

## DISTRIBUTIONAL NOTES ON SOME SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

by JULIAN FORD, Western Australian Institute of Technology.

The following observations on the distribution of birds in South Australia were made while I was carrying out investigations on the quail-thrushes during a field expedition, financed by a grant from the Science and Industry Endowment Fund, in the summer of 1967-68.

### CINCLOSOMA CINNAMOMEUM.

Cinnamon Quail-Thrush.

Condon (1968, p. 140) does not show the occurrence of this species east of the Flinders Ranges and south of Lake Frome. On December 31, 1967, I saw two males and a female, 6 miles north of Martins Well; a female, 3 miles north of Curnamona; two birds, one mile east of Curnamona; three parties, 5 miles ESE of Curnamona; one bird, 6 miles ESE of Curnamona; two birds, 7 miles ESE of Curnamona; and two birds, 10 miles ESE of Curnamona. The first three birds were seen along a watercourse fringed with low bushes (*Koekia*, *Atriplex* and *Acacia*) in open gibber country while the others were in bluebush (*Koekia*) steppe overtopped with mulga savannah on hard loamy soils. The species was not seen in the mulga sandplain country which becomes dominant about 13 miles ESE of Curnamona on the track to Kalabity.

### MYIAGRA INQUIETA.

Restless Flycatcher.

A pair was seen in tall mallee (*Eucalyptus oleosa*)—teatree (*Melaleuca pubescens*) woodland 15 miles south-west of Yalata Mission on February 1, 1968. The usual western limit on Eyre Peninsula is doubtless the sharp transition zone between the *Eucalyptus* woodlands and the myall (*Acacia sowdenii*) savannah, here termed the myall-eucalypt line.

### EOPSALTRIA AUSTRALIS.

Yellow Robin.

A single bird was seen in tall mallee (*Euc. oleosa*) woodland with a lower stratum of teatree (*Melaleuca pubescens*), 7 miles ESE of Nundroo on February 1, 1968. The individual was in moult. This record extends the known range westwards from the Ceduna area (Jenkin and Waterman, 1965, p. 46). The Peninsula population of the Yellow Robin probably occurs in *Melaleuca pubescens* thickets westwards to the myall-eucalypt line. I have also seen this species in identical habitat in the Eucla area (Ford, unpublished). Condon (1968, p. 88), in giving the range of the olive-green rumped subspecies *rosinae* as Eyre Peninsula west to the Lake Dundas district of Western Australia, has overlooked my contribution (Ford, 1963) on the geographic variations in this species, in which the distribution of *rosinae* is given as west to a line joining Cliff Head, Wongan Hills, Kellerberrin and Ravenshorpe.

### CLIMACTERIS RUF A.

Rufous Treecreeper.

Two were observed in tall *Eucalyptus oleosa* woodland at Colona on December 26, 1967; several near Nundroo on February 1, 1968; and several near Yalata Mission on February 1, 1968. It has recently been established that this species ranges continuously between south-western Australia and Eyre Peninsula in the mallee-marble gum (*Eucalyptus gongylocarpa*) formations north of the Nullarbor Plain (Ford, unpublished). Contrary to Condon's (1968, p. 92) remarks, the Rufous Treecreeper is not divisible into subspecies.

*MELIPHAGA LEUCOTIS.*

White-eared Honeyeater.

A single bird was seen in tall mallee woodland with an under-story of dense teatree scrub, one mile west of Yalata Mission on February 1, 1968. As with several other mallee inhabiting species on Eyre Peninsula, the White-eared Honeyeater probably ranges as far west as the myall-eucalypt line. Eyre Peninsula birds and the population in the south-eastern Australian mallee country belong to the subspecies *novaeorciae* (Ford, unpublished), not nominate *leucotis* as given by Condon (1968, p. 97).

*MELITHREPTUS BREVIROSTRIS.*

Brown-headed Honeyeater.

Flocks of this species and the Yellow-plumed Honeyeater (*Meliphaga ornata*) were seen in mallee woodland along the Eyre Highway as far west as the myall-eucalypt line on February 1, 1968. My investigations on the geographic variation in this species show that the entire south-western Australian population belongs to one subspecies, viz. *leucogenys*, which also occurs on Eyre Peninsula and the drier parts of south-eastern Australia where it secondarily intergrades with nominate *brevirostris*. Condon (1968, p. 97) recognises two subspecies, *leucogenys* and *augustus*, in Western Australia, the latter extending into South Australia and western Victoria.

*ARTAMUS CYANOPTERUS.*

Dusky Woodswallow.

On December 25, 1967, a single bird was seen in mixed tall mallee woodland in sand-dune country at Ooldea. Identification was based on the presence of the white wing edging and on the general darkish appearance. On February 1, 1968, it was found to be common in tall mallee woodland on Yalata Mission and along the Eyre Highway west to the myall-eucalypt line.

*ARTAMUS MINOR.* Little Woodswallow.

Seven birds, including a juvenile, were seen in an open area in a broad valley below a chain of steep mountain cliffs, in the vicinity of Mt. Hack (20 miles north-east of Beltana), Flinders Ranges. These birds were darker and smaller than the Dusky Woodswallow and lacked white edging on the wings. Condon (1968, p. 105) includes this record in his handlist.

*GYMNORHINA TIBICEN.*

Australian Magpie.

Two magpies were seen on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain at Ooldea on December 25, 1967. Magpies were also common in savannah woodland country along the Eyre Highway from Yalata Mission to Ivy Tanks. I was unable to determine the subspecies status of these magpies. After a gap across the southern edge of the Nullarbor Plain, this species reappears again some 20-30 miles east of the border between South Australia and Western Australia.

## REFERENCES

- Condon, H. T. 1968. *A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia*, South Australian Ornithological Association.
- Ford, J. R. 1963. Geographic Variation in the Yellow Robin in Western Australia, *Emu*, 62: 241-8.
- Jenkin, C. R., and M. Waterman. 1965. An Expedition to Eyre Peninsula and Offshore Islands. *S. Aust. Orn.*, 24: 45-8.