

SOUTHERN RECORD OF THE PAINTED FINCH

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While in a gorge near Corunna Station on December 31, 1974, J. B. Cox, Terry Lindsay *et al* obtained glimpses of a small group of finches, thought to be Painted Finches *Emblema picta*. Accordingly, a necessarily rough and incomplete description of these birds was taken. The area was once again revisited over January 10-12, 1975, by J. B. Cox, J. H. Hatch, S. A. Parker, Nick Reid and myself to confirm this identification. The finches were again located in the gorge and the following characteristics were observed:

Rump, abdomen, forehead, facial region: red; breast: black; sides of abdomen and lower breast: black, spotted with white; back, tail: brown.

These features leave no doubt that the birds were Painted Finches. The maximum number of finches seen at one time was five. There appeared to be three immatures with less pronounced features and two adults among them. It is, of course, possible that other Painted Finches were in the area.

The Painted Finches were seen either visiting rock pools in the bottom of the gorge already mentioned, or on the nearby slopes of the hillsides, keeping mainly either to *Triodia* or eucalypts growing thereon. On one occasion, a small white shell lying on the ground was an object of what was apparently no more than curiosity to one bird.

This record of the Painted Finch is some 840 km SE of the Musgrave Ranges where the species is known to occur, but approximately 320 km SW of Lake Frome and Mt. Ward where it has also been recorded (Condon 1969, Crisp 1974, respectively). It is possible that the Painted Finch is resident in these latter two narrowly separated localities and that this record is of stray birds from there, especially as a visit to Corunna in February, 1975, although necessarily brief, showed no Painted Finches. However, whether or not the species is actually resident so far south of its known range is, at this stage, largely a matter of conjecture.

REFERENCES

- Condon, H. T. (1969), *A Handlist of the birds of South Australia*. 3rd ed. S. Aust. Orn. Assoc.
Crisp, B. (1974), S.A.O.A. Newsletter, No. 69.