

## A Long-Lost Bird.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

The rediscovery of John Gould's *Xerophila pectoralis* must come to Australian ornithologists as a subject of great interest, one specimen only having been seen up to this, and from which the great ornithologist described the species in 1871 (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., series 14, vol. VIII.). The bird is known now as *Aphelocephala pectoralis* (Mathews' "A List of the Birds of Australia," p. 246). Several South Australian ornithologists, including myself, have hunted for years after this bird, but could never find a trace of it, and I know of late a very strong feeling has been in my mind as to the possibility of this species ever existing. On June 29th, 1914, my assistant and taxidermist (Mr. J. P. Rogers) brought in a couple of small birds, and I at once recognised them as the lost bird. Within a few hours I met with a small party myself and secured several specimens. I found this bird to extend over the country for 100 miles west of Oodnadatta, and seemed to be entirely confined to the tableland country covered with gibber stones, with small clumps of low bushes and a few mulga (*Acacia aneura*) growing in the watercourses. *A. pectoralis* was found nearly always in the company of *A. nigricincta* and another species which was very numerous and resembled both *A. leucopsis* and *A. p. castaneiventris*. Their habits seem to be identical with other members of the genus, but their call is distinctive, in being a low plaintive note, and they are not nearly so bold as the more common species, and on being alarmed they flew straight away out of gun shot. A few points of rain fell in February over this country, and these birds must have bred, because fully fledged young were collected with the parent birds, but unfortunately I did not meet with any nests containing eggs.

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