

BIRDS OF STREAKY BAY

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Ornithologically, one of the most neglected parts of the State is the west coast of Eyre Peninsula. C. Sullivan, from Ceduna, in the late 1920s wrote a series of short notes culminating in a list of 60 identified species plus 11 indefinitely identified species, and a further 32 species known to the aborigines, but not seen by him. H. H. Howard of Nagurtie, in 1935-38, also contributed notes which contained some

valuable sightings. However Condon's (1969) definition of Eyre Peninsula puts both these localities outside the northern boundary, thereby leaving the only records for the west coast as those of persons travelling through, e.g. Sutton 1923, Cleland 1926, Jenkin and Waterman 1965.

I spent January 24 to February 7, 1972, at Streaky Bay, during which time I visited spots

from Venus Bay to Denial Bay. I was also given useful information—some of it included below—by Lee Warneke and his father, E. Warneke, who have lived at Streaky Bay for several years.

As my main interest was in gauging the status of waders, most of my work was done coastally. I was not able to find any wrens of the genus *Malurus*, nor were the Warnekes able to recall seeing any there. Sullivan did not see any, either; and the two species he listed as seen by the aborigines might, as he states, have come from well inland. It would be interesting to know just where the various *Malurus* species ranged on western Eyre Peninsula.

The following 41 species were seen frequently enough to suggest that they are common in the district and require no special comment. Black-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscocinctus*, Pied Cormorant *p. varius*, White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*, Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*, Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Sooty Oystercatcher *H. unicolor*, Spur-winged Plover *Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*, Red-capped Dotterel *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*, Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*, Pacific Gull *L. pacificus*, Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*, Fairy Tern *S. nereis*, Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*, Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*, Rock Dove *Columba livia*, Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*, Welcome Swallow *Hirundo tahitica*, Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*, Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*, Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*, Yellow-tailed Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, Brown Thornbill *A. pusilla*, Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*, Western Thrush *Colluricinclla harmonica*, Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*, Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*, Singing Honeyeater *Meliphaga virescens*, Yellow-throated Miner *Myzomela flavogularis*, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Murray Magpie *Grallina cyanoleuca*, White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphus*, Brown Currawong *Strepera versicolor*, Grey Butcher-Bird *Cracticus torquatus*, White-backed Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen leuconota*, Little Raven *Corvus mellori*.

ANNOTATED LIST

(* Denotes specimen(s) taken)

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus tenuirostris*. Large numbers were seen flying south-easterly, well out from Pt. LaBatt. They were widely scat-

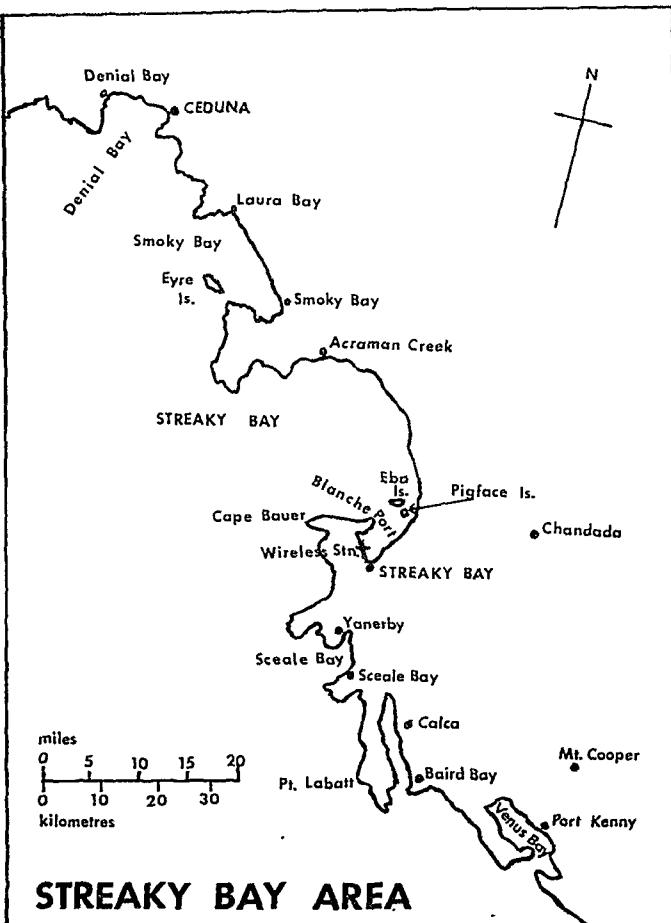
tered and appeared to be foraging, probably coming from breeding islands further west.

PELICAN *Pelecanus conspicillatus*. Up to three were seen at times in the Blanche Port section of Streaky Bay, often not far from the caravan park. Also seen at Baird Bay.

LARGE BLACK CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Only seen at Pt. LaBatt, where a dozen or so were resting on rocks.

REEF HERON *Egretta sacra*. One seen near the wireless station. The Warnekes say that this species is frequently seen about the reefy parts of the coast.

LITTLE BITTERN *Ixobrychus minutus*. An injured bird was brought to Lee Warneke at Streaky Bay on September 25, 1969, it having been found in the town area. It died soon after, but fortunately the specimen was preserved, for it is a new record for Eyre Peninsula. Because the Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* had been recorded at Kalgoorlie in 1967 (Ford, *Emu*, 69; 233-5) the specimen was thoroughly examined before identity was made certain. The line of dark feathers down the foreneck plus the black tail and rump suggested *minutus*, which was supported by the measurements: wing 135; culmen 46; tarsus 42. The bird was not sexed but may have been a female because the crown was dark reddish-brown, back



reddish-brown and wings yellowish-brown. Iris was canary yellow.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*. Only seen in Baird Bay, where 20 or more were present.

CHESTNUT TEAL *Anas castanea*. A flock of about 30 at the entrance to Baird Bay, but the Warnekes say that the species is often present in hundreds there, and in small salt lakes south of Streaky Bay.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus notatus*. One over cultivated land two miles west of Streaky Bay.

WHISTLING KITE *Haliastur sphenurus*. Only seen at Acraman Creek.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE *Aquila audax*. Often seen. Three were feeding on a dead kangaroo at the roadside a few miles east of Streaky Bay, and one remained until the car was pulled up to about 10 paces from it. This possibly indicates that the species is not persecuted greatly in that area.

SPOTTED HARRIER *Circus assimilis*. One a few miles south of Streaky Bay.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Three seen about the cliffs at Pt. LaBatt.

BLACK FALCON *Falco subniger*. One near Port Kenny.

BROWN FALCON *Falco berigora*. Only seen once at Mt. Cooper.

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*. One drifting fairly high above cultivated land near Cape Bauer.

MALLEE-FOWL *Leipoa ocellata*. One seen in mallee scrub near Acraman Creek. Another seen in captivity was said to have come to feed with farmyard fowls at Laura Bay.

STUBBLE QUAIL *Coturnix pectoralis*. Very common in grassland on Cape Bauer.

BANDED LANDRAIL *Rallus philippensis*. On Pigface Island, where the Warnekes say it is not uncommon.

AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD *Ardeotis australis*. A single bird was sighted about two years prior to my visit at Paddy's Plain near Yanerby by E. Warneke.

* **GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*. One of the most abundant waders in the area. At Cape Bauer, the birds were scattered all along the wide sandy flats, and 62 were counted as being visible at one time. The total actually present there may have been much higher. At Baird Bay a flock exceeding 120 was present at high tide on two occasions, and smaller numbers were present in other parts of the bay, several feeding along the shore near the shacks. At Denial Bay about 20 were seen; five were seen at Venus Bay; and spots like Sceales Bay and Laura Bay usually had one or two. A few fed at times on the flats near the Streaky Bay caravan park.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica*. Four near the wireless station and one at Baird Bay.

* **MONGOLIAN SAND-DOTTEREL** *Charadrius mongolus*. Three, possibly five, at Baird Bay.

* **LARGE SAND-DOTTEREL** *Charadrius leschenaultii*. A flock of 21 dotterels was present at Baird Bay, but were always too scattered and too wary for me to identify all with certainty. However, 16 were certain *leschenaultii* and three certain *mongolus*. When both species were seen together it could be seen that generally the Large Sands were slightly

larger and paler than the Mongolians, although variation amongst the Large Sands meant that the darker ones approached closely the colour of the Mongolians. A reasonably close approach was necessary before the heavy bill of the Large Sands became evident. When approached closely, the Large Sands often gave a trilling call which, to me, sounded similar to the agitated chatter of distant Fairy Terns. The only call heard from the Mongolians was "Drit, Drit, Derreet," rather reminiscent of a call given at times by the Red-capped Dotterel.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Six were seen near the wireless station.

EASTERN CURLEW *Numenius madagascariensis*. Several frequented the area from the wireless station to Cape Bauer and several more were seen at Denial Bay.

* **GREY-TAILED TATTLER** *Tringa brevipes*. Ten were present near the wireless station at high tide, and two were seen on a small reef at Denial Bay.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. One on tidal flats at Denial Bay.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. Four seen at Baird Bay.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*. 20-30 on the tidal flats at Denial Bay were the only ones seen.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. A specimen, taken from a flock of about 12 feeding on tidal flats at Baird Bay on December 5, 1969, is now in the possession of Lee Warneke. I have seen the specimen and am satisfied that the identification is correct. It is the first record of the species for Eyre Peninsula.

BRUSH BRONZEWING *Phaps elegans*. A pair was seen at the edge of the road near Laura Bay, close to some teatree thickets.

COCKATIEL *Nymphicus hollandicus*. A small flock seen at Port Kenny.

PORT LINCOLN PARROT *Barnardius zonarius*. Rather numerous in the large mallee but seldom seen away from this timber.

MULGA PARROT *Psephotus varius*. Seen occasionally. Widespread but seemingly not abundant.

BLUE-WINGED PARROT *Neophema chrysostomus*. In September, 1972, while staying with friends at Mt. Cooper, C. Sim caught an injured bird from a flock of *Neophemas* in the vicinity. It was brought back for me to use as a specimen, but it recovered, and at present is still in captivity. The large amount of blue in the shoulder and lack of the two-toned effect in the blue of both shoulder and frontal band leave no doubt as to its identity.

BUDGERYGAH *Melopsittacus undulatus*. A single bird was seen a few miles south of Streaky Bay on the Yanerby road.

FORK-TAILED SWIFT *Apus pacificus*. Near Calca from 5.00 to 5.15 p.m. on February 1, at least 100 Swifts were seen in about four miles of travel. The weather at the time was sultry and almost calm, and the swifts were scattered and circling in a leisurely way several hundred feet above the ground.

GROUND CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Pteropodocys maxima*. Four were seen feeding on the ground in fairly open mallee country just west of Chandada.

LITTLE GRASS-BIRD *Megalurus gramineus*. Seen and heard calling in samphire along tidal creeks at Acraman Creek.

BROWN SONGLARK *Cincloramphus cruralis*. Very plentiful in all the agricultural land from Streaky Bay to Cape Bauer, yet not seen elsewhere—precisely the same comments as apply to the Stubble Quail.

WEEBILL *Smicrornis brevirostris*. Seen in low mallee at Acraman Creek.

SCRUB-WREN *Sericornis frontalis*. Seen frequently, often in places well away from the coast, especially where there was teatree.

* RUFOUS FIELD-WREN *Calamanthus fuliginosus*. Only seen in coastal heath and stunted mallee at Pt. LaBatt.

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER *Myiagra inquieta*. Seen in mallee at Acraman Creek.

JACKY WINTER *Microeca leucophaea*. Seen in mallee at Acraman Creek.

CRESTED BELLBIRD *Oreocica gutturalis*. Only seen in stunted mallee at Pt. LaBatt.

BLACK-CAPPED SITELLA *Neositta chrysoptera*. A party was feeding along the margin of a burnt patch of mallee at Acraman Creek.

YELLOW-PLUMED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga ornata*.

WHITE-EARED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga leucotis*.

BROWN-HEADED HONEYEATER *Melithreptus brevirostris*. These three species of honeyeater were numerous in the mallee between Acraman Creek and Smoky Bay, but scarce elsewhere.

RED WATTLE-BIRD *Anthochaera carunculata*. Seen twice in mallee a few miles south of Streaky Bay.

DUSKY WOOD-SWALLOW *Artamus cyanopterus*. Small groups seen only near Chandada and Caica.

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