

A SECOND SATIN FLYCATCHER RECORD ON KANGAROO ISLAND. The Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca* typically breeds in south-eastern Australia and Tasmania where it occurs during spring–summer. It migrates north in winter to north-eastern Queensland and Papua New Guinea (Pizzey 1997). There are a number of spring–summer records from the Lower South East of South Australia where it is also known to breed (Reid and Cox 1978). Elsewhere in South Australia it is regarded as a spring–summer–autumn vagrant with rare observations recorded from widespread localities to the north and west of the Lower South East. Positive identification of individuals of this species come from the Adelaide region (Horsnell Gully and Eagle on the Hill), Fleurieu Peninsula/Murray Lakes (Langhorne Creek, c. 60 km SE of Adelaide), Kangaroo Island and further north in arid inland localities such as Marree and Billa Kalina Station, c. 170 km SE of Coober Pedy (Reid and Cox 1978; Eckert 1987; Guy 1991; Baxter 1995; Rich 1998; P. Langdon, pers. comm.).

Until now there has been only one record of this species from Kangaroo Island, that of two males in coastal roadside mallee near Cape Willoughby, the eastern tip of Kangaroo Island, on 12 April 1991 (Guy 1991). This note documents a second sighting from Kangaroo Island.

The Record

At 0730 on 12 January 1998 whilst camped at Vivonne Bay on the south coast of Kangaroo Island, I heard a repetitive call (sharp ‘zhurrrt’) which I at first thought to be a Restless Flycatcher *Myiagra inquieta*. At first sounding very familiar, the call then expanded into a series of loud and often repeated musical whistles which I had never heard before. Upon closer investigation I located a single male Satin Flycatcher perched in dense mallee scrub some 30 m west of the campground. The campground is about 300 m north-west of the Harriet River mouth (approximately 35°58’S, 137°10’E).

Under observation for twenty minutes, the flycatcher actively hawked in the middle and upper layer of the five metre high mallee taking insects from the air by means of graceful aerial pursuits. It swooped up and down and darted here and there, landed frequently on mallee perches for brief periods and then was quickly off again. At times it disappeared from view in the thick scrub only to be located again by its loud distinctive call. Excellent views were obtained from as close as 10 metres through 10 x 40 binoculars. The description from my field note book is as follows:

At first glance similar to a Restless Flycatcher in general shape and colour. However on closer inspection the blue-black colouring of upperparts

and head carried down onto breast as it does in a Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*. Bluish-black plumage had an eye catching iridescent shiny sheen. Whilst perched it frequently raised its distinctive crest and 'shivered' its tail up and down. White underparts, black bill and legs, dark eye and pronounced rictal bristles were other features noted.

The mallee scrub formation here grows on limestone and calcareous dunes. It is a coastal white mallee *Eucalyptus diversifolia*, Kingscote mallee *E. rugosa*, Port Lincoln mallee *E. lansdowneana*, red mallee *E. oleosa* and dryland tea-tree *Melaleuca lanceolata* association with an understorey dominated by drooping velvet bush *Lasiopetalum schulzenii*, coast beard-heath *Leucopogon parviflorus*, pale turpentine bush *Beyeria lechenaultii* and coast silver wattle *Acacia retinodes* var. *uncifolia*. Ground cover shrubs comprise mostly ruddy beard heath *Leucopogon rufus* and a substantial tussock cover of morning flag *Orthrosanthus multiflorus* and black-anther flax-lily *Dianella revoluta*.

Discussion

It is interesting that both records of Satin Flycatchers on Kangaroo Island have come from coastal mallee habitat and not from wetter forested areas on western Kangaroo Island. In the lower South East of South Australia stringybark forest appears to be the favoured habitat of this species with breeding recorded from this habitat near Mount Burr township (37°33'S, 140°28'E) (Reid and Cox 1978). Stringybark forest is not uncommon on Kangaroo Island, particularly in the wetter western districts where it forms both pure and mixed stands of dense riverine forest with a bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum* understorey. These forests are best represented in Flinders Chase National Park where magnificent examples of messmate *Eucalyptus obliqua* trees are known to occur. This would appear to be ideal Satin Flycatcher habitat and perhaps vagrants occur in it from time to time. They could easily be overlooked due to most of these forests being tucked away in secluded river valleys with minimal visitation by humans.

On the other hand, coastal mallee areas are well visited on Kangaroo Island, particularly during November to March when seaside birdwatching activities are at their peak.

Moreover, towns, subdivisions, caravan parks and campgrounds are most often situated in coastal localities and hence presence of locals and visitors is high. Thus vagrant birds are much more likely to be seen in coastal areas than in secluded forested areas. It is interesting to note that the only Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* recorded on Kangaroo Island was also observed in coastal mallee habitat on the outskirts of Kingscote in June 1988 (Baxter 1989). This species is also a visitor from the wetter forested areas of eastern Australia.

It will be interesting to note the future occurrence of the Satin Flycatcher on Kangaroo Island. If vagrants are crossing to Kangaroo Island via Backstairs Passage, it may be wise to concentrate on searching Dudley Peninsula's coastal mallee and limited forested areas (e.g. Wilson River) both earlier (e.g. November–December) and later (e.g. March–April) during the migratory season in the hope of observing individuals of this species passing through this eastern end of Kangaroo Island on their migratory wanderings. Learning and then listening for this species' loud and distinctive call, a critical factor in locating the bird at Vivonne Bay, would seem to assist the search. This would be particularly so in the densely vegetated forest areas of western Kangaroo Island.

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