

BIRDS OBSERVED NEAR LAKES FROME AND CALLABONNA

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Our observations from two brief visits to the Lakes Frome and Callabonna areas in April, 1977, are given with observations made by Dr. A. B. Black in the same region in November 1974 (additional to those in Black 1975).

The first trip, by Gordon Ragless, was from Balcanooka on April 4, 1977, via Old Moolawatana across the recently dried southern portion of Lake Callabonna, to where April 6 and 7 were spent near the ruins of Callabonna homestead east of the lake, and then on April 8 to the western side of the lake at Mulligans Springs.

The second trip, by G. Ragless and L. Pedler, was from Martin's Well to Frome Downs via Curnamona on April 23, 1977, and along the eastern side of Lake Frome to Yandama Creek on April 24, on to the western side of Lake Callabonna on April 25, and to Blinman on April 26.

There had been no significant rainfall in the region since January 1976, and this fact explains the scarcity or absence of some species. Different status of some species from that noted by Black (1975) may also have been due to more regular seasonal movements than those influenced by local conditions.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

Four on a dam at Frome Downs H.S.

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN

Pelecanus conspicillatus

BLACK and PIED CORMORANTS

Phalacrocorax carbo and *varius*

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

On the remaining water in Lake Callabonna near Mulligan's Springs. Here fishermen were catching large Yellowbelly and Bream and there were many old cormorants' nests in dead trees along the lakeside. Black recorded the above four species and one Little Pied Cormorant *P. melanoleucos* at Lake Callabonna and also saw swans and cygnets at No. 3 Bore, near the eastern side of Lake Frome.

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax calendonicus

Black recorded three immatures on a lake near No. 3 Bore.

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

Pair with nest and two eggs at Callabonna ruins. None was seen in late April. Black saw

eggs at No. 3 Bore and at Old Mollawatana H.S.

BLACK-BREASTED KITE

Hamirostra melanosternon

One seen by GBR at Paralana Ck. on April 4, on a dead branch by the road, flew upstream, turned and came overhead, giving excellent view of a dark phase bird. Black (*in litt.*) saw a pale phase bird near North Mulga H.S. on September 5, 1977.

LITTLE EAGLE *Hieraaetus morphnoides*

Pair at Mulligan's Springs and one at Yandama Ck. Also seen by Black east of Lake Frome and near Lake Callabonna.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE *Aquila audax*

Frequently seen; one flew from a nest containing two fresh eggs at a point about 60 km north from Frome Downs H.S. on April 24. Rabbits were plentiful in the sandhill country east of Lake Frome, and there were remains of a number on the nest examined.

BLACK FALCON *Falco subniger*

One near Callabonna ruins, one 55 km north of Frome Downs and two at Yandama Ck. Black saw one east of Lake Frome and two near Lake Callabonna.

QUAIL *Spp.*

Rabbit shooters Murray and David Searcy described to us STUBBLE QUAIL *Coturnix pectoralis* (one of which GBR saw in dry grassland near Callabonna ruins) and small quail with white bellies (obviously *T. velox*) and said that a few of the latter were present in the grassy sandhill country east of Lake Frome at that time, and that there had been vast numbers of both species there in the previous few good seasons. Black saw a number of both these species near Mosquito Creek.

MASKED PLOVER *Vanellus miles subspp.*

Two at Frome Downs H.S. and six at Cootabarlow Bore appeared to be typical *V. m. novaehollandiae*, whereas five at Mollawatana Bore appeared to have slightly less black on their shoulders than *novaehollandiae*.

SNIPE *Gallinago sp.*

In November 1974 Stephen Walker (pers. comm. to A. Black and Editor) saw a snipe in an area of grass where water had recently been lying, south of Frome Downs. The species of

this bird must remain uncertain because of the difficulty of specific identification of this genus in the field.

CRESTED PIGEON *Ocyphaps lophotes*

Numerous near waterholes, especially near Frome Downs where we saw a group of over 80.

RED-WINGED PARROT

Aprosmictus erythropterus

About ten years before our visit Murray Searcy saw four large red and green parrots at Cootabarlow Bore, east of Lake Frome. The birds he described were undoubtedly male and female Red-wings. McGilp (1923) only had two records of this species both in 1920, a poor season.

NEOPHEMA *Spp.*

David Searcy told us small flocks of "Elegants" were present east of Lake Frome, but admitted that these might have been Blue-winged Parrots *N. chrysostoma*. It was probably *N. elegans* we had seen flying over a tree-lined creek near Martin's Well. Two *Neophemas* flushed in samphire on an island in the dry Lake Callabonna appeared duller and with more blue on their wings than *elegans* and were probably *chrysostoma*.

CINNAMON QUAIL-THRUSH

Cinlosoma cinnamomeum

One in shrubby grassland 15 km WSW of Old Moolawatana H.S., and a pair on gibbers at Fossils Bore west of Lake Callabonna.

CHESTNUT-CROWNED BABBLER

Pomatostomus ruficeps

Seen only in shrubs on sandhills at No. 3 Bore.

BROWN SONGLARK

Cincloramphus cruralis

Only one seen, a male in bluebush *Maireana astrotricha* near Old Moolawatana H.S.

GRASSWREN *Amytornis sp.*

Seen by GBR in an area of canegrass and blue-bush on a flat at Callabonna ruins.

ORANGE CHAT *Ephthianura aurifrons*

Apart from a flock of about 50 east of Lake Frome and small groups at water's edge of No. 3 and Moolawatana Bores, only odd birds were seen.

GIBBER CHAT *Ashbya lovensis*

Seen in claypans between sandhills near No. 3 Bore and near Yandama Ck. and on gibbers near Fossils Bore.

GREY FANTAIL *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

One at Frome Downs H.S. and one at Paralana Ck. in late April.

MISTLETOE BIRD *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

Common in April at almost every locality visited.

RED-BROWED PARDALOTE

Pardalotus rubricatus

Seen in Coolibahs in Callabonna Ck. Calls almost certainly of this species heard in Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* at Paralana Ck. on April 26.

SILVEREYE *Zosterops lateralis*

Numerous near Blinman and one seen near Wooltana in late April. In October 1976 LPP saw Silvereyes feeding a weakly flying fledgeling 8 km north of Balcanoona. McGilp (1923) only had one record — of a small flock in October 1920.

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus leucorhynchus

12 clustered on a branch at Callabonna ruins.

MAGPIE *Gymnorhina tibicen*

Those seen east of Lake Frome mostly had broad black back bands. Hybrid and white-backed birds were seen west of the lake, and a white-backed bird was seen at Callabonna ruins.

AUSTRALIAN RAVEN *Corvus coronoides*

LITTLE CROW *Corvus bennetti*

Both species identified by calls from Curnamona to Moolawatana Bore and at Callabonna ruin, Paralana Ck. and near Blinman. Black identified both these species east of Lake Frome and near Lake Callabonna.

LITTLE RAVEN *Corvus mellori*

Heard among *coronoides* at Wilpena Ck. near Erudina Stn., and about 20 seen and heard near Blinman. There are no specimens of *mellori* north of Partoo, Carrieton or Wilmington except one taken with *coronoides* in the Aroona Valley in April 1975 (S. A. Parker pers. comm.) Parker stresses the need for specimens of corvids where they are recorded outside their recognised ranges, though we consider aural records should be recorded where specimens are not obtained.

Species which are not mentioned above and were seen in April 1977, between Frome Downs H.S., Old Moolawatana and Balcanoona H.S. by Pedler and Ragless (P,R) are listed below. Also those marked C were seen by Ragless (R) near Callabonna ruin. Those marked w were seen west of Old Moolawatana.

For comparison the list includes species noted by Black (B) from the portion of his trip in November 1974 between Frome Downs and Lake Callabonna. Species marked e were seen east of Lake Frome and those marked LC were seen between Old Moolawatana, Skeleton Bore and Mosquito Ck. on the western side of Lake Callabonna by either (B) in November 1974 or (P,R) in April 1977. Records already given above or in Black (1975) are not repeated here.

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Emu — LC (B), C (R), e, w (P,R).
 White-faced Heron — LC (B).
 Straw-necked Ibis — LC (B).
 Yellow-billed Spoonbill — e (B).
 Black Duck — e, LC (B).
 Blue-winged Shoveler — LC (B).
 White-eyed Duck — LC (B).
 Black-shouldered Kite — LC (B).
 Whistling Kite — C (R), w (P,R).
 Brown Goshawk — C (R).
 Spotted Harrier — LC (B).
 Brown Falcon — e, LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w, (P,R).
 Little Falcon — e (B).
 Nankeen Kestrel — e, LC, (B), e, w (P,R).
 Black-tailed Native-Hen — e, LC (B).
 Eastern Swamphen — e (B).
 Coot — e (B).
 Red-capped Dotterel — e, LC (B), e (P,R).
 Black-fronted Dotterel — e, LC (B).
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper — e (B).
 Pied Stilt — LC (B).
 Red-necked Avocet — e (B).
 Silver Gull — e, LC (B), LC (R), e (P,R).
 Whiskered Tern — LC (B).
 Gull-billed Tern — e, LC (B).
 Caspian Tern — LC (B).
 Common Bronzewing — w (P,R).
 Crested Pigeon — e, LC (B), C (R) e, w (P,R).
 Little Corella — e, LC (B), C (R).
 Galah — e, LC (B), C (R), e, w, (P,R).
 Mallee Ringneck — e, w (P,R).
 Bluebonnet — e (P,R).
 Budgerygah — LC (B).
 Pallid Cuckoo — C (R).
 Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo — LC (B).
 Barn Owl — LC (B).

Tawny Frogmouth — e (B), C (R).
 Red-backed Kingfisher — e, LC (B).
 Rainbow Bee-eater — e, LC (B).
 Welcome Swallow — e (B), C (R), e (P,R).
 White-backed Swallow — e, LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Tree Martin — e, LC (B), e, w (P,R).
 Fairy Martin — e (B).
 Richard's Pipit — e, LC (B), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Ground Cuckoo-Shrike — e (B).
 Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike — e (P,R).
 White-winged Triller — LC (B).
 White-browed Babbler — w (P,R).
 Southern Whiteface — e, w (P,R).
 Weebill — e, w (P,R).
 Chestnut-rumped Thornbill — w (P,R).
 Broad-tailed Thornbill — w (P,R).
 Rusty Fieldwren — e (B), LC (P,R).
 White-winged Wren — e, LC (B), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Purple-backed Wren — LC (B), C (R), e, w (P,R).
 Willy Wagtail — e, LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Red-capped Robin — LC (R), e, w (P,R).
 Rufous Whistler — w (P,R).
 Grey Shrike-Thrush — w (P,R).
 Chirruping Wedgebill — e, w (P,R).
 Striated Pardalote — LC (B), C (R), e, w (P,R).
 Singing Honeyeater — e, LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Grey-fronted Honeyeater — w (P,R).
 White-plumed Honeyeater — LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Yellow-throated Miner — LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater — e, LC (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 White-fronted Honeyeater — w (P,R).
 Zebra Finch — e, LC, (B), C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Magpie-Lark — e, LC (B), LC, C (R), e, LC, w (P,R).
 Black-faced Woodswallow — e, LC (B), C (R), e, w (P,R).

REFERENCES

- Black, A. B., 1975. Some observations of birds in the region of Lake Frome and Lake Callabonna: with a note on Magpies. *S. Aust. Orn.* 26:195-197.
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