

FIRST RECORD OF THE SPANGLED DRONGO (*CHIBIA BRACTEATA*) IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

L. P. PEDLER

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This is the first State record of the Spangled Drongo (*Chibia bracteata*). One bird of this species was seen on May 13, 1974, four miles N.-E. of Koolunga in the mid-north of South Australia.

The drongo was first seen with a group of Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Coracina novaehollandiae*) in the mid-afternoon at the edge of a small patch of mallee (*Eucalyptus odorata*). Both species were catching flying insects and several times the drongo perched close to a cuckoo shrike, showing that it was about an inch shorter but had a proportionately longer tail and a smaller body. An hour later the drongo was alone but only about 100 yards from where first seen and still flying after insects, returning to nearby dead branches in the afternoon shade.

A description of the bird from notes written soon after the sighting is as follows; black overall with the wings shiny black. Tail long and forked and broadened considerably towards the tip which from a side view was bent backwards then downwards again. Length about an inch shorter than Black-faced Cuckoo-Box 58, Koolunga, South Australia, 5464.

Shrikes. Beak, black and slightly curved, eyes brown-red. Short feathers at the back of the head were often raised. In flight the wings were broad and rounded and the tail twisted and fanned a lot. The white spots on the underwing or undertail were noted and the shiny wings showed that the bird was in adult plumage, although its eyes were not red as in adults (Robertson, J. S., 1974, "Spangled Drongo Age Indicators," "Australian Bird Bander," 12: 1).

The bird was watched for about two hours and was approached as close as 20 feet and photographed. During this time it moved only a small distance but was gone when the area was visited two days later.

The presence of this species may be partly attributed to the weather, which for three weeks preceding this record was unusual with wide-spread thundery conditions and heavy rains. There was very little wind associated with this weather.

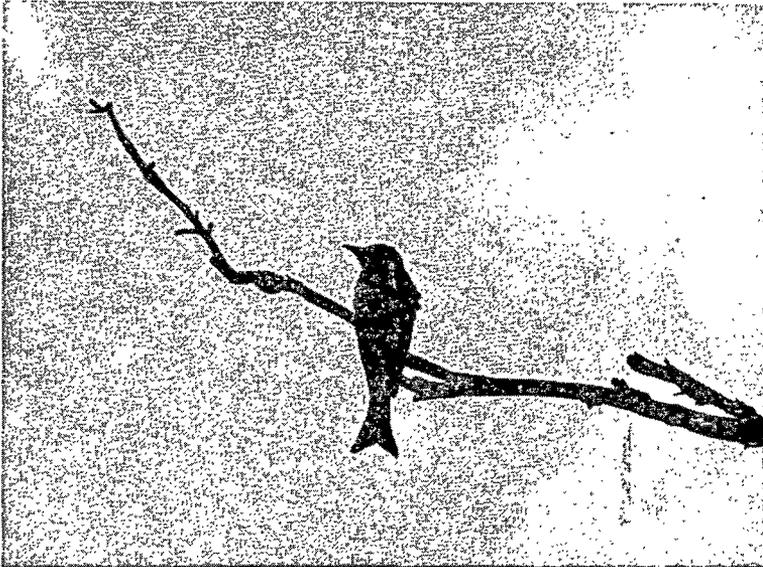
REFERENCES

- Robertson, J. S. (1974), Spangled Drongo Age Indicators, Australian Bird Bander, 12, 1.

COMMENT FROM MR. A. MCGILL

The observation of a Drongo so far west of its normal range is certainly amazing, and probably can only be explained through the "lost bird" theory, probably something akin to the observation of our Yellow-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla citreola*) some years ago near Sydney. The Drongo does not reach the western areas of New South Wales, although a 95 Nuwarra Road, Moorebank, 2170. N.S.W.

few years ago I received a record by persons who I have no doubt had identified one correctly at a small place about 350 miles north-west of Sydney and considered that most unusual. The bird in question was so exhausted that it was easily caught, held and forced fed for 24 hours and released apparently much improved.



The Spangled Drongo.