

**A SECOND RECORD OF THE BLACK-FACED MONARCH *MONARCHA MELANOPSIS* FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA.** The first record for Black-faced Monarch *Monarcha melanopsis* is that of an adult bird found dead in a suburban garden at Goolwa on 3 December 1998 (Eckert 2001).

On Sunday 12 March 2000 I was informed that a Black-faced Monarch had been seen below the flood control dam in Sturt gorge near Sturt Gorge Recreation Park in the southern Adelaide metropolitan region. The bird had been sighted and identified by Kieran Brewer a few days earlier.

At 1530 h I met John and Heather Cox and Chris Doughty and we proceeded into the gorge below the dam. The weather was warm and still. Arriving at the location below the dam wall we searched the stands of desert ash *Fraxinus rotundifolia* along the creek without success. Directly below the dam wall the trees formed a particularly thick and impenetrable copse so we played a BOCA recording of the call of the Black-faced Monarch (Buckingham and Jackson 1992). Within a minute or so Chris Doughty spotted an adult Black-faced Monarch high in the canopy of a desert ash. No calls were heard despite the fact that the bird was sighted shortly after the tape was played.

For the next thirty minutes I observed the bird through 8x40 binoculars (Bausch and Lomb Elites) as it foraged in the desert ash with occasional forays into the olive *Olea europaea* trees growing on the nearby slope of the gorge. On these occasions clear views were obtained from as close as 10 m.

**Description:** Black throat and forehead, grey bib with clear demarcation from chestnut-rufous belly and undertail. Grey tail, wings and mantle. Nape, crown and ear coverts slate grey. The black throat and forehead identifies the bird as an adult Black-faced Monarch. Grey tail and absence of black in the wings rules out Black-winged Monarch *Monarcha frater*. Absence of black through the eye and on the ear coverts and lack of dark tail with white outer tail feathers eliminates Spectacled Monarch *Monarcha trivirgatus* (Simpson and Day 1996).

Of the two races of the Black-faced Monarch recorded in Australia by Blakers, Davies and Reilly (1984), *pallida* and *melanopsis*, the southern race *melanopsis* breeds in south-east Victoria and NSW (i.e. coastal south-east Australia) and migrates north in March–April to winter in southern Queensland. It should be noted, however, that Schodde and Mason (1999) treat the species as monotypic, albeit with reservations. The Atlas of Australian Birds has no records for South Australia with the majority of records being from Victoria east of the dividing range (Blakers, Davies and Reilly 1984). A record in Adelaide (138°E) is significantly further west than the most westerly records in Victoria (144°E) and represents a significant deviation from the usual migration route east of the dividing range.

Preferred habitat appeared to be the stand of desert ash along the creek. Rainforest is the usual habitat for the Black-faced Monarch and the thick foliage of the desert ash may serve as a reasonable approximation to that habitat. The bird foraged along the branches of the desert ash and often sat motionless for several minutes. At these times it was difficult to detect in the thick foliage. We left the bird foraging in the desert ash along the creek. Subsequent attempts to locate it during the following week failed.

## REFERENCES

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