

THE CORTLINYE WATER RESERVE

by GORDON LEIBLICH, Kimba, S.A.

The Cortlyne Water Reserve is an area of approximately 1,200 acres of which 700 acres are under timber (mostly large mallee). It is situated $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of Kimba on upper Eyre Peninsula, being sections 86, 87 and 88, Hundred of Cortlyne. It is administered by the Engineering and Water Supply Department, and is one of the finest stands of timber remaining on upper Eyre Peninsula, with a diversity found in few other places.

Section 88 has never been stocked, and there is little encroachment by introduced weeds. Section 87 has been stocked for a very brief period and little damage has been done to the vegetation; where grasses occur they are mainly the native spear grasses (*Stipa* spp.). Section 86 has two patches of heavy timber.

The dominant tree species are Eucalypt, with a considerable variety of other trees and shrubs, including species of *Acacia*, *Atriplex*, *Callitris*, *Cassia*, *Casuarina*, *Dampiera*, *Dodonaea*, *Eremophila*, *Eucalyptus*, *Geijera*, *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Hibiscus*, *Kochia*, *Lasiopetalum*, *Melaleuca*, etc., plus native grasses and annuals including *Triodia* ('Spinifex'). In one sheltered area of scrub on the north side of the road is a magnificent stand of *Geijera linearifolia*, interspersed with other trees and shrubs. It is in this area that the Turquoise Wren (*Malurus callainus*) occurs.

The reserve is situated across four three-chain main roads which still have good bordering timber, giving cover for certain birds to travel in and out of the area. All the surrounding land has been cleared for well over 40 years, yet the Southern Scrub-Robin (*Drymodes brunneopygia*) still inhabits this area. This species is fast disappearing on Eyre Peninsula because of habitat loss. I am convinced that it will not be many years before this bird will be confined almost entirely to reserves on Eyre Peninsula.

Being very interested in the preservation of native flora and fauna, it was with alarm that I learned during 1968 that the Engineering and Water Supply Department proposed to let a portion of the Cortlyne Reserve for cropping and grazing. Owing to the vigorous

efforts of the Kimba District Council, and very strong objections by farmers to the clearing of this valuable area, it is still intact. Because I had been conducting a survey of the birds and plants of the area, I was asked by the District Council to give evidence for their case.

The day before the contractor was due to start clearing the area a hurried meeting and inspection of the area was held by the District Council, a neighbouring farmer and myself. The District Council decided to ask the contractor to delay logging to give them time to approach the authorities. The contractor agreed, stating that he did not wish to go against the wishes of the people of the district. The E. & W.S. Dept. sent a delegation of officials to meet the council and myself on the site, and I was asked many questions on the birds and plants of the area.

The result of this meeting was that the area involved would not be cleared or touched for the present. That is the situation at present, but the future of the reserve is still in doubt.

An added incentive to retain this area intact is that it is used as a study area by classes from the Kimba Area School.

It is not my intention to include extensive field notes, but the following are, I feel, worth including.

The Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*) and Budgerygah (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) have in some seasons bred in large numbers in the reserve when seemingly absent from other parts of Eyre Peninsula.

The Port Lincoln Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius*) seems to have its highest population density on Eyre Peninsula in a belt of country running east and west from Buckleboo, through to north of Kimba and south of Iron Knob. Cortlyne Reserve (which is in this area) is a popular nesting area for this species, and clearing of the timber must result in a reduction in its population. The Mulga Parrot (*Psephotus varius*) also nests in this area.

The following species were observed in the reserve during the twenty-four months of 1968-9. The numbers and order are those

of Condon's *Handlist*. The status is indicated by the letter R (resident) or V (visitor). Resident birds were observed in every month. Visitors were found at spasmodic intervals, or for periods of a few months.

- | | |
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| 11 Little Grebe | V |
| 12 Hoary-headed Grebe | V |
| 53 White-faced Heron | V |
| 54 White-necked Heron | V |
| 68 Yellow-billed Spoonbill | V |
| 87 Grey Teal | V |
| 94 Maned Goose | V |
| 99 Black-shouldered Kite | V |
| 100 Letter-winged Kite | V |
| 102 Fork-tailed Kite | V (rare) |
| 105 Whistling Kite | V |
| 107 Brown Goshawk | V |
| 108 Collared Sparrowhawk | R |
| 109 Little Eagle | R |
| 110 Wedge-tailed Eagle | R |
| 113 Spotted Harrier | R |
| 114 Swamp Harrier | V |
| 119 Little Falcon | V (rare) |
| 121 Nankeen Kestrel | R |
| 124 Stubble Quail | R |
| 128 Little Quail | R |
| 145 Masked Plover | R |
| 146 Banded Plover | V |
| 150 Red-capped Dotterel | V |
| 155 Black-fronted Dotterel | V |
| 157 Australian Dotterel | V |
| 207 Common Bronzewing | R |
| 211 Crested Pigeon | R |
| 217 Pink Cockatoo | V (rare) |
| 220 Galah | R |
| 223 Purple-crowned Lorikeet | V |
| 225 Cockatiel | V |
| 232 Port Lincoln Parrot | R |
| 233 Red-backed Parrot | V |
| 234 Mulga Parrot | R |
| 243 Budgerygah | V |
| 249 Horsefield Bronze Cuckoo | V |
| 252 Barn Owl | R |
| 257 Tawny Frogmouth | R |
| 258 Owlet-Nightjar | R |
| 264 Red-backed Kingfisher | V |
| 266 Australian Bee-Eater | V |
| 270 Welcome Swallow | R |
| 271 White-backed Swallow | V |
| 272 Tree Martin | V |
| 273 Fairy Martin | V |
| 274 Pipit | R |
| 276 Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike | R |
| 278 White-winged Triller | V |
| 280 Southern Scrub Robin | R |
| 286 White-browed Babbler | R |
| 291 Brown Songlark | V |
| 292 Rufous Songlark | V |
| 293 White-fronted Chat | V |
| 294 Crimson Chat | V |
| 297 Western Whiteface | R |
| 302 Weebill | R |
| 305 Yellow-tailed Thornbill | R |
| 308 Chestnut-tailed Thornbill | R |
| 310 Brown Thornbill | R |
| 326 Turquoise Wren | R |
| 328 Variegated Wren | R |
| 330 Grey Fantail | V |
| 332 Willy Wagtail | R |
| 335 Restless Flycatcher | V |
| 336 Jacky Winter | R |
| 338 Red-capped Robin | R |
| 342 Western Yellow Robin | R |
| 343 Golden Whistler | V |
| 344 Rufous Whistler | R |
| 346 Gilbert Whistler | V |
| 348 Western Shrike-Thrush | R |
| 350 Crested Bellbird | R |
| 353 Black-capped Sitella | R |
| 358 Mistletoe Bird | V |
| 360 Yellow-tailed Pardalote | R |
| 362 Striated Pardalote | R |
| 364 Grey-backed Silvereye | V |
| 368 Singing Honeyeater | R |
| 375 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater | R |
| 376 White-eared Honeyeater | R |
| 378 Brown-headed Honeyeater | R |
| 384 White-fronted Honeyeater | V |
| 391 Yellow-throated Miner | R |
| 392 Dusky Miner | V |
| 397 Red Wattle-Bird | R |
| 398 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater | R |
| 403 Zebra Finch | V |
| 405 Magpie-Lark | R |
| 407 White-winged Chough | R |
| 409 Masked Wood-Swallow | V |
| 410 White-browed Wood-Swallow | V |
| 412 Dusky Wood-Swallow | R |
| 414 Brown Currawong | R |
| 416 Grey Butcher-Bird | R |
| 417 Australian Magpie | R |
| 420 Australian Raven | R |
| 422 Little Crow | R |