, Overland Corner, Chowilla and Lowbank. Observed at Moorook by S. Sanders, October, 1954.

The seven species which can be added to the State bird list since publication of Condon's "Birds of South Australia" (*S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 18, pp. 12-20, 1946) are, in Checklist order:—

Royal Penguin (*Eudyptes schlegeli*): (Condon, H. T., *Emu*, vol. 50, pp. 59-61, 1950).

Kerguelen Petrel (*Pterodroma brevirostris*—or *P. lugens*): (Condon, H. T., *S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 20, p. 10, 1951).

Arctic Tern (*Sterna macrura*): (Hitchcock, W. B., *S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 21, pp. 45-46, 1954).

Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) (sight record): (Miles, J. A. R., *S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 21, p. 12, 1953).

Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) (sight record): (*Emu*, vol. 54, pp. 55-56, 1954).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) (sight record): See above.

Noisy Friar-Bird (*Philemon corniculatus*) (sight record): See above.

Two additions to the introduced species listed by Condon (*S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 20, pp. 26-68, 1951) are:—

Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*).—Descendants of former Ostrich farms still exist, and breed in the wild state in the Port Augusta area. The colony at Campbell Park on Lake Albert appears to have been exterminated, although odd birds may still occur along the Coorong, on Younghusband Peninsula, etc.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*).—Established in the City of Adelaide on the Torrens Lake and the artificial lakes in the Botanic Gardens, where it breeds freely, and has hybridized extensively with the native Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*). Rarely reported elsewhere. See Condon, *S.A. Nat.*, vol. 24, p. 2.

Two other species, the Indian Mynah (*Actridotheres tristis*) and the Red-vented Bulbul (*Otocompsa emeria*) are occasionally reported from the suburbs of Adelaide, but as yet neither has succeeded in definitely establishing itself. Several native species from the Eastern States have been liberated on Kangaroo Island. See Condon, *S.A. Ornith.*, vol. 18, p. 78, 1948. These are the Brush Turkey (*Alectura lathami*), Bar-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*), and the Wonga Pigeon (*Leucosarcia melanoleuca*).