

## A BLACK-FACED WOODSWALLOW NEAR CROMER IN THE MOUNT LOFTY RANGES

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On 17 October 1982 several bird-watchers including the writer observed a Black-faced Woodswallow *Artamus cinereus* in Cromer Conservation Park, 39 km NE of Adelaide, in the Mount Lofty Ranges. The bird was observed for about 15 minutes in full sunlight during mid-morning in pink gum *Eucalyptus fasciculosa* and long-leaved box *E. goniacalyx* open-woodland, with open thickets of the small trees, *Banksia marginata* and *Acacia pycnantha*, and scattered shrubs (*Xanthorrhoea* sp. and *Acrotriche depressa*). It sat quietly for almost the whole period both at the level of the observers as well as high in a eucalypt, permitting observations to within 10 to 15 metres. It was initially perched near three male White-winged Trillers *Lalage sueurii*, with which it moved away when disturbed. A description was written during observations.

A pale grey woodswallow with a black face. Probably slightly smaller than a Dusky Woodswallow *A. cyanopterus*, with less pointed wings (noted in flight). Pale grey above, wing coverts and scapulars slightly more blue-grey than back, primaries and secondaries slightly browner than back. Pale grey below (paler than upperparts), with black triangular facial patch, coming to a point at the eye, widest at the base of the bill. Vent, undertail-coverts and tail black, tail and longest undertail coverts tipped white, the white on the latter forming white "v's" against the black of the tail and undertail-coverts. Bill pale blue-grey, tipped black. Leg colour not noted.

We were fortunate in having observed and handled a mistnetted adult Dusky Woodswallow about an hour beforehand. Although no Dusks were seen near the Black-faced, the latter's very pale overall plumage, and the lack of the white leading edge on the outer primaries convinced us of its identity.

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The Black-faced Woodswallow is probably a vagrant in the Mount Lofty Ranges at the latitude of Cromer Conservation Park. SAOA (1977) records the species as far south as the Freeling district on the edge of the Ranges, 40 km NW of Cromer. However, intensive studies of the avifauna of Sandy Creek Conservation Park and Para Wirra Recreation Park, 15 to 20 km NW of Cromer, have not recorded it (Rix 1976; Ford and Paton 1976). The bird's occurrence in pink gum and long-leaved box open-woodland is also unusual, it being generally associated with open, sparsely vegetated plains in the interior (Pizzey 1980). Its occurrence in a more mesic habitat than usual may be related to the serious drought in 1982 throughout most of coastal and eastern South Australia.

The white-tipped undertail coverts of the Cromer bird are of interest in view of the hybridization of the white-vented and black-vented subspecies of the Black-faced Woodswallow in Queensland (Ford 1978). Introgression of genes of the white-vented form (confined to north-eastern Queensland) evidently extends well into southern Australia. I have also observed similarly plumaged birds at Roxby Downs in central South Australia.

### REFERENCES

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