

Birds observed about Berri, River Murray, S.A.

By T. Brandon.

Berri is on the right bank of the River Murray, 122 miles in a direct line north-east by east from Adelaide. While working there from 15th February to 30th March, 1938, the following species were noted. It may be as well to state that most of the time was spent at work in the vines, therefore, more species may have been seen had they been looked for. *Geopelia cuneata*, Diamond Dove.—A flock of eight or nine was seen by the roadside between Berri and Renmark. *Ocyphaps lophotes*, Crested Pigeon.—Seemed plentiful between Berri and Renmark, but was not seen elsewhere. Cormorant sp.—One bird was seen flying at a distance along the river, but could not be identified. *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Pelican.—Two birds were seen flying past very high up. Dotterel sp.—Two birds were seen on the bank of the river, but flew off before they could be identified. They appeared to be the Red-kneed species (*Erythrogonys cinctus*). *Notophox novae-hollandiae*, White-faced Heron.—Several were seen along the river. *Chenopsis atrata*, Black Swan.—Birds heard flying past at night. *Astur fasciatus*, Australian Goshawk.—On several occasions one bird was noted in the fruit-trees or vines after the smaller birds; the latter made a great twittering until the intruder had flown away or was chased off by the Magpies. One bird was approached to within a foot. *Haliastur sphenurus*, Whistling Eagle.—Several birds were seen along the river and several nests were noted very high up in the redgum trees on its banks. *Falco longipennis*, Little Falcon.—Only one bird was seen, and that was flying among the trees on the southern edge of Berri. *Falco cenchroides*, Nankeen Kestrel.—Very few noted in comparison

with farming areas. *Kakatoe leadbeateri*, Major Mitchell.—Towards the end of March a flock of seventeen was seen flying south-easterly and on the following day they were again seen flying in the same direction, but on the third day only five flew past. We were told that this species bred in the scrub east of Berri. *Kakatoe roseicapilla*, Galah.—Parties of from two to six birds were occasionally seen. (*Polytelis anthopeplus*, Rock Pebbler.—A few were said to be visiting some nearby figtrees, but the writer never had an opportunity to see them.) *Barnardius barnardi*, Ringneck (Mallee) Parrot.—A few pairs were noted at the almonds. *Psephotus haematonotus*, Red-backed Parrot.—Very few were seen, only odd pairs, but they may be more numerous along the river. *Psephotus varius*, Mulga-Parrot.—These were as numerous as any Parrot as far as could be seen, especially between Berri and Renmark. *Halcyon pyrrhopygius*, Red-backed Kingfisher.—A pair was seen on a bank of the river. They were very quiet and always sat facing the observer. *Merops ornatus*, Australian Bee-eater.—Several were noted along the river flats. *Rhipidura leucophrys*, Willie Wagtail.—Fairly common. *Petroica goodenovii*, Red-capped Robin.—A few females were seen, but only one male. *Grallina cyanoleuca*, Magpie-Lark.—Fairly numerous, especially about the river. Babbler, *Pomatostomus* sp.—Appeared in the wood-heap at our camp on several occasions in flocks of about twenty or more. These birds seemed to be larger than the White-browed Babbler (*P. superciliosus*) at Wilmington. The nests, a few of which were found in some scrub, seemed also to be much larger and bulkier than those found near Wilmington. Could these have been the Grey-crowned Babblers (*P. temporalis*)? * *Smicror-nis brevirostris*, Brown Weebill.—Heard in the nearby scrub; *Aphelocephala leucopsis*, Eastern Whiteface.—A few birds were noted at our camp. *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, Yellow-tailed Thornbill.—Very few were seen. *Malurus assimilis*, Purple-backed Wren.—Wrens were noted several times about the wood-heap and the plain-coloured birds, about twelve in all, were easily "kissed" to within a few feet, but the male, one of which appeared to be with each party, was very wary, and only glances could be obtained of it, but the red patch on the shoulder was noted. *Zosterops halmaturina*, Grey-backed Silvereye.—These were numerous and could be seen or heard almost everywhere. *Meliphaga virescens*, Singing Honeyeater.—Seen in the fruit-trees rarely. *Meliphaga penicillata*, White-plumed Honey-

*[We think not. Most probably they were the Chestnut-crowned Babblers (*P. ruficeps*), which have been recorded for the district.—Editors.]

cater.—Several birds were noted. *Myzantha melanocephala*, Noisy Miner.—Seen in fair numbers along the river. *Acanthagenys rufogularis*, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater.—Several were seen in pinetrees near the river. *Taeniopygia castanotis*, Zebra Finch.—These birds were numerous among the vines. This was the only species found nesting. A nest was found eight feet from the ground in a plumbtree and contained four eggs, later four chicks were seen. *Corcorax melanorhamphus*, White-winged Chough.—A flock of about thirty suddenly appeared in some pines in front of the house one morning and made a great noise, but they only stopped for a few minutes and then flew off towards the scrub. *Gymnorhina tibicen*, Black-backed Magpie and *G. hypoleuca*, White-backed Magpie.—These two species were in equal numbers just where we were camped. *Carduelis carduelis*, Goldfinch.—Only a few were noted. *Sturnus vulgaris*, Starling.—Only four of these birds were seen. This seemed strange to me, as there were so many grapes about.
