

THE WESTERN WARBLER SIGHTED IN THE MT. LOFTY RANGES

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On October 27, 1974, a call, unmistakably that of a warbler, was heard in the Altona scrub, 3 km N.E. of Lyndoch. The bird was then attracted by an imitation of its call and was observed at close range (3 m). This procedure has also been found successful with the White-throated Warbler *Gerygone olivacea* in the Onkaparinga Gorge.

The bird was found to be the Western Warbler *Gerygone fusca*. It was thornbill-sized, with upperparts brownish-grey and underparts whitish. Seen from above, the tail was darker than the back, with white tips to the tail feathers. When spread, the tail also showed white on the outer feathers and a brown sub-terminal band. The under-side of the tail was lighter. The eyes appeared dark, with a distinct white eyebrow; legs and bill were black. The bill was straight as is typical of warblers, and unlike that illustrated in Slater's *Field Guide* (1974).

The bird's habits were similar to those of the White-throated species, in that it fed mainly amongst the twigs and outer foliage of eucalypts. Its flight, unlike that of thornbills,

was direct and sustained. It often flew 100 m from tree to tree. The bird called frequently, each time pausing in its feeding to take an upright stance, also seen in the White-throated Warbler. The call was similar to the latter's, but lacked its initial, prolonged, descending trill.

The bird was again observed in the same area on November 3, 1974, by the authors in company with J. A. McNamara and N. Reid. On this occasion it was seen to leave what appeared to be an incomplete nest of a globular form, suspended in the uppermost foliage of a Pink Gum *Eucalyptus fasciculosa* 5 m from the ground. During further visits the nest was found to be still incomplete; and at no time were two birds seen together.

This species has been seen by two of the above observers (J. A. and M. S. Mc.) at Gunbower Creek near the Murray in northern Victoria, and in Western Australia. This record represents a considerable extension of range: according to Condon's *Handlist*, the closest South Australian records are from the vicinity of Pt. Lincoln.