

## SIGHTING OF THE RUFIOUS-CROWNED EMU-WREN IN THE SIMPSON DESERT

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The Rufous-crowned Emu-wren *Stipiturus ruficeps* was first reported from Queensland in 1969. At present it is known from the north-west and central parts of the State (records summarized by Ford & Parker 1974:186).

While searching for the Eyrean Grasswren *Amytornis goyderi* in the eastern Simpson Desert in August, 1976 (May, forthcoming), I encountered an emu-wren that was almost certainly the above species. The locality was at about 25° 52'S, 138° 39'E, 13 km north of the Queensland/S.A. border; the date was August 28, 1976. The habitat was large sandhills vegetated mainly with Sandhill Canegrass *Zygochloa paradoxa*. The single emu-wren seen was observed to flutter to the top of a canegrass tussock and then disappear into the tussock. The bird seemed smaller than the Blue-and-White Wren *Malurus leucopterus*, which was common in the area. It was predominantly rufous-brown with a large blue patch extending

from the throat to halfway down the breast. Its tail was fine and held erect.

This appears to be the first record of the Rufous-crowned Emu-wren from the Simpson Desert. Ford & Parker (*op. cit.*) noted that previous records of the species were from areas of *Triodia* and *Plectrachne*, and speculated that the species could exist throughout the Simpson Desert in the swale-inhabiting *Triodia basedowii*. Its occurrence in the dune-inhabiting *Zygochloa paradoxa* in the Queensland sector of the Simpson Desert lends support to the idea that it may occur throughout the Desert, that is, in the Northern Territory and South Australian sectors as well. (At present, the known range of *S. r. ruficeps* in South Australia is the north-western corner of the State.)

#### REFERENCE

Ford, J. R. & S. A. Parker. 1974. Distribution and taxonomy of some birds from south-western Queensland. *Emu* 74: 177-194.

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