

BEAUTIFUL FIRETAILS ON KANGAROO ISLAND

On the mainland of South Australia the Beautiful Firetail (*Emblema bella*), is not numerous either in the Mount Lofty Ranges or the coastal belt of the South-East.

On the north coast of Kangaroo Island I have seen Beautiful Firetails in early March 1958, 1969, 1971, at Western River, Snug Cove, and Harvey's Return.

At Western River the firetails are in Sheoak (*Casuarina stricta*) stands beside water courses in cleared grazing land. The firetail habitat at Snug Cove is overgrazed sandhill country covered with Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) some Boobyalla (*Myoporum insulare*), with small shrubs on the steep cliff sides. At Harvey's Return the firetails are in uncleared, thick Sheoak scrub on creek banks.

In the most unlikely firetail habitat at Snug Cove, four firetails were associated with about a dozen Red-browed Finches (*Aegintha temporalis*) for at least a few hours on 4 March, 1971, between 1100 hours and 1500 hours.

Nowhere except in certain localities of Tasmania are firetails claimed to be numerous. Although not numerous, firetails in the three places mentioned here on Kangaroo Island do not appear to be rare. Perhaps some peculiarity of island ecology is favourable to the species.

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