

FURTHER NOTES ON EYRE PENINSULA BIRDS

by JOHN ECKERT

From December 31, 1972 to January 17, 1973, I revisited Eyre Peninsula, following a similar routine to that of 1971 (*S.A.O.* 26, 42), except that the first week was spent at Port Lincoln.

Twenty-five species not noted in 1971 were seen this time, three of which (Wood Sandpiper, Great Knot, Japanese Snipe) were hitherto unrecorded for Eyre Peninsula. Coincidentally, these three were recorded independently at about the same time by the Reid family. [Another species was recorded by Mr. D. C. Palmer, who also visited southern Eyre Peninsula in January, and whose records are included below in square brackets in the appropriate places—editor.] The 25 were:

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*—3 on Little Swamp.

[Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*—Only one, in a tidal inlet south of Tumby Bay. None in several other likely habitats, such as Big and Little Swamps, Sleaford Mere, and Lake Wangary. D. C. Palmer.]

White Egret *Egretta alba*—4 in Franklin Harbour.

Nankeen Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*—Several roosting in pine trees at Coffin Bay.

Duck *Anas sp.*—A duck on Little Swamp resembled a large dull Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*, but had red legs. It associated with the Black Ducks but was always the last to fly. Presumably it was a hybrid between the Black Duck and some domestic species, or perhaps the Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus notatus*—One seen hovering above a vacant allotment in Port Lincoln.

Little Eagle *Hieraetus morphnoides*—Seen several times at Big Swamp, where it appeared to be nesting, and at Mikkira.

Black-tailed Native-Hen *Tribonyx ventralis*—Several hundred at Little Swamp and a hundred or more at Big Swamp. Possibly a thousand at a swamp near Tumby Bay, and two were seen crossing the road near a dry swamp close to Arno Bay.

Red-kneed Dotterel *Charadrius cinctus*—Six at the south end of Big Swamp.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*—Three at Little Swamp and at least 12 at Big Swamp. A female at a small pool near Big Swamp was secured as a specimen.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*—One in Franklin Harbour.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*—One at Lucky Bay.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*—One, seen several times in association with Grey Plovers, in a tidal creek south of Tumby Bay, was eventually secured.

Japanese Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*—One near Sleaford Mere, another at Little Swamp and at least 15 at Big Swamp. One wonders whether the dry season in the South-East of the State had forced the Snipe to move beyond their normal range, or whether they are actually regular visitors to Eyre Peninsula.

Budgerygah *Melopsittacus undulatus*—Two flocks of about 30 seen near Cleve.

Red-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon pyrrhopygius*—A female was taken near Cleve.

Rainbow-Bird *Merops ornatus*—Several seen near Cleve.

White-backed Swallow *Cheramoeca leucosternum*—A small flock flying above presumed nesting-holes in a roadside cutting between Cleve and Arno Bay.

Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons*—A flock of six at the southern end of Franklin Harbour and about 12 in a paddock 14 miles north of Arno Bay, close to the main road.

Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*—Seen near Big Swamp and near Cleve.

Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*—Seen in mallee near Midgee Rocks.

Blue-and-white Wren *Malurus leucopterus*—Two family parties seen in *Nitraria* about 14 miles north of Arno Bay.

Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*—Seen near Mikkira.

Hooded Robin *Petroica cucullata*—Two pairs seen in Hincks National Park.

White-fronted Honeyeater *Phylidonyris albifrons*—Several seen in flowering mallee a few miles south of Midgee Rocks.

Masked Wood-Swallow *Artamus personatus*—Plentiful between Cowell and Tumbay Bay.

White-browed Wood-Swallow *Artamus superciliosus*—In the same area but not seen as often as the preceding. A pair had a nest with two eggs at Tumbay Bay. Several people told me that wood-swallows had been abnormally plentiful during spring and early summer.

Most of the other birds seen were not remarkably different in numbers or distribution to my previous visit. Those warranting comment were:

Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*—Much more plentiful. About 70 at Little Swamp and over 100 at Big Swamp.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*—A small flock with some Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons* at Sleaford Mere. [Two pairs at Big Swamp, D. C. Palmer.] Grey Teal were very numerous about Tumbay Bay but no Chestnuts were seen there.

Blue-winged Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis*—Again well represented on both Big and Little Swamps.

Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*—One at White Flat. [Another, seen by D. C. Palmer, near Tumbay Bay.]

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*—Over 40 present in the tidal creek south of Tumbay Bay but only about 12 seen in Franklin Harbour.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*—11 in the tidal creek south of Tumbay Bay.

Hooded Dotterel *Charadrius rubricollis*—Two pairs at a salt swamp north of Tumbay Bay.

Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*—41 counted in the tidal creek south of Tumbay Bay.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleuca*—One on a levee bank in Big Swamp.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*—One only seen at Big Swamp.

Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*—Plentiful at the salt swamp north of Tumbay Bay and in Franklin Harbour.

Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila*—Three seen several times in the caravan park at Kirton Point. At least 200 near the tidal marsh south of Tumbay Bay and a few at Arno Bay. [D. C. Palmer found them common in a narrow belt of sandhills south of Tumbay Bay and in adjacent paddocks.]

Horsfield Bushlark *Mirafrja javanica*—Seen at Big Swamp, Tumbay Bay and Wharminda.

Southern Scrub-Robin *Drymodes brunneopygia*—A specimen was taken just behind D'Anville Bay, less than a mile from the sea and close to the southernmost tip of Eyre Peninsula.

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*—Several at Little Swamp.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*—Again seen and heard in bamboos at Little Swamp.

Rufous Field-Wren *Calamanthus fuliginosus*—Seen at Wanna and 14 miles north of Arno Bay (specimen).

Blue-breasted Wren *Malurus pulcherrimus*—Seen at Mikkira, Hincks N.P. and Midgee Rocks, where a specimen was taken. Also believed seen half-way between Cowell and Kimba.

Yellow-tailed Pardalote *Pardalotus xanthopygus*—Seen in mallee behind D'Anville Bay, close to the southernmost tip of Eyre Peninsula.

Purple-gaped Honeyeater *Meliphaga cratitia*—Seen at the North Block of the Marble Range; and I was shown a slide of one photographed in a Port Lincoln garden shortly before my visit.

White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphus*—Flocks seen near Green Patch and Wanilla.

Black-faced Wood-Swallow *Artamus cinereus*—Small groups seen twice again between Moonabie and Whyalla.