

### Orroroo Notes.

By James T. Gray. 10/10/1937.

We are having a wonderful visitation of nomadic birds at present. Hundreds of Wood-Swallows (mostly the White-browed) and the three Chats are nesting here. The place, at times, is noisy with bird-song. A Rufous Songlark in my garden is trying to out-sing the lot. The Wood-Swallows are nesting all about the township. The following species, of which in some cases I see only a few specimens, were noted. Dates given are for first recording this season. Common species are not included unless to record some particular feature.

*Ocyphaps lophotes*, Crested Pigeon.—This species has increased considerably in the last few years, and not being shot at so much, is much less shy.

*Porphyrio melanotus*, Eastern Swamphen.—Very rarely seen. A specimen was accidentally killed in the reeds of Pekina Creek,

Orroroo, 30/11/1936. ♂; total length, 46 cm.; wing spread, 79 cm.; stomach full of comminuted vegetable matter. Endoparasites—mallophaga.

*Microcarbo melanoleucus*, Little Pied Cormorant.—Rarely seen on the Irrigation Dam. A specimen, 10/5/1937; ♀; total length, 71 cm.; wing spread, 84 cm.; stomach contents, several water-beetles (*Dytiscidae*) and fragments of other beetles; several small gastroliths. Parasites—endo-, mallophaga; ecto-, nematodes and cestodes.

(A few Little Black Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax ater*) are usually seen on the Dam.)

*Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Pelican.—Rarely seen. A pair was at the Dam in March, 1937.

*Threskiornis spinicollis*, Straw-necked Ibis.—Very rarely seen. A specimen 20/9/1937; ♀; total length, 76.25 cm.; wing spread, 114.5 cm.; legs, red only as low as to an inch of the "knees," below that dark green; feet, dark green; stomach contents, very many caterpillars, two large centipedes, two large spiders, three weevils, 1 staphylinid beetle. Endoparasites, mallophaga.

I have seen this species and *T. molucca*, the White Ibis, here once only.

*Querquedula castanea*, Chestnut Teal.—Rarely seen. A specimen 2/5/1937; total length, 53.5 cm. It was shot some time before being given to me, so the sex was undetermined. The usual ducks found in this district are *Q. gibberifrons*, Grey Teal, and *Anas superciliosa*, Grey (Black) Duck.

*Leptolophus hollandicus*, Cockatiel.—A few have come into the district. We had a great many nesting here a few years ago, but I have not seen them since till this year.

*Barnardius barnardi*, Ringneck Parrot.—They have greatly increased in numbers this year.

*Psephotus haematonotus*, Red-backed Parrot.—A common species here, with an occasional *P. varius* (Mulga Parrot), *P. haematogaster* (Blue Bonnet), and rarely *Neophema chrysostoma* (Blue-winged Parrot).

*Melopsittacus undulatus*, Budgerygah.—28th August, 1937. Very large numbers spend the summer here.

*Aegotheles cristata*, Owllet Nightjar.—A specimen, Orroroo, 10/12/1936; ♂; total length, 24 cm.; wing spread, 36 cm.; stomach contents: insects, heads and fragments of two beetles. Noted occasionally. A pair was seen at a hole in a gumtree at Eurelia on 12/9/1937.

*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*, Red-backed Kingfisher.—Four different males were seen in gumtrees of Pekina Creek last summer. The nesting burrows were not located. A pair spent a few days in my garden in September, 1937.

*Merops ornatus*, Australian Bee-Eater.—On rare occasions several are seen about the town. I have not known them to stay here. Several were seen in March, 1937.

*Eurostopodus guttatus*, Spotted Nightjar.—A bird was seen on two evenings in September, 1937, flying backwards and forwards over the gardens, hawking for insects.

*Cuculus pallidus*, Pallid Cuckoo.—19th June, 1937. The only Cuckoo seen so far this year.

*Rhipidura leucophrys*, Willie Wagtail—14/10/1936. In a small patch of mallee and mulga scrub near Orroroo two nests were found, both built on dead branches of mulga about four feet from the ground. One contained two fledglings, and the other two eggs in the nest and one on the grass below.

*Pachycephala inornata*, Gilbert Whistler.—Heard and the male only seen in pine (*Callitris*) scrub at Eurelia, 12/9/1937. Have not yet seen it at Orroroo, where I observe *P. rufiventris*, Rufous Whistler.

*Pomatostomus superciliosus*, White-browed Babbler.—A specimen 14/10/1936; ♂; total length, 21 cm.; wing spread, 26 cm. The specimen had larvae of *Echinorhynchus pomatosomus* (Cleland and Johnston).

*Epthianura albifrons*, White-fronted Chat; *E. tricolor*, Crimson Chat; and *E. aurifrons*, Orange Chat.—The White-fronted is occasionally seen through the winter months. Two nests found had three and four eggs respectively. The Crimson was first seen on 29/8/1937; and the Orange on 12/9/1937. There has been a great increase in the number of the Crimson this year. Two pairs nested in my garden; each nest contained two eggs. Usually I see approximately ten Crimson to one Orange. I am told that at Eurelia, about 14 miles north of Orroroo, the Orange exceed the Crimson in numbers.

*Aphelocephala leucopsis*, Eastern Whiteface.—Common here. One nest in a hole at the top of a thin mallee fence-post had fledglings on 2/10/1937.

*Cinchorhamphus cruralis*, Brown Songlark.—29/8/1937. Many have come here this year.

*Cinchorhamphus mathewsi*, Rufous Songlark.—29/8/1937. A male is very noisy with song in my garden.

*Artamus personatus*, Masked Wood-Swallow; *A. superciliosus*, White-browed Wood-Swallow; and *A. cyanopterus*, Dusky Wood-Swallow.—19/6/1937. These birds come in great numbers in the case of one of the species. It is strange that one species predominates greatly in numbers over the other two, and that the predominating species changes each time. Last time it was the Dusky species and before that the Masked. This year there is a very great number of the White-browed, with very few of the other two species. They are very tame, flying about the gardens and streets and nesting in quite conspicuous places. I can look into four nests in my garden—each containing two eggs. One pair of birds has nested on the crossbar of a railway iron telephone-post, which gives practically no protection.

*Pardalotus ornatus*, Red-tipped Pardalote.—Can be heard and seen in almost every big gumtree in the creeks.

*Zosterops halmaturina*, Grey-backed Silvereye.—Was seen occasionally in the township during last winter.

*Meliphaga penicillata*, White-plumed Honeyeater.—14/10/1936. In a small patch of mallee and mulga scrub near Orroroo a nest was found, five feet from the ground, and suspended in twigs of a mallee sapling. The nest was made of sheep's wool, lined with hair and fine grass, and contained two fledglings. This is the first nest I have seen of this species below a height of at least 20 feet.

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