

WHAT IS A SIGHT RECORD ?

By J. NEIL MCGILP.

In the *S.A. Ornithologist*, XVI, 36 and 45, 1942, there appears an article "Additions and Corrections to the List of the Birds of South Australia." In the list of additions on page 36 there are several species shown as "no authority quoted." In regard to 248A, *Pomatostomus rubeculus*, this authority can be given as *S.A.O.* XI, 9, 1931. I shot a bird, but having no formalin or skinning outfit tried salting, but owing to the hot weather the skin had to be thrown away. On page 45 *Chlamydera guttata* is given as a sight record only. A reference to *S.A.O.* XI, 98, will show that I spent some hours watching these birds at a bower. On another occasion I shot two birds, which I believe are in the S.A. Museum. A photo of the bower is shown with my article, and I have the eggs of this species from the Musgrave Ranges in the McGilp Collection in the S.A. Museum.

I do not quite understand why a well-known bird like *Hamirostra melanosterna* (Black-breasted Buzzard) should be quoted as a sight record only. This bird is easily identified. I know the bird well and refer to its presence in "Birds of Lake Frome District" in *Emu*, XXII, 1923, wherein a description is given of two young in a nest. I consider that a "sight record" hardly describes my record. I watched a pair from June to October in 1921.

Then I do not think "sight observation only" fits in with *Kakatoe tenuirostris* (Long-billed Corella). This is a well-known bird near Joanna, close to Naracoorte, and surely could be included in the list without a specimen being taken for identification.

Why not include Red-breasted Babbler and Nullabor Quail Thrush in the "sight observations only." So far as I know these records

were made by me. I took skins but owing to misfortune the skins never reached the Museum and no ornithologist other than myself handled the birds.

No. 258, *Smicrornis flavescens* (Yellow Weebill) has apparently been removed from "sight observation only" when a skin taken between Mount Daer and Etalileluli on the S.A.-Centralian border was sent to the Museum in 1938. I am, perhaps in error, under the impression that Mr. F. E. Parsons took this bird on the Birdsville track, S.A., many years prior to 1938.

No. 64, *Gelochelidon nilotica* (Gull-billed Tern) is shown as removed from "sight observation only" when a skin of this bird was secured at Yadlamalka Station, Port Augusta, and sent to the Museum for identification (*S.A.O.*, XII, 1933). On 10th Jan., 1931, Dr. Morgan and I found this species breeding freely on Lake Callabonna, Lake Frome District. The bird was not needed for identification, so was not taken. Reference "The Nesting of the Banded Stilt" (*S.A.O.* XI, 54).

I consider that well known and easily identified birds when recorded by more than one person with a knowledge of birds could be included in the list without it being necessary to send a skin to the Museum, which appears to be the basis of certified observation for inclusion in the list of Birds of S. Australia. Yet even this certification falls down in the case of the Nullabor Quail Thrush and Red-breasted Babbler, for so far as I know there are no skins of these birds in the Museum. Perhaps there are other species such as Grey Jumper and Rufous Grass Wren, etc., that have not been identified from a skin taken in S. Australia. Could we not include all birds observed by competent persons in the list of S.A. birds* and place a star before each species which has been identified from a skin in the Museum.

*—All the species placed in the list as "sight observations only" appear in their proper place in the Second Edition of J. Sutton's "Birds of South Australia" or in the present "List of Additions."—Editors.