

EXTENSION OF THE RANGE OF THE RED-LORED WHISTLER (*Pachycephala rufogularis*) AND COMMENTS ON SOME BIRDS OF THE NORTH-EAST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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During 11-13 October, 1970, the Strathalbyn Naturalists Club and the Mammal Society of S.A. camped out on Gluepot Station, thirty miles north of Waikerie. While the party viewed Striated Grass-Wrens (*Amytornis striatus*) and Shy Heath-Wrens (*Hylacola cauta*), Mr. J. Hurn called that a larger bird had passed near him. It was followed and proved to be an adult Red-lored Whistler (*Pachycephala rufogularis*). Subsequent searching revealed that a pair of adults were feeding two flying juveniles close by, thus enabling the whole party to view the birds and most to see the diagnostic feature of the species, the red lore.

One immature seen reasonably well appeared to have no red colour on the lores or breast, but possessed vertical dark streaking on the breast similar to that of an immature Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*). A caterpillar was the only identifiable food seen brought to the young. As the young were still dependent no specimen was taken. Another Red-lored Whistler was heard

calling and seen a few miles further on. As there is an extensive tract of apparently similar country north and east of the area where these birds were found, it is anticipated that the species will eventually prove to be quite strongly represented north of the Murray.

Although the Red-lored Whistler is undoubtedly extinct in its type locality (the Adelaide metropolitan area), and has not been reliably reported west of the Murray for many years, its range has now enlarged considerably from that given in Condon's 1962 Handlist. At that time it was believed to be restricted to the triangle of country bounded by Karoonda, Peebinga and Pinnaroo and adjacent parts of Victoria. Since then it has proved to be quite common in the desert country between Pinnaroo and Bordertown and its main stronghold would be now better defined as roughly bounded by Karoonda, Meribah, Red Cliffs, Hopetoun, Yanac, Bunn's Bore, Coonalpyn and west almost to Murray Bridge, where the species still occurs a few miles east of that town.

The significant discovery of an apparently isolated population of the species in the Pulletop Faunal Reserve and nearby areas of New South Wales in 1964 (Schodde, 1965, *Emu*, 64, 204-5) plus the recent find on Gluepot have therefore resulted in a great improvement of the species' status during the last decade. These last discoveries are located over 200 miles east and over 100 miles north, respectively, of the nearest portion of the main stronghold. Breeding has been noted in both of these new areas.

Dr. Schodde suggested that the species may be confined to pine and broom shrubberies, but neither of these were noticed where the birds were seen on Gluepot, the vegetation here being dominated by porcupine interspersed with stunted mallee. It is interesting to note that while the species had young on the wing at Gluepot on October 13, the following weekend in the desert south of Pinnaroo, two nests found both contained two eggs, one clutch apparently being fairly fresh. This indicates a difference of at least a month in commencement of breeding in each area. An excellent account of the species' discovery, rediscovery, identification, nesting and general habits has been published in the *Emu* (The Two Red-throated Whistlers, Parsons and McGilp, vol. 35, pp. 113-126).

Other typical mallee birds seen in the Red-fored Whistler locality on Gluepot were Striated Grass-Wren, Shy Heath-Wren, Chestnut Quail-Thrush (*Cinlosoma castanotum*), Southern Scrub-Robin (*Drymodes brunneopygia*), Black-winged Currawong (*Strepera versicolor*), Purple-backed Wren (*Malurus lambertii*)—all quite plentiful—and Mallee-Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*)—three

birds and one active mound. The reported presence of the Scarlet-chested Parrot (*Neophema splendida*) in nearby areas means that three species currently included in the Third Schedule of Rare Species of the Fauna Conservation Act, 1964, inhabit this general locality.

Of the birds mentioned by K. J. Mack (*S.A. Orn.* 1970, 25, 126-141, Birds of the North-East of S.A.), two call for comment in the light of my experience of two trips to the area. The White-browed Tree-creeper (*Climacteris affinis*) is much more plentiful than the three records listed would suggest. It was seen on several occasions on Sturtvale in 1968, and was plentiful on Gluepot and adjacent areas in 1970. A specimen was taken on each trip. It shows a strong preference for Black Oak country, and away from this vegetation it is hard to find.

The Black-faced Wood-Swallow (*Artamus cinereus*) was recorded on Sturtvale in 1968 and again near Gluepot in 1970, when a specimen was taken. This suggests that its presence in the area must be more widespread than the limited occurrence indicated by Mack. Boehm (1957, *Emu*, 57, 318) indicates that the species is seldom absent from the nearby Mount Mary Plains, and I would expect much the same situation in the North-East District.

Other interesting sightings on Gluepot were three Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Pteropodocys maxima*), two male Pied Honeyeaters (*Certhionyx variegatus*), several Striped Honeyeaters (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*), Black-backed Wren (*Malurus melanotus*) and Little Pied Shag (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*).