
MORGAN—A Trip to Moolawatana, S.A.

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By A. M. Morgan, M.B., B.S.

On 8th January, 1931, in company with Mr. J. Neil McGilp, I started on a trip to the Far North with the object of observing a nesting colony of the Banded Stilt. The notes on this species are recorded elsewhere in this Part, but observations on many other species were made on the trip which are considered worth recording. The itinerary was—8th January, Adelaide to Jamestown; 9th January, Jamestown, via Nilpena, to Beltana; 10th January, Beltana to Moolawatana, returning, on 15th January, by way of Mount Serle, Sliding Rock, Beltana, Hookina, Warrakimbo, Yadlamalka, and Port Augusta (20th January). Observations were begun at Clare on the way up, and ended just south of the same town on the return journey. Four days were spent at Moolawatana, one night at Wooltana, two days at Mount Serle, by Mr. McGilp on Pastoral Board business, and by myself in observing and collecting birds. I wish to express my thanks to Mr. McKay, at Moolawatana, Mr. Chapple, at Wooltana, and Mr. Greenwood, at Mount Serle, for their hospitality and assistance. One hundred and three species were identified. Birds were not so numerous as we hoped, considering the good season, probably because the rains in the north have been so widespread that the bird population is much scattered. The species seen were:—

1. *Dromaius novae-hollandiae*, Emu.—An adult bird, with four half-grown young, was seen at Wooltana. The adult bird had a very distinct white neck-ring.

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2. *Coturnix pectoralis*, Stubble-Quail.—Seen at Wooltana and Moolawatana.
3. *Turnix velox*, Button Quail.—Fairly common at Wooltana and Moolawatana wherever there was good grass.
4. *Geopelia placida*, Peaceful Dove.—A pair had a nest in a street plantation at Jamestown. Seen and heard frequently in the Flinders Ranges, but not on the plains to the east of them.
5. *Geopelia cuneata*, Diamond Dove.—Common to the east of the Flinders Ranges; also heard once at Mount Serle.
6. *Ocyphaps lophotes*, Crested Pigeon.—Seen both on the plains and in the ranges. Three birds roosted in the pepper-trees at Wooltana H.S.
7. *Porzana fluminea*, Spotted Crake.—Seen at Broken Swamp, Moolawatana. Mr. McGilp found a nest there with one egg in it. Broken Swamp is a small "lignum" swamp which was filled by the December rains, but was rapidly drying up at the time of our visit.
8. *Porzana plumbea*, Spotless Crake.—Two birds seen at Broken Swamp.
9. *Tribonyx ventralis*, Black-tailed Native Hen.—Numerous at Broken Swamp, where they were nesting. The nests were made of grass placed on the ground in the base of a lignum surrounded by water. Two clutches taken were heavily incubated.
10. *Podiceps poliocephalus*, Hoary-headed Grebe. — Very common on Lake Callabonna and Broken Swamp, in both of which places they were nesting freely. Many young birds seen and many deserted nests with the eggs uncovered, which had been left high and dry by the receding water.
11. *Chlidonias leucopareia*, Marsh-Tern.—A colony was nesting on Broken Swamp. The nests were placed on the submerged lateral branches of the lignums. They were built of fairly substantial sticks and lined with green grass. There were no water-weeds available.
12. *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Gull-billed Tern.—Numerous on Lake Callabonna, where they were nesting on a low mud island. Mr. McGilp counted 42 nests with eggs, seven

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of them with three eggs each, and 22 with two eggs each; the contents of the rest not counted. The nest was a scrape in the earth containing a few small sticks, the edge surrounded by a rim of samphire-sticks in which there were a few of the birds' feathers.

13. *Larus novae-hollandiae*, Silver Gull.—A small colony was established on the Banded Stilts' island in Lake Callabonna. There were about a dozen new nests, only one of which contained eggs, two in number.
14. *Erythrogonys cinctus*, Red-kneed Dotterel.—Several pairs seen at Broken Swamp. They were behaving as though nesting.
15. *Zonifer tricolor*, Banded Plover. — Only seen once near Broken Swamp.
16. *Charadrius ruficapillus*, Red-capped Dotterel. — Several pairs seen on the shores of Lake Callabonna.
17. *Peltohyas australis*, Australian Dotterel.—Only three birds seen, all on Moolawatana Station. A nest was found a few yards from the mail-track containing three eggs. The nest was a simple cavity scraped in the ground without any added material. The eggs were partly covered over with dust and small pebbles.
18. *Himantopus leucocephalus*, White-headed Stilt.—Seen on Broken Swamp and Lake Callabonna, where they were nesting on an island. The nest was a scrape in the bare ground lined with a little debris.
19. *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*, Banded Stilt.—A full account of this species is given elsewhere in this Part.
20. *Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae*, Red-necked Avocet. — Fairly common on Lake Callabonna, where they were nesting on two islands. The nest is a scrape in the bare ground. Eggs four in number for a clutch, arranged with the points inwards.
21. *Erolia acuminata*, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.—A few small flocks seen on Lake Callabonna.
22. *Stiltia isabella*, Australian Pratincole. — A pair seen near Broken Swamp.
23. *Burhinus magirostris*, Southern Stone-Curlew. — Heard calling at night at Moolawatana H.S.

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24. *Notophox novae-hollandiae*, White-faced Heron (Blue Crane).—A single bird seen in the creek at Jamestown.
25. *Chenonetta jubata*, Maned Goose (Wood Duck).—Small flocks seen on Lake Callabonna and a flock of about 50 at Broken Swamp.
26. *Chenopsis atrata*, Black Swan.—Fairly numerous on Lake Callabonna. Not nesting.
27. *Anas superciliosa*, Black Duck.—One pair seen at Broken Swamp.
28. *Querquedula gibberifrons*, Grey Teal.—Numerous on Lake Callabonna.
29. *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*, Pink-eared Duck. — Numerous on Lake Callabonna and on Broken Swamp, where they were nesting. The nest was placed on a lignum-bush, and consisted entirely of a ball of the bird's own down, which completely concealed the eggs.
30. *Nyroca australis*, White-eyed Duck.—Fairly numerous on Lake Callabonna.
31. *Circus assimilis*, Spotted Harrier.—Seen near Jamestown and Broken Swamp.
32. *Circus approximans*, Swamp-Harrier.—Seen near Clare.
33. *Astur fasciatus*, Australian Goshawk.—One bird seen near Nilpena Siding.
34. *Accipiter cirrocephalus*, Collared Sparrowhawk.—Seen once at Italowie Creek, in the Flinders Ranges.
35. *Uroaetus audax*, Wedge-tailed Eagle.—Only once seen, near Wootana.
36. *Hieraetus morphnoides*, Little Eagle.—One seen at River Frome, Mount Serle.
37. *Haliastur sphenurus*, Whistling Eagle.—Seen at Beltana, Moolawatana, and Mount Serle.
38. *Milvus migrans*, Fork-tailed Kite.—A single bird seen once near Moolawatana H.S. Mr. McGilp says this is unusual, as the birds are generally absent in the summer.
39. *Elanus axillaris*, Black-shouldered Kite.—A single bird seen between Tarlee and Linwood.
40. *Falco berigora*, Brown Hawk.—Unusually scarce. Only seen twice—at Pootana Creek and Wootana.

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41. *Falco cenchroides*, Nankeen Kestrel.—The only common Hawk. Seen at intervals throughout the trip.
42. *Ninox boobook*, Boobook Owl.—Heard calling at Mount Serle. The call seemed to me to differ from the southern bird. Mr. Greenwood, owner of Mount Serle Station, says that there are two species of brown Owls in the district, one larger than the other, so this may be *Ninox connivens*, Winking Owl.
43. *Kakatoe sanguinea*, Bare-eyed Cockatoo.—Seen near Nilpena, North Moolooloo, and on all the creeks in and running out of the ranges.
44. *Kakatoe roseicapilla*, Galah.—Seen first at Orroroo, and then northwards in numbers. Very common.
45. *Leptolophus hollandicus*, Cockatoo-Parrot.—Very common from Beltana northwards on all the creeks of the ranges.
46. *Barnardius barnardi*, Ringneck Parrot.—Seen only on the Willochra Creek near Warrakimbo.
47. *Barnardius zonarius*, Port Lincoln Parrot.—Common at Beltana and on all the gum creeks northwards.
48. *Psephotus haematonotus*, Red-backed Parrot.—Common between Clare and Jamestown. Also occurs on the gum creeks of the Flinders Ranges. Fairly common at Mount Serle.
49. *Psephotus varius*, Mulga-Parrot.—Seen from Moolooloo northwards. Not common.
50. *Psephotus haematogaster*, Blue Bonnet.—Seen only once at Warrakimbo.
51. *Neophema elegans*, Elegant Parrot.—Two young cage-birds at Beltana. The owner said he took them from a gum-tree in the creek.
52. *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Budgerygah (Shell Parrot).—First seen near Nilpena siding. Very common, and in large flocks in the ranges and grass country to the east of them.
53. *Aegotheles cristata*, Owlet Nightjar.—A bird flushed from a hollow tree in the bed of the River Frome at Mount Serle.
54. *Halcyon pyrrhopygius*, Red-backed Kingfisher.—Seen at Moralana Creek, near Wooltana, and near Hookina.

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Two nest-holes examined were drilled about 15 inches into the face of a bank and had large nesting cavities at the end of them. Each contained five partly incubated eggs.

- 55. *Merops ornatus*, Bee-eater.—Seen at Cradock, at Mount Serle, and in McKinlay Pound in the ranges. A specimen ♀ collected at Mount Serle measured—Total length, 23 cm.; spread, 33.75 cm.; weight, 27 grammes. Stomach contents: remains of wasps.
- 56. *Hirundo neoxena*, Welcome Swallow.—Seen at intervals throughout the trip.
- 57. *Cheramoeca leucosterna*, White-backed Swallow.—Seen at Angipena.
- 58. *Hylochelidon nigricans*, Tree-Martin.—Seen at intervals throughout the trip. Particularly common about the gum creeks in the ranges.
- 59. *Rhipidura leucophrys*, Willie Wagtail.—Seen at intervals throughout the trip.
- 60. *Seisura inquieta*, Restless Flycatcher.—A single bird seen in a street plantation in Jamestown.
- 61. *Microeca fascinans*, Jacky Winter.—A pair seen near Mount Remarkable. Not seen in the Far North.
- 62. *Petroica goodenovii*, Red-capped Robin.—Seen occasionally in the ranges and on either side of them north of Port Augusta.
- 63. *Pachycephala rufiventris*, Rufous Whistler.—Seen at intervals in the Flinders Ranges.
- 64. *Colluricincla harmonica*, Grey Shrike-Thrush.—Fairly common in the gum creeks of the ranges. A ♀ collected on 18/1/1931 at Mount Serle measured—Total length, 24 cm.; spread, 39 cm.; weight, 61 grammes; iris, brown; bill, black; legs and feet, mealy black; inside mouth, dark horn. Stomach contents: grasshoppers.
- 65. *Grallina cyanoleuca*, Magpie-Lark.—Seen throughout the trip wherever there was water.
- 66. *Oreoica gutturalis*, Crested Bellbird.—Not at all common. Heard at Wooltana and in the ranges.
- 67. *Sphenostoma cristatum*, Wedgebill.—Very common on the outskirts of Pootana Creek, where it had overflowed, also

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in the foothills on the east side of the ranges. They like the less heavily-timbered creeks, where there is some bushy undergrowth. They are not found in the big timber. They had nearly finished nesting. Many old nests, which the young had recently left, and two containing young were found. The call is like "Wirry chip," the last note being much accentuated.

68. *Coracina novae-hollandiae*, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.— Seen at Jamestown, and several times in the gum creeks of the ranges.
69. *Lalage tricolor*, White-winged Triller.—Seen on the east side of the ranges and at Mount Serle.
70. *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*, Cinnamon Quail-Thrush. — A common bird on the plains on the east side of the ranges, but not seen in the ranges. There is another Quail-Thrush in the ranges, probably *C. castanotum*, Chestnut Quail-Thrush, but it has not yet been identified with certainty.
71. *Pomatostomus superciliosus*, White-browed Babbler. — Common in the ranges.
72. *Epthianura albifrons*, White-fronted Chat.—Only seen twice north of Port Augusta, at Wooltana and Yadamalka.
73. *Epthianura tricolor*, Crimson Chat.—Common north of North Moolooloo. Nesting.
74. *Epthianura aurifrons*, Orange Chat.—Common in the same country as the last species; probably nesting.
75. *Ashbyia lovensis*, Gibber-Bird.—A bird was put up alongside the road just north of Orroroo, which Mr. McGilp and myself both thought was a Desert Chat, but as it was so far out of its usual habitat it cannot be recorded with certainty. On the east side of the ranges it was fairly common, and was said to be nesting, though we did not find any nests.
76. *Smicrornis brevirostris*, Brown Weebill.—Seen at Italowie and at Mount Serle in gum creeks. The pair at Mount Serle had a nest containing one egg.
77. *Aphelocephala leucopsis*, Eastern Whiteface. — Common north of Orroroo.

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78. *Acanthiza uropygialis*, Chestnut-tailed Thornbill. — Only seen once in the bed of the River Frome at Mount Serle.
79. *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, Yellow-tailed Thornbill. — Seen occasionally throughout the trip. A pair had a nest containing young near Mount Serle.
80. *Calamanthus isabellinus*, Rusty Field-Wren. — Seen at North Moolooloo northwards; not common. They were heard singing in the evening near Lake Callabonna.
81. *Cinclorhampus cruralis*, Brown Songlark. — Very common on the plains to the east of the ranges, where there was good grass and herbage.
82. *Cinclorhampus matthewsi*, Rufous Songlark. — Seen near Jamestown and east of the ranges. Not so common as the Brown Songlark.
83. *Megalurus gramineus*, Little Grassbird. — Only seen at Broken Swamp, where they were nesting in numbers.
84. *Acrocephalus australis*, Reed-Warbler. — A single bird heard at the Hutt River near Clare.
85. *Malurus cyanotus*, Blue-and-White Wren. — First seen north of Hookina, and at intervals northwards in the plains-country. Not seen in the ranges.
86. *Malurus assimilis*, Purple-backed Wren. — Seen on Moolawatana and at Pootana Creek, on the east side of the ranges.
87. *Artamus personatus*, Masked Wood-Swallow. — Seen at Jamestown and northwards; a large flock was seen in the ranges feeding on young grasshoppers.
88. *Artamus melanops*, Black-faced Wood-Swallow. — First seen near Hookina and common from there northwards; always in pairs or in flocks of at most four or five.
89. *Artamus cyanopterus*, Dusky Wood-Swallow. — Not common. Seen only at Mount Serle and Sliding Rock.
90. *Climacteris picumnus*, Brown Tree-creeper. — Fairly common in the Flinders Ranges. Not seen elsewhere. A ♀ collected measured — Total length, 16 cm.; spread, 27 cm.; weight, 28 grammes; iris, dark brown; legs and feet greyish black, soles grey; bill black, inside of bill dark horn; throat, light horn. Stomach contents: black ants.

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91. *Pardalotus ornatus*, Red-tipped Pardalote.—Common in the gum creeks of the ranges.
92. *Meliphaga virescens*, Singing Honeyeater.—Seen first at Eurelia, and thence northwards in suitable country.
93. *Meliphaga ornata*, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater.—Seen at Balcanoona on the east side of the ranges, and at Italowie Gorge.
94. *Meliphaga penicillata*, White-plumed Honeyeater.—Seen in all the gum creeks north of Beltana. They were all the light subspecies *M.p. leilavalensis*.
95. *Myzantha melanocephala*, Noisy Miner.—Common in the street plantations at Jamestown. A few months ago Mr. McGilp found only the Yellow-throated Miner there. The latter appears to have been driven out, by this species, which is making its way northwards.
96. *Myzantha flavigula*, Yellow-throated Miner.—Common in all the gum creeks north of Eurelia.
97. *Acanthagenys rufogularis*, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.—Only seen twice—at Balcanoona and Warrakimbo.
98. *Anthus australis*, Pipit.—Common in plains country throughout the trip.
99. *Taeniopygia castanotis*, Chestnut-eared Finch.—Seen in numbers throughout the trip. Nesting freely.
100. *Corvus ceciliae*, Crow.—Common throughout the trip. The Little Crow (*C. bennetti*) was not identified with certainty.
101. *Cracticus torquatus*, Grey Butcher-Bird.—Seen only once, at Mount Serle.
102. *Gymnorhina tibicen*, Black-backed Magpie.—First seen a few miles south of Black Rock, and thence to the end of the ranges. North of Nilpena it was the only species seen. In the ranges it is found only in or near the gum creeks.
103. *Gymnorhina hypoleuca*, White-backed Magpie.—Common in the south, and seen occasionally as far north as Hawker.