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Part 1

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## BIRD LIFE WEST OF OODNADATTA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

By J. NEIL MCGILP.

Having received a cordial invitation from Mr. J. E. Robb to spend a holiday on Granite Downs and see the far western country about the Everard Ranges, the writer left Adelaide on the morning of August 3, 1943, and reached Oodnadatta at 8 a.m. on August 7.

The country north from Burra as far as Anna Creek was bare and uninviting, but thereafter to Oodnadatta there was a pleasant change, and grass and herbage were plentiful and the country was in wonderful heart.

Mr. Robb and his manager, Mr. C. K. Bradey, met me at Oodnadatta, and we commenced the 150 mile drive to Granite Downs in a buckboard laden to the "plimsoll" mark with passengers and goods. Perched high on a swag behind the cabin it was possible to see many things which, otherwise, would have escaped notice. The Gidyca, an acacia somewhat resembling the Myall, grows along the Neales River and other water-courses. Gidyca country extends out westward for a considerable distance, but after passing Todmorden Station it gradually fades away, its place being taken by the Mulga. It was pleasing to note the variety of flowers; the glorious scarlet and black Sturt Pea; the purple vetch or wild violets; the very beautiful mauve-colored flower of the Parakylia; dozens of different yellow daisies, everlastings and the wide-spread expanse of candytuft or wild stock. As they grew in such profusion, these wild-flowers made a charming picture. Bird-life was rather disappointing; no doubt with

such good conditions they had not found it necessary to congregate in numbers at any particular spot. The little Zebra Finch was exceedingly common throughout the trip. A fair number of Bustards were noted. Only one Gibber Bird was noted, and that was within two miles of Oodnadatta. Australian Dotterels were disturbed as the motor passed along through open plains. Large numbers of Fork-tailed Kites were noted, mostly in proximity to creeks and watercourses. Many common birds were noted on the journey, and will be dealt with in a list of birds seen during the whole fortnight's holiday.

At Lambinna it was pleasing to see so many young Mulgas growing on a large flat out from the Warrangulla Creek. The trees ranged from just plants to six feet tall. Many people have been heard to say that they had never seen a young Mulga tree. They would be astonished to see the Lambinna flat. The Mulga is probably the most valuable of all fodder trees in Australia, and it is good to know that, under favorable conditions, it is capable of prolific regeneration. Rabbits were numerous in the vicinity, but had not damaged the trees. Mr. Robb stated that he had not run cattle on Lambinna Flat for five years, and this largely accounts for the regeneration of Mulgas. Many other young Mulgas were noted throughout the journey, but this particular spot is worth mentioning, as when the writer last saw it the flat was devoid of Mulgas. The over-

flowing of the creek has worked wonders, for to-day it is a forest of young trees.

During the trip many fine trees and shrubs were noted. Perhaps the most attractive were 'Quinine' trees (*Pittosporum phillyreoides*), which have a drooping bright green foliage and white stems with fruits of a yellow color and the seeds scarlet.

Granite Downs was reached at 6.30 p.m., just as a heavy rain started to fall. It continued throughout the night and one and a half inches of rain were registered by 8 o'clock next morning.

After spending two days at Granite Downs, during which many interesting birds, including the Black-banded Whiteface, Black Honey-eater, and Ground Cuckoo-Shrike, were closely observed, we left on a trip to the Everard Ranges, which is approximately 260 to 270 miles by road from Oodnadatta.

The Everard Ranges lie almost due west of Oodnadatta in the Far North-West corner of the State. They were named by Ernest Giles in 1872 after the Hon. Wm. Everard, a then prominent legislator. The highest hill in the Ranges is Mount Ilbilli, about 3,000 ft. high, and it is closely followed by Mount Karameena and Mount Etitinna. Practically all the hills in the Ranges are solid masses of rock, forming dome-shaped tops destitute of vegetation. These hill-tops, after even a light shower of rain, throw off streams of water, and consequently the trees and shrubs growing at the base of the hills are of luxuriant growth. Between the hills there are a few small gum-creeks which empty out on to the dense Mulga scrub to the south. The scenery is beautiful, changing quickly as one passes through one gorge after another. Here we admire a fine cluster of Ironwoods (*Acacia estrophiolata*), trees of symmetrical beauty with narrow-leaved dense foliage, throwing a lovely shade in the summer, which is severe in the district. When growing out a little distance from the confines of the gorges, the Ironwoods give the country a beautiful park-like appearance.

Close against the rocky face of a gorge one stops to inspect the speartree, a species of *Tecoma*. It is a robust creeper with a pleasing cluster of bell-like cream-colored flowers with russet brown streaks inside the petals. The aborigines use its branches for the making of spears. The wood is tough and almost cane-like, and although anything

but straight naturally, when covered with hot ashes and straightened and then placed under weights until cold it retains this shape. The spear is light, very true in flight, and is much prized by the natives.

Growing in seemingly impossible places through crevices in the rocky formations is the Native Fig, *Ficus platypoda*. It is of some height; its wide-spreading branches are very similar to the domestic fig-tree, but the leaves are rather long, pointed, smooth and shiny, and not serrated. The fruit is round and small, and of a red color when ripe. The Western Bower-Bird is usually found where the Native Fig grows. It is very fond of the fruit and loves to play among the limbs and roots under the good shade cast by the foliage. One could sit for hours under a fig-tree watching the antics and hearing the many astounding calls as these birds come within a few yards of the watcher. The male bird has a delicate lilac rose plume on the nape of the neck. During my observations I did not see the plume elevated. The female has no such plume. Keartland's Honeyeater seemed very partial to the fruit of the fig-tree.

Throughout the ranges robust plants of native tobacco can be seen. It is usually called Pituri, but Okiri is the correct name for this plant. It differs slightly from the Pituri of the more eastern parts. Okiri has very broad, bright green leaves and the usual white tobacco flower. The plants are gathered by the natives, dried in the sun, and then ground up. The coarse powder is then mixed with ashes and chewed. The chewed plug is often passed from one native's mouth to another, and when not in use it is seen "parked" behind the ear.

The plants and trees of the Everard country are very varied and beautiful, and mention must be made of some of the more attractive. The Native or Desert Rose grows luxuriantly, its shiny serrated leaves and the delicate mauve colored flower forming a charming picture. In the Gum Creeks, Bloodwoods, stately Eucalypts with mottled bark, and the Ghost Gum with its gleaming, almost mysterious white boles and branches, are growing in close proximity, whilst the 'Quinine' tree, sometimes referred to as the Wild Apricot or Locket Wood (*Pittosporum phillyreoides*) is rather abundant, as also is Bullock-bush (*Heterodendron oleifolium*).

Passing out from the Ranges one enters the Mulga Scrub, where the two Mulgas, the narrow leaf and the broad leaf, grow in almost forest stands. Here one can see thousands of young Mulgas of all sizes from plants a few inches in height to almost mature trees. Another tree, called Witchetty Bush (*Acacia Kempeana*) and somewhat like the Mulga, is found right through the scrub. The Mulga was flowering, and its almost miniature bottle-brush blossom is of a yellow color and gives off a sweet smell. It is said that the native name of the Mulga blossom was something like "Oodnadatta" and that the town of that name was christened after it.

Before passing, it is worth recording that under a great number of Mulga, Witchetty and Ironwood trees holes or trenches from two to three feet deep had been excavated. This work had been undertaken by the natives in searching for the Honeyants, which, after collecting honey from the trees, retire underground, their abdomens being distended with the honey. The native is most ravenous for anything sweet, and the honey-laden ant is much sought after. When secured it is crushed between the teeth and the honey sucked out. Occasionally, it is said, the ants are swallowed after the crushing.

There are many small acacias, the more common and most attractive being *A. Victoriae*—it is a mass of golden wattle. A rather striking tree is the Ealberra, with its long, thin, pendulous leaves and a somewhat roughish bark. The Corkwood (*Hakea*) is numerous and conspicuous through the masses of cork on the trunk and limbs, and the long, spine-like leaves; the flower is a cluster of cream tongues. There are two native plums, the *Santalum lanceolatum* and the well-known Emu Bush. Both fruits are eaten by the aborigines. There are so many other trees—such as the Needlewood, a tree with very sharp, needle-like leaves; the Turpentine bush, and the Native Poplar, a tree of great beauty when young, but when old becoming devoid of shapeliness—that one cannot continue to describe them in a paper written about birds.

Of the grasses, a species like the Wandary Grass of Western Australia holds prominence. It is a perennial, shooting up fresh after rains. Next comes the Mulga Grass, a good fodder; when drying the outer stems curl up into a spiral shape, forming small conical tussocks. There are, of course, many other

species of grass, but mention might be made of the Star Grass and the Rattail Grass, both of excellent pasture value, and a 'Kangaroo Grass,' of no fodder value, but having a very aromatic scent. Porcupine grass is occasionally found in the Mulga Scrub, but it grows more luxuriantly nearer and in the Ranges. The herbage is very varied; pride of place must be given to the Rolly-poly (*Salsola kali*), which in its tender youth is a valuable pasture, but as it "comes quick it goes quick," and so it is of little nutriment for stock when dry. There is very little Salt or Bluebush on the Everard country, but closer to the Ranges fairly extensive stands of Old Man Saltbush (*Atriplex nummularium*) are noted. Parakylia grows in abundance and of astonishing height. It was in full bloom, and acres of land appeared to have had a mantle of purple or mauve color thrown over it, reminding one of a paddock of Salvation Jane in full flower.

I have gone to some length in describing the country of the Everard Ranges in an endeavor to create a word picture of the type of vegetation and surroundings in which the birds observed and hereinafter listed make their home.

The following birds were recorded during my fortnight's holiday out west from Oodnadatta:—

Emu (*Dromaius novae-hollandiae*)—Fairly numerous, sometimes in flocks of 20 birds. A nest with 8 eggs was taken and eaten by natives during my stay at Granite Downs.

Mallee Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*)—Not seen, but a fairly recently formed mound was observed in the Mulga Scrub south of the Everard Ranges.

Stubble Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*) and Little Quail (*Turnix velox*)—Both were occasionally seen but more often heard on the grassy plains.

Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*)—Only a few noted.

Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*)—Quite common and nesting.

Hoary-headed Grebe (*Podiceps poliocephalus*)—Observed on the Railway Dam, Oodnadatta, and on several large waterholes.

Black Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)—Three birds seen on the Railway Dam.

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)—Four birds seen flying above a large waterhole at Lambinna Station.

Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*)—Very

numerous. A nest of four eggs was found on Granite Downs.

Blackfronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*)—A single pair seen near Wantapella Swamp.

Australian Dotterel (*Peltohyas australis*)—Not numerous. Some in pairs and appeared to be nesting, although no nest was found.

Southern Stone-Curlew (*Burhinus magnirostris*)—Heard at Granite Downs and at a night camp in Everard Ranges.

Bustard (*Eupodotis australis*)—Quite a number of these handsome birds seen. Some were paired off but, although searched for, no nest was found.

Brolga (*Megalornis rubicundus*)—A single bird was seen on Lambinna Flat.

White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*)—Fairly common at dams and waterholes. A bird flew from a nest in a tall gum in a waterhole at Lambinna. The nest was not examined.

Wood Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*), Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*), Grey Teal (*Querquedula gibberifrons*), Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*), and White-eyed Duck (*Nyroca australis*)—Only a few flocks of ducks were seen on waterholes, and these species were identified.

Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*)—Several pairs seen working over the plains and scrub-country alike.

Australian Goshawk (*Astur fasciatus*)—Only three birds observed.

Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*)—One bird, a male, was seen at Ewintinna Well on Granite Downs. He was perched in a tall gum tree.

Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*)—18 birds seen, all in pairs, but they did not appear to be nesting.

Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*)—A few seen near waterholes in creeks.

Fork-tailed Kite (*Milvus migrans*)—Very numerous and in flocks; at Mundowdna Siding 84 birds were counted as they foraged around for scraps thrown out from a fettler's camp. They were very tame.

Little Falcon (*Falco longipennis*)—Two pairs noted, one in the Everard Ranges and the other pair at Wantapella Swamp, when one bird flew off a nest about 40 feet up in a gum tree. A native climbed to the nest, but no eggs had been laid, although the nest

contained green gum leaves and was apparently ready for eggs.

The common hawk of the locality (*Falco berigora*)—A very dark form was occasionally noted. A nest in a tall gum was being attended by a pair of birds.

Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*)—Only once seen. My attention was drawn to it by the calls of Tits and Honeyeaters. It was resting in a dense clump of a species of Acacia.

Major Mitchell Cockatoo (*Kakatoe leadbeateri*)—Several small flocks seen in the Everard Ranges and at Granite Downs.

Galah (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*)—Fairly numerous. One pair was nesting in a hollow trunk of a gum tree. Each time we passed the tree the bird came to the entrance and poked out its head, but seldom left the hollow.

Cockatoo Parrot (*Leptolophus hollandicus*)—Only one flock, of about 10 birds, was observed as they flew overhead.

Port Lincoln Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius*)—Fairly numerous. The head is not nearly as black as the Eyre Peninsula bird.

Many-colored Parrot (*Psephotus varius*)—These beautiful birds were quite common but did not appear to be nesting. They spend quite a lot of time on the ground when feeding on grass and herbage seeds.

Bourke Parrot (*Neophema bourki*)—Only a small flock of seven birds seen in the Mulga Scrub just east of the Everard Ranges. It was disappointing not to have recorded the Scarlet-chested Parrot, which, together with the Bourke, is usually to be found in the Mulga Scrubs.

Shell Parrot (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)—Very numerous, in large flocks making quite a distinct "whirr" as they rise almost as one bird from the ground. There was no sign of nesting operations having commenced.

Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)—Only one bird seen, and it was sitting on one egg, slightly incubated, in the usual flat nest of sticks placed across a horizontal fork of a tea-tree. The mate did not show up.

Red-rumped Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*)—Seen occasionally, but only single birds sitting on a dry twig and calling mournfully.

Spotted Nightjar (*Eurostopodus guttatus*)—A bird; thought to be this species, rose

from the ground near a clump of hill mallee on Granite Downs. No egg was found.

Cuckoos.—The Fan-tailed, the Pallid, the Black-eared, and the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoos were recorded, but in few numbers. No cuckoo eggs were found in any nests examined.

Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*)—Numerous at homesteads and wells. A pair had a nest with four eggs on a rafter of a shed at Granite Downs, and another pair had young in a nest built between the timber of the shaft at Windmill Well.

White-backed Swallow (*Cheramoeca leucosterna*) and Tree Martin (*Hylochelidon nigricans*)—These swallows were found in small parties along the gum creeks. The former were seen near creek banks, but, although several holes drilled into steep banks were investigated, they were only being used as resting places. Towards sunset one evening, at least six Tree Martins were seen to enter a dry hollow spout high up in a gum tree. It was evidently a roosting place. No Fairy Martins were seen.

Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*)—Quite common, except in the Mulga Scrubs, where few were seen.

Restless Flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*)—A few birds were seen and a pair were just commencing a nest in a horizontal fork of a mallee tree at Lester's Well.

Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*)—Very numerous and nesting. One pair had a nest, with two eggs, built in a small, dry fork of a Tarbush, a species of *Eremophila*. The lining was of rabbit fur, and outwardly the nest was decorated with spiders' cocoons and moss. When the male bird came to the nest it completed a very pretty picture. Another pair had an almost identical nest in the fork of a Mulga at a height of eight feet from the ground. Both birds fed the two young ones as we watched.

Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*)—Quite a common bird throughout the locality. One pair had a nest with two almost fully-fledged young. The nest was built of bark and grass, with a little exterior decoration, in a horizontal fork of a fallen tree.

Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*)—The only Whistler observed, and it was by no means plentiful.

Western Shrike Thrush (*Colluricincla rufiventris*)—This species was identified by observation; it did not appear necessary to

take a specimen. The rufous underpart was easily seen. Not nesting.

Magpie Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*)—Seen occasionally near waterholes. A pair had a nest on a gum tree bough overhanging the Lambinna Waterhole. There were young in the nest and the parents were carrying to the nest insects captured at the water's edge.

Crested Bellbird (*Oreica gutturalis*)—Very numerous, but more often heard than seen. Several nests were seen. The usual set was of three eggs, but sets of two eggs and two young were also found. As usual, dormant caterpillars were on the rim of the nest.

Wedgebill (*Sphenostoma cristatum*)—It was not until we reached the Everard Ranges that the peculiar call of this interesting species was heard. Following up the call two birds were located in a dense thicket of *Acacia Victoriae*, but there was no sign of a nest, though old structures were noted. The locality was Brown's Soak. Another pair were observed at the foot of Mt. Ilbilli.

Ground Cuckoo-Shrike (*Pteropodocys maxima*)—Only a few birds noted, mostly in pairs. One pair were attending a nest some twenty feet up in a Corkwood. One bird flew from the nest, which was almost ready for eggs. Five days later the bird again left the nest but eggs had not been laid. The call of the Ground Cuckoo-Shrike is very plaintive.

Blackfaced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*)—Fairly numerous. A pair were attending the wants of two young, which had only recently left a nest. No nests were found.

White-winged Triller (*Lalage tricolor*)—These birds were just arriving in the district. They came in numbers working down from the North. They were calling very loudly. No signs of nesting.

Quail-Thrush (*Cinlosoma* sp.)—Only one bird of this family was seen. It was very wild and repeatedly flew up into a tree. It was too wary to give an opportunity of securing a specimen. The very rufous chest and underpart of the breast decided me not to record it as the Cinnamon or the Chestnut-backed Quail Thrush. It may be *C. castaneothorax*.

White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*)—Not at all a common bird in the district. It was nesting; one nest built in a Wild Cherry contained two eggs.

White-fronted Chat (*Epthianura albifrons*), Crimson Chat (*E. tricolor*), and Orange Chat (*E. aurifrons*)—Very few of the first and the last-named seen. The Crimson Chats were very plentiful, but no nests were observed.

Gibber Bird (*Asbyia lovensis*)—Only one seen and that within two miles of Oodnadatta. It was close to the roadside as our car passed.

Western Warbler (*Gerygone fusca*)—A pair seen in a gorge in the Everard Ranges. It was definitely not nesting, for they remained close to our camp for fully two hours. They have a very musical song.

Yellow Weebill (*Smicrornis flavescens*)—Numerous in Eucalypt localities. Only one nest located and that contained two "just-born" babies. The nest was almost identical with that of the Brown Weebill.

Eastern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*)—Though a specimen was not secured, I saw no difference between the birds of Granite Downs and the Everard Ranges and those of the southern part of the State. They may be intermediate between *A. leucopsis* and *A. castaneiventris*, but are not true *A. castaneiventris*. Several nests were noted. When built in a dense bush the nests are so like the nest of *A. nigricincta* that one formed the opinion that they had taken possession of the nest of the latter species. Three to four eggs formed the set in each of the four nests I examined at Granite Downs, but a nest at the entrance of a brush shed near Oodnadatta held four eggs. A pair of birds nested in a hollow post in the stockyard at Granite Downs and continued to feed the young as horses were being drafted.

Blackbanded Whiteface (*Aphelocephala nigricincta*)—Only seen on the Granite Downs flat. Several nests, containing three young birds almost ready to leave the nest were found. The nests are a bulky dome-shaped structure, built outwardly with short, stout sticks and snugly lined with feathers. The nest has a long tunnel or funnel entrance. The young birds had the adult plumage and a distinct black band across the breast. The back is decidedly cinnamon in color. A nest was being built in a dense Deadfinish bush; later the nest contained two eggs; no others were laid, and the set was taken two days later. It is now in the S.A. Museum.

Red-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza hamiltoni*) and Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (*Acan-*

*thiza uropygialis*)—Both species were occasionally observed. The latter were constructing a nest in a small knothole in a hollow stump close to the ground.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*)—Common. They were nesting—one nest with four eggs and another with three young being located. The yellow coloring of the rump appeared to be a shade lighter than with southern birds.

Red Throat (*Pyrrholaemus brunneus*)—This beautiful songster was seen and heard several times, but it is not common. It was found only in some saltbush country near Mt. Chandler.

Songlarks (*Cinclorhamphus*)—Both the Brown Songlark (*C. cruralis*) and the Rufous Songlark (*C. mathewsi*) were noted on Granite Downs, the former, of course, being found on the grassy plains and the latter along timbered watercourses. A black boy, who accompanied me in order to climb trees, found a nest with three young Brown Songlarks when he was out after cows. I did not see the nest, but he described it and said, "that fellow jumps up and flies with legs hanging down."

Grass Wren (*Amytornis* sp.)—A Grass Wren was disturbed from a clump of porcupine grass at the foot of a rocky hill in the Everard Ranges. It ran under a large rock and I failed to see it again. Its squeak was very like that of *A. striatus* when suddenly disturbed. I could not venture to describe or identify the bird on such slender evidence.

Blue and White Wren (*Malurus cyanotus*).—Fairly common in saltbush and blue bush country and in watercourses with low bushes. Nesting. Clutches with 3 eggs. Nest dome-shaped—made of fine grass, flowerheads and cobweb, lined with flower down, mostly thistle down. The blue body of the male varied from dark royal blue to a very light blue.

Purple-backed Wren (*Malurus assimilis*)—Only two pairs seen, both in wooded gullies. No sign of nesting.

Masked Wood Swallow (*Artamus personatus*), White-browed Wood Swallow (*A. superciliosus*), Black-faced Wood Swallow (*A. melanops*), and Dusky Wood Swallow (*A. cyanoptera*)—The Dusky was seen only once, five birds in the party. They were in flight. The Masked and White-browed were in fair numbers. The Black-faced is the resident Wood Swallow. It seemed to be everywhere.

One nest was found with two fresh eggs, another nest just starting.

Sittella (*Neositta* sp.)—A party of nine birds were just commencing to build in an upright fork of an old rotten Mulga tree. The marking on the wing band appeared too white for *N. pileata*, but I failed to collect a skin. I had a shot but missed, and time did not permit my remaining long. The birds did not return for the twelve minutes I stayed near the nest. It may have been *N. leucoptera*, which has a white wing band.

Mistletoe Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*)—Quite a number seen in Mulga and Eucalypt areas. Feeding on mistletoe. No nest observed, although one male hung about a dense, tall acacia.

Red-tipped Pardalote (*Pardalotus ornatus*) and Red-browed Pardalote (*Pardalotus rubricatus*)—Both species seen in Gum Creek. The Red-tipped was observed to enter a knot-hole in a large gum and probably had its nest there. The Red-browed was carrying shredded bark into a tunnel in a creek bank. The hole was dug out, but the nest had only just been started. It was pleasing to see this species again, for the last time I saw it was in 1918/1919 on Moolawatana Station, Lake Frome.

Black Honeyeater (*Myzomela nigra*)—Quite numerous on wooded hillsides. Nesting had just started. Eight nests were found in early stages of construction. Later two nests contained the set of two eggs, one nest one egg. The nests were made of fine dry grass and cobweb and placed in a dry fork within three feet of the ground. The nests were lined with very fine rootlets, but no fur or feathers. Females only appeared to carry material and build nests.

White-fronted Honeyeater (*Gliciphila albifrons*)—Numerous, not nesting, but some paired off. Generally found on wooded hillsides and gullies.

Pied Honeyeater (*Certhionyx variegatus*)—Fair numbers about scrubby hills and gullies. Appeared to be preparing for nesting. As has been my experience, this species is generally noted in company with the Black Honeyeater.

Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*)—Seen throughout the trip. Nest, with two eggs, built in a tarbush at a height of five feet from the ground. Eggs "chipping."

Keartland Honeyeater (*Meliphaga keartlandi*)—Fairly numerous in the Everard

Ranges, where it appears only when the Native Fig is in the vicinity. Not nesting.

Yellow-fronted Honeyeater (*Meliphaga plumula*)—Five birds seen in one party feeding in a Bloodwood tree in the Everard Ranges.

White-plumed Honeyeater (*Meliphaga penicillata*)—This pallid form was common, but not nesting.

Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*)—Very numerous everywhere. Nests, with three eggs or three young, found lined with fur, wool and cowhair.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*)—Also quite a common bird. No nests located.

Ground Lark (*Anthus australis*)—Common on all open country. Two nests, with three eggs, were built in a depression in the ground near a clump of grass.

Chestnut-eared Finch (*Taeniopygia castanotis*)—Extremely numerous. Nesting freely. Nests were found in hollow stumps, up twenty feet from the ground, and on the ground in a clump of grass. One bush, *Acacia Victoriae*, held 21 nests, each inhabited. The clutch varied from three to seven eggs.

Western Bower-bird (*Chlamydera guttata*)—About twenty birds were observed. Only found in or near Fig trees. Not nesting. The female has no lilac plume. They give a great variety of calls.

Australian Crow (*Corvus ceciliae*)—A bird, which with some hesitation is listed as this species, is found almost everywhere west of Oodnadatta. One nest with three fresh eggs was built in a Mulga tree fifteen feet from the ground. Bennett's Crow was not seen.

Grey Bell Magpie (*Strepera versicolor*)—A few birds were seen in the Everard Ranges and near Mount John on Indulkinna. No specimen was collected, but it was undoubtedly *S. v. centralis*. It was very wary but its loud ringing call drew attention to it.

Pied Butcher Bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*)—A fair number were seen. One pair were building a nest in a tall Corkwood. After my experience with this very fine bird out west of Oodnadatta I do not consider, as once I did, that its song is more beautiful than *C. torquatus*. It sounds more mournful and is not so continuous in song.

Grey Butcher Bird (*Cracticus torquatus*)—More numerous than the preceding species. No sign of nesting was noted. One bird called

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## BIRD LIFE WEST OF OODNADATTA

(Continued from Page 8)

early in the morning before sunrise close to the Granite Downs homestead.

Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*)—Fairly plentiful nearer Oodnadatta. Few were seen in the Everard Ranges and surrounding country. They did not appear to be nesting. They were generally very wild.

Kangaroos were in great numbers, and it was noted that the male is of a lighter red and the does are red fawn and not bluish as is usual with the Kangaroos of the more southern parts.

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