

BIRDS SEEN ON KANGAROO ISLAND BY MEMBERS OF THE RALPH TATE SOCIETY

By Miss Joan Cleland.

On January 24, 1940, a party from the University of Adelaide visited Flinders Chase, on Kangaroo Island, under the auspices of the Ralph Tate Society. We left Glenelg at 8 a.m., and reached American River in the early afternoon. We motored to Rocky River, where we made our camp till February 7. During this period places visited included: (i) Upper Breakneck River, a creek surrounded by thick vegetation, chiefly Teatree and Kangaroo Bush, with a few large eucalypts. The surrounding hills were sandy, and covered with low scrub. (ii) Sou'-West River. The country near the mouth of this river is flat and grassy. The beach is sandy, and somewhat protected by reefs and headlands. (iii) Stunsail-Boom River. This country resembled that at Sou'-West River, and included a large lagoon. (iv) Cape de Couedie. The scrub along the top of the cliffs was very stunted, but dense. (v) Rocky River Mouth, a small cove in a rocky coastline. Little vegetation grew on the slopes abutting on the sea, but the sandhills behind these were covered with dense undergrowth and mallee. The house at Rocky River was situated in a cleared patch and was surrounded with scrub. On the south side were sandhills covered with scrub, some of which had recently been burnt. Near the watercourses the vegetation developed into large forest trees, such as *Eucalyptus viminalis*, and close to the water was Teatree. In some parts there were small swamps.

During the trip, 78 native and four introduced species of birds were seen, though

three of the former include birds which have been let loose on The Chase. They are the Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia placida*), the Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*), and the Cape Barren Goose (*Cereopsis novae-hollandiae*). One bird, the Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) has not previously been recorded for Kangaroo Island. Despite the lateness of the season, a few nests were found. These included those of the Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*), containing 2 eggs, the Red-browed Finch (*Aegintha temporalis*), with 5 eggs, the Brush Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*), with 2 eggs, the Red-tipped Pardalote (*Pardalotus ornatus*), with young, the Tree Martin (*Hylochelidon nigricans*), and the Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*).

Various people have reported seeing a Red-crested Black Cockatoo, but no members of the party saw one. Mr. Hansen, the Ranger, who captured a bird which was imprisoned in a burning log, gave the following description of it: About the same size as the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, and with a similar flight, but the cry, uttered at regular intervals while flying, was more of a squeak than a screech. Both male and female appeared about the same size, and were black, with red on the tail and crest. They nest usually in April or May, in hollow trees; they lay two eggs, which are readily deserted if the birds are disturbed. Mr. Wilson said that they had red bars under the tail and wings.

Eudyptula minor (Little Penguin).—Penguins were seen at the mouths of Rocky River, Sou'-West River, and Stunsail Boom River. At the latter place six were seen under one rock, and specimens of fleas and one tick were obtained from a burrow.

Turnix varia (Painted Quail).—A pair was seen in the scrub just south of the Rocky River homestead. They were very difficult to see unless flushed.

Phaps elegans (Brush Bronzewing).—A number of these birds were seen at Rocky

River, and on the roads leading to it. One bird was frightened from its nest in a *Banksia*. The nest contained two eggs.

Ocyphaps lophotes (Crested Pigeon).—These pigeons have been introduced to Rocky River. One bird was seen.

Geopelia placida (Peaceful Dove).—These birds have been introduced. Several were seen near the house at Rocky River.

Gallinula tenebrosa (Dusky Moorhen).—One bird was disturbed in the reeds near the mouth of the Sou'-West River.

Phalacrocorax varius (Pied Cormorant).—Numbers were seen at Kingscote and American River, where over 40 in one flock were counted, two at Stunsail Boom, and one on a waterhole at Rocky River.

Sula serrator (Australian Gannet).—Two between Adelaide and American River, and a third at Remarkable Rocks.

Sterna bergii (Crested Tern).—Three birds were seen on the voyage to Kangaroo Island, and about 30 on the return journey were diving among small schools of tuna. One was seen at the Remarkable Rocks.

Sterna nereis (Fairy Tern).—A pair was seen diving into shallow water near Kingscote.

Larus novae-hollandiae (Silver Gull).—Common on all the beaches visited.

Gabianus pacificus (Pacific Gull).—Two immature birds at Kingscote, a pair of adults and a young bird at Sou'-West River, and one adult at Rocky River mouth, and at Remarkable Rocks.

Stercorarius parasiticus (Arctic Skua).—Following the boat on both journeys, as many as eight being seen at one time. There appeared to be about equal numbers of both types of plumage. Several were seen floating on the water, but none was seen chasing other birds.

Haematopus unicolor (Sooty Oyster-Catcher).—A flock of 10 at Kingscote, and a pair each at American River, Sou'-West River, Rocky River Mouth, and Remarkable Rocks.

Haematopus ostralegus (Pied Oyster-Catcher).—Several on the mud banks at American River, and 10 at Kingscote.

Lobibyx novae-hollandiae (Spur-winged Plover).—Common at Kingscote, Rocky River, Rocky River Mouth, and Sou'-West River. At Kingscote one flock of over 50 was

counted, and at Rocky River a flock of 15 was seen near the house every day.

Zonifer tricolor (Banded Plover).—A pair near Grassdale Station (Sou'-West River), and three on the mud banks at American River.

Charadrius cucullatus (Hooded Dotterell).—A pair on the beach at Kingscote, and a flock of eight at Sou'-West River.

Charadrius ruficapillus (Red-capped Dotterell).—A pair near the lagoon at Stunsail Boom.

Numenius cyanopus (Eastern Curlew).—One at American River, and one at Kingscote.

Tringa nebularia (Greenshank).—One on a mud flat near the lagoon at Stunsail Boom. It was very shy, and gave a sharp cry repeatedly as it flew away.

Erolia ruficollis (Red-necked Stint).—One on the mud banks near the lagoon at Stunsail Boom. It was in the company of Red-capped Dotterells, Sharp-tailed Stints, White-fronted Chats, and a Greenshank.

Erolia acuminata (Sharp-tailed Stint).—A flock of six seen on the edge of the lagoon at Stunsail Boom. Another flock of about 15 at Kingscote.

Burhinus magnirostris (Southern Stone-Curlew).—Heard at Rocky River on two occasions.

Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae (White-faced Heron).—Five at Stunsail Boom, and three at Sou'-West River.

Cereopsis novae-hollandiae (Cape Barren Goose).—Introduced to Rocky River, where there is now a flock of 15. They nest in the reeds near the house, and the young birds are pinioned to prevent the adults flying away.

Chenopsis atrata (Black Swan).—Four at American River, a flock of 18 at Kingscote, and two on the lagoon at Stunsail Boom.

Anas superciliosus (Black Duck).—Four were seen amongst the teal at Stunsail Boom, and two on the waterhole at Rocky River.

Querquedula gibberifrons (Grey Teal).—A flock of ten near Hallett's Cove, on the way to Kangaroo Island, and several flocks of about two dozen on the lagoon at Stunsail Boom.

Querquedula castanea (Chestnut Teal).—Four birds amongst the Grey Teal at Stunsail Boom.

Hawk.—A Hawk corresponding to the description of the Australian Goshawk was seen near Rocky River. It was too distant for identification.

Uroaetus audax (Wedge-tailed Eagle).—Near Rocky River four were seen in the air together, and later two sitting on a eucalypt. An old nest was seen high up in a eucalypt.

Haliaetus leucogaster (White-breasted Sea Eagle).—One was seen flying along the coast near American River, and two flying between Remarkable Rocks and Cape du Couedie. The remains of an old nest was observed on a ledge on the cliff face.

Falco cenchroides (Nankeen Kestrel).—Seen frequently, chiefly over grassy areas near Rocky River, Sou'-West River, and Kingscote, and also over the scrub near the upper portion of Breakneck River, and along the road to Cape du Couedie.

Ninox boobook (Boobook Owl).—Often heard at night near Rocky River. One was seen at Sou'-West River.

Trichoglossus moluccanus (Rainbow Lorikeet).—Numerous in the sugar gums, which were in flower. One bird was seen entering a hollow in a eucalypt about 30 feet from the ground.

Glossopsitta porphyrocephala (Purple-crowned Lorikeet).—Not as numerous as the Rainbow Lorikeets, but in the same localities.

Calyptorhynchus lathamii (Glossy Black Cockatoo).—A number were seen on the north coast feeding on acacias. Settlers in these parts had neither seen nor heard of a cockatoo with a red crest. The country and vegetation here differ considerably from that where the Red-crested Cockatoo has been reported.

Calyptorhynchus funereus (Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo).—Several small flocks near Rocky River.

Kakatoe galerita (White Cockatoo).—One flock of six and several single birds at Rocky River, and some at Sou'-West River.

Platyercus elegans (Crimson Rosella).—A number near Rocky River. Both sexes appeared to be much darker than those on the mainland.

Neophema petrophila (Rock Parrot).—At Stunsail Boom numerous small flocks of these birds were seen; the largest contained 10. They were very much greener on the breast than elegans.

Halcyon sanctus (Sacred Kingfisher).—One on the banks of the Sou'-West River.

Cuculus pallidus (Pallid Cuckoo).—One bird at Stunsail Boom.

(To be continued.)