

THE OCCURRENCE OF THE SINGING BUSHLARK *MIRAFRA JAVANICA* IN NORTH-EASTERN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Writing of the subspecies *Mirafra javanica rufescens* Ingram, 1906, Mayr and McEvey (1960) commented: 'Earlier field records of *M. javanica* in the north-east of South Australia probably refer to this race, e.g. Parsons (1921), Morgan (1930) (Goyder's Lagoon). Of the same subspecies, Condon (1969) wrote: 'probably occurs in the far north-eastern corner of the State.'

Parsons (1921) gave an account of the birds seen on a trip from Adelaide through north-eastern South Australia to western Queensland. Of the Singing Bushlark he wrote: 'A very common bird on the grassy downs,' but gave no localities. In the South Australian Museum there is a *ms* written by John Sutton (presumably copied from Parsons' field notes) that lists the species recorded by Parsons from the South Australian localities visited during this trip. The Singing Bushlark is nowhere mentioned in these lists; so presumably it was recorded by Parsons only in western Queensland.

Morgan (1930) writing of a trip to the Diamantina in July-August 1930, noted a single individual of this species at Goyder's Lagoon:

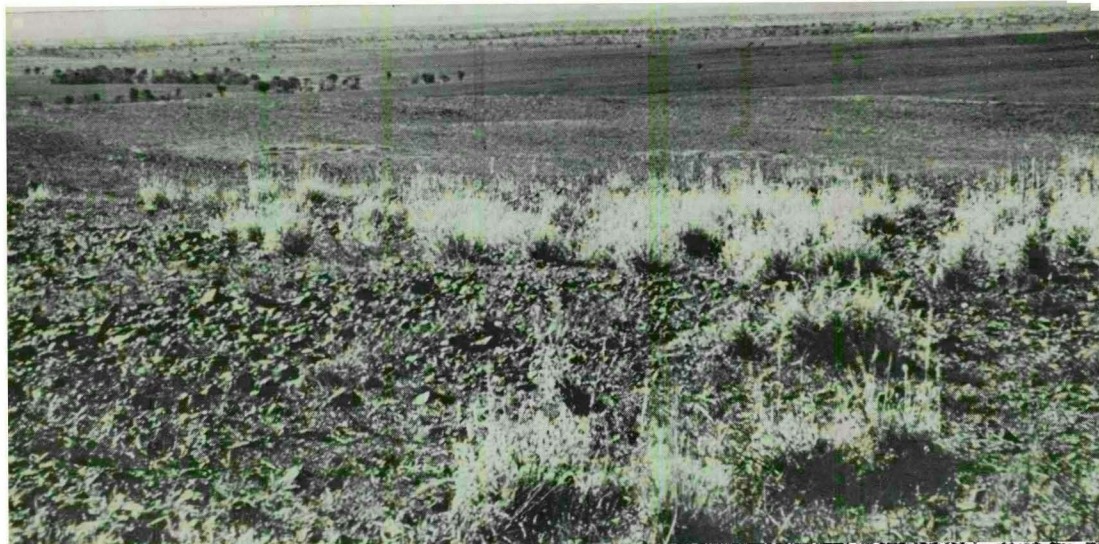
*South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide, S.A. 5000.

In the South Australian Museum there is an overlooked specimen of *M. j. rufescens* from north-eastern South Australia. It is B25070, an adult male collected by Mr. P. F. Lawson on low hills south of Muderu Cooter Waterhole and about 25 km south-south-east of Innamincka on 18 August 1957. The hills consist of low stony rises, and at the time were well-vegetated with a species of Mitchell Grass, *Astrebla* (see below).

It is significant that Mr. J. B. Cox did not encounter the Singing Bushlark during a thorough survey of the North-East in August 1975 (Cox *et al.* forthcoming), a trip during which several days were spent at Goyder's Lagoon. Possibly *M. j. rufescens* is an uncommon and irregular visitor to north-eastern South Australia from western Queensland.

REFERENCES

- Condon, H. T. 1969. A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia. 3rd ed. Adelaide: S. Aust. Orn. Assoc.
 Cox, J. B. and L. P. Pedler, 1976. Birds of the far North-East of South Australia in October 1974 and August 1975. S. Aust. Orn. (forthcoming).
 Mayr, E. and A. R. McEvey, 1960. The distribution and variation of *Mirafra javanica* in Australia. *Emu* 60: 155-192.
 Morgan, A. M. 1930. A trip to the Diamantina. S. Aust. Orn. 10: 263-274.
 Parsons, F. E. 1921. Notes on a motor trip from Adelaide to western Queensland. S. Aust. Orn. 6: 12-23.



Stony rise vegetated with *Astrebla* sp. (Mitchell Grass), where specimen of *Mirafra javanica rufescens* was collected; 25 km SSE of Innamincka, north-eastern South Australia. (Photo by P. F. Lawson.)