

AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLES NEAR BOOL LAGOON

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On 22 December, 1982 I observed an adult Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella* at Little Bool Lagoon, 17 km SSW of Naracoorte. The bird was identified as an adult *S. isabella* by the extensive dark red-brown patches on its belly and its gently-rounded tail. The Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* has a pale, un-marked belly and a forked tail in all plumage phases.

The pratincole at Little Bool was found squatting on bare dry mud adjacent to the receding edge of the lagoon. The margins of the lagoon were mostly devoid of vegetation: in my experience, the Australian Pratincole seems to prefer bare types of habitat.

Two Australian Pratincoles were seen just before sunset on the same day, flying low past nearby Hack's Lagoon toward stubble paddocks. These birds were first located through their clear whistling calls.

In South Australia, the Australian Pratincole has been seen as far south as Lake Alexandrina (Pizzey 1980) and Middleton (Condon 1969). It is not listed in publications dealing with birds recorded in the South-East of South Australia (e.g. SEDB 1980)

and Mr J. Bourne (pers. comm.) is not aware of this species having been recorded previously in the Bool Lagoon district. The record described above is not the most southerly recorded occurrence of *S. isabella* in Australia as Pizzey (1980) mentions Lake Murdeduke, near Geelong as a locality for this species.

The appearance of Australian Pratincoles near Bool Lagoon may have been related to the severe drought affecting much of southern Australia in 1982. The Australian Pratincole has regularly appeared in barer parts of the Adelaide Plains and low country around Lake Alexandrina during recent summers (Pizzey 1980; pers. obs.). However, the unusually poor condition of paddocks south and east of these areas in 1982 may have encouraged this species to venture as far south as the Bool Lagoon district. This record was briefly described in Glover (1983).

REFERENCES

- Condon, H. T., 1969. A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia. Third Edition. South Australian Ornithological Association.
 Glover, B. 1983. Bird notes. S. Aust. Orn. Assoc. Newsletter 105: 8.
 Pizzey, G., 1980. A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. Collins: Sydney.
 South Eastern Drainage Board, 1980. Environmental Impact Study on the Effect of Drainage in the South-East of South Australia.