

SIGHTING OF A ROSE ROBIN NEAR ADELAIDE

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The Rose Robin *Petroica rosea* normally frequents dense forest and scrub of eastern Australia, from western Victoria eastward. In winter months it is commonly found in more varied, open habitat, and has on several occasions been recorded in South Australia as far west as Adelaide. Published records in S.A. are as follows:—

1. Imm. male; Beaumont, nr. Adelaide; 24 Aug. 1967; mist-netted and photographed (*S.A. Orn.* 25:19-20).
2. Ad. male; Derwents Waterhole, 40 km S of Keith; 24 Aug. 1967 (*ibid.*).
3. Ad. male; Belair National Park, nr. Adelaide; 13 Aug. 1968 (*S.A. Orn.* 25:56).
4. Presumed imm. female; Beaumont; nr. Adelaide; 21 May 1969; mist-netted (*S.A. Orn.* 25:213).
5. Presumed imm. male; Roslyn Park, nr. Adelaide; 24 Aug. 1969; caught when stunned (*ibid.*).
6. Adult male with (?) female; 3.25 km NW of Williamstown; 12, 14, 15 Apr.

1974; in garden of farmhouse; mist-netted and photographed by B. R. Hutchins (*Bird Talk*, 1 July 1975, p. 57).

On 7 July, 1978, at 09.40, in dry, sunny and mild weather, I saw an adult male in a gully which runs parallel to Shepherds Hill Rd. (Bellevue Heights) on its southern side, a gully which eventually runs into Sturt Gorge. I saw what I assumed was the same bird in the same area, at the same time of day, on 10 July. This time the weather was dull with intermittent downpours, and it had just finished raining when I located the bird. The place where the sightings occurred was on the southern edge of the gully where the habitat comprises mainly sapling *Eucalyptus odorata*, and *Acacia armata*, with open cleared land nearby. On the first occasion, my first impression was of a small fantail-type bird, constantly active. The wings were continually spread and lifted above the body, lowered or drooped, and closed again. At the same time the tail was raised or lowered, or spread briefly. All these movements were

short and jerky. The bird was also constantly shifting its position on its perch. Every ten seconds or so it would fly a few yards to another perch, almost invariably at a different height from the ground to the previous one. As I watched—for approximately ten minutes—the height from the ground at which the bird perched varied from between two to fifteen feet.

Because of this intense activity I was easily able to view the bird from all angles, at distances ranging between eight and thirty feet, using 7 x 50 mm binoculars for the greater distances. The light was good. From the rear the immediate impression was of a uniformly dull, dark grey plumage without wing bars but with white outer tail feathers. These stood out

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very well because of the spreading movement of the tail. From the front the deep rose pink breast stood out against the grey throat; the abdomen was white. Although at times I was quite close I found the small white spot on the forehead difficult to see. I only succeeded in seeing it once, when the bird was facing me directly, at a distance of about eight or nine feet, and it then appeared to be more off-white in colour. I was then viewing the bird without binoculars.

On the second occasion, the bird's behaviour was the same as on the first. After approximately two minutes it dropped down amongst a dense patch of *Acacia armata* and was lost to sight.