

BLACK-FACED WOODSWALLOWS ON KANGAROO ISLAND

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On 7 July 1982, at Cape du Couedic on the south-western tip of Kangaroo Island, I observed seven Black-faced Woodswallows *Artamus cinereus* perched on low bushes (less than 1 m high) in stunted coastal heath. They were huddled close together not more than 300m inland from high, coastal cliffs. I approached to within six metres of them and clearly saw their black faces, dark undertail-coverts and uniform blue-grey wings without any trace of white in the leading edge. They remained perched throughout the afternoon and gave an impression of being exhausted after a long flight. Their inactivity was in sharp contrast to several Dusky Woodswallows *A. cyanopterus* busily hawking insects nearby. Later the same afternoon, I sighted another six *A. cinereus* at Yacca Flat, six kilometres NE of Cape du Couedic. They behaved similarly to the first birds seen. Resting quietly, they flew only after being approached too closely and uttered quiet twittering noises in flight which seemed to serve as contact calls.

All of the *A. cinereus* had evidently gone by the following morning and I have not seen them since. An injured *A. cinereus* was handed to me by Mr and

Mrs R. Deed on 8 July 1982. It was found at Cape du Couedic in the same vicinity as those I had seen. It had a badly damaged wing and was taken as a specimen to be lodged in the South Australian Museum.

The above records appear to be the first of *A. cinereus* from Kangaroo Island. *A. cinereus* is typically a dry-land bird not suited to wetter coastal areas of southern Australia (see Ford 1978). Their presence on Kangaroo Island well to the south of their normal range may have been due to extreme drought conditions in inland areas during 1982 and strong north-west winds which persisted for several days prior to my sightings. It is interesting to note that two vagrant *A. cinereus* were seen on southern Eyre Peninsula some two weeks earlier on 22 June 1982 (S. Aust. Orn. Assoc. Newsletter, December 1982) and one was seen in the Mount Lofty Ranges on 17 October 1982 (Reid 1983).

REFERENCES

- Ford, J. 1978. Hybridization between the white-vented and black-vented forms of the Black-faced Woodswallow. *Emu* 78: 105-114.
Reid, N. 1983. A Black-faced Woodswallow near Cromer in the Mount Lofty Ranges. *S. Aust. Orn.* 29: 45.