

SOME OBSERVATIONS IN SOUTH-EASTERN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND ADJACENT PARTS OF VICTORIA

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Although more than 160 species of birds were seen during this trip (October 6—12, 1951), we shall restrict our remarks to those of most interest.

Black-tailed Native Hen (*Tribonyx australis*)—The current invasion of this predominantly interior species reached the South-East. Parties of Native Hens were observed at Beachport, between Kingston and Reedy Creek, 19 miles north of Kingston, and at Ashville.

Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*)—The night of October 8 was spent at Mr. O. Edgar's beautiful property, *Nerrinyerrie*,* seven miles west of Harrow (Victoria). Our host, a keen student and protector of the birds on his station, was asked, among other things, of the status of the Brolga in his district. He had not seen one for some years. Imagine then our surprise and his pleasure when on the following morning, just before our departure, a pair of these fine birds flew low over the homestead and settled in a nearby paddock.

White Egret (*Egretta alba*)—Egrets were often noted during the trip. A single bird near Wood's Well (Coorong) with the bill entirely black was the subject of much enquiry—none of us could recall ever seeing a similar specimen.

Pacific Heron (*Notophoxyx pacifica*)—Although this heron is normally resident in the South-East, it seemed more plentiful and widespread than usual. They were observed as far north as Wirrega. (I had not previously seen them further north than in the swamps, twelve miles south of Bordertown.—G.M.S.)

Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*)—On a lagoon near Edenhope (Victoria), open except for a few rushes, three adult Black Duck and about ten ducklings were seen being attacked by a Swamp Harrier (*Circus approximans*). At each stoop of the harrier

the ducklings dived, while at least two of the adult birds leaped from the water as though snapping at the hawk. After several unsuccessful attempts, the harrier withdrew to the bank.

Grey Teal (*Anas gibberifrons*)—We saw enormous numbers of this teal, especially in the Naracoorte district and on the Coorong.

Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*)—We saw this species only at Robe, where a compact flock of at least 200 birds was on one small lake just east of the town.

Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*)—A single bird was observed over the outskirts of the town of Beachport.

Fork-tailed Kite (*Milvus migrans*)—One seen with two Wedge-tailed Eagles and a Whistling Eagle five miles north of Robe on October 11. On the following day we watched eight Kites wheeling above the main road one mile south of Wellington East.

Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus notatus*)—One of these hawks was seen on two successive days using the signpost at the Beachport Junction as a perch. Its flight consisted of alternate flapping and gliding with wings held high, as in harriers. When hovering the body was almost vertical, while the tail was fanned to its maximum extent. This position was only maintained by vigorous flapping of the wings, the bird thus appearing somewhat ungainly in comparison with a kestrel. It was last seen drifting away to the south after circling up to a considerable height.

Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)—Although not seen, the distinctive cries of this cockatoo were heard in the eucalypt forests between Hotspur and Heywood (Victoria). Later on the same day we heard them again in the dense forests clothing the left bank of the Glenelg River, south of Drik Drik.

Long-billed Corella (*Kakatoe tenuirostris*)—First observed in a paddock 15 miles north of Naracoorte, feeding with a mixed flock of Galahs and White Cockatoos (*K. galerita*). In the field, the pale bill of the Corella, as

* A brief account of the birds of *Nerrinyerrie* by one of us (R.W.McK.) appears in *Australian Aviculture*, 5, No. 12, 1951.

opposed to the black bill of *galerita*, helps in separating the two species. The quaint yapping cries of the Corella are also diagnostic—they are utterly unlike the raucous screeching of the larger bird. Mr. Jack Hood showed us a dead gum on his property at Joanna, hollows of which contained a nest of each species. Corellas were also noted in Victoria, at Edenhope, Harrow, and Powers Creek.

Blue Bonnet (*Psephotus haematogaster*)—A pair with four young (flying) were observed in the sheoak-covered sand-dunes three miles south of Wellington East.

Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysotoma*)—We first saw this parrot in damp paddocks adjoining scrub a few miles west of Heywood. Later they were flushed from the side of the road running through dense forest between Drik Drik and Nelson. We also observed them in the open country surrounding Nelson through to the extreme south-eastern corner of the State.

Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*)—It is pleasing to record the steady expansion of range of this species in the South-East. Mr. Jack Hood showed us a Yellow Robin sitting on two eggs at Joanna, and told us that in his time these birds have extended their range north from Penola, but have not yet reached Naracoorte. On the western side they were observed near Robe.

Little Cuckoo-Shrike (*Coracina robusta*)—Only a mile north-east of Naracoorte a pair of these birds built their nest on a small horizontal fork about 40 feet up in a eucalypt. The birds changed over on the nest while we were watching.

Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis*)—We were surprised to see so little of this species. The single bird seen during the whole trip was in some red gum saplings growing on the roadside near Edenhope.

Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*)—Silvereyes were very plentiful in the coastal scrubs and thickets from Port MacDonnell to Salt Creek. This is probably also the optimum habitat in South Australia for the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthogenys rufogularis*), Little Wattlebird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) and the Grey Butcherbird (*Cracticus torquatus*).

Black-chinned Honeyeater (*Melithreptus*

gularis)—We observed this species at Naracoorte, where, according to Mr. Hood, it is decidedly rare. Also noted at Edenhope.

Black Honeyeater (*Myzomela nigra*)—In the pine (*Callitris*) scrub four miles north-west of Tailem Bend we watched male birds of this dainty honeyeater engaged in display flights. Although fallen pines afforded numerous sites, a quick search revealed no nests.

We were rather surprised at the numbers and wide distribution of certain introduced birds. As their present extent is much greater than indicated in literature, we append these notes.

Domestic Pigeon (*Columbia livia*)—A pair of feral pigeons was apparently nesting in the high sea-cliffs at Robe.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)—One drake was seen on the Coorong, 30 miles north of Kingston.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)—This species has apparently adapted itself quite well to the "Boobialla" scrubs, for it was frequently recorded in the coastal strip from Port MacDonnell to 26 miles north of Kingston.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)—The Skylark is now well established in the South-East. In the Hundred of Spence we flushed it frequently from paddocks only recently cleared and sown down to pasture. It was also observed elsewhere in the Naracoorte district, Donovans, Port MacDonnell, Mount Gambier, Millicent and Kingston.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)—This species, too, was recorded from a number of localities, viz., Naracoorte, Port MacDonnell, Mount Gambier, Glencoe, Tantanoola, Millicent, Beachport, Robe, 28 miles north of Kingston, seven and five miles south of Salt Creek, and at Wood's Well (Coorong). Also widespread in Western Victoria from Edenhope and Harrow south to Nelson and Heywood.

Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*)—Observed in the townships of Naracoorte, Nelson, Mount Gambier and Beachport.

Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were frequently seen.