

BIRDS OF THE NORTH-WEST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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SUMMARY

Information on the status and distribution of birds in the far north-west of South Australia, (north of 27° 30' S, and west of 133° 20' E), including the Everard, Mann, Musgrave and Tomkinson Ranges is reviewed. The region's landscape and vegetation are briefly described. Records are published of seven expeditions between April 1975 and October 1981, the records for that of August-September 1980, which included the authors', being especially detailed. These data are compared with published records of at least 11 expeditions between 1873 and 1972. Comments are made when appropriate on the long-term status of each species.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to publish information collected on recent expeditions to the north-west of South Australia, and to compare it with earlier records. The recent expeditions are:—

A. K.S. Shurcliff's studies of vegetation and birds in the Everard Ranges in April, May, September and December 1975; April, May, September and December 1976; and October 1981. Her field work lasted 12 weeks in total. The 1975 work was in Bloodwood Valley, two kilometres north of Mt Illbillee, the rest in the Illbillee basin and Victory Well area further south. The basin consists of granite and is *ca* one kilometre wide from north to south. A small creek fringed with *Melaleuca glomerata* runs along its length. The rest of the basin is thickly wooded with mallee *Eucalyptus intertexta* and *E. oxymitra*. At the eastern end of the basin the creek turns south and descends to the plain. Along this sector it is lined with Red Gum *E. camaldulensis* and Native Fig *Ficus platypoda*. Where it reaches the plain, it is more thickly lined with Red Gums and also with shrubs *Melaleuca* sp. and *Acacia victoriae*. Victory Well lies on the plain within two kilometres of the basin. Elsewhere, close to the ranges, the plain consists of grassland with patches of *Triodia* and trees of Ironwood *Acacia estrophiolata* and Corkwood *Hakea divaricata* (for further information see Shurcliff 1980). DHC participated in observations in this area, as well as on the plains further south and east of the ranges, on 14-21 May 1976, and made the comments on status given below

for that month. Shurcliff's visits covered the full range of climatic conditions: for example there was much surface water in this part of the ranges in September 1975 and none in May 1976.

- B. By Shurcliff to Aparinna Creek and Mt Woodroffe on 7-11 June 1975.
- C. By J. Reid to Mt Woodroffe and nearby Brown's Pass on 9-12 May 1976.
- D. By S.J. Debus to the area within 15 km of Ernabella (and also a brief visit to Ayliffe Hill) on 27 January — 26 February 1980. These records are assumed to be in February unless he wrote otherwise.
- E. By J. and E. Bransbury and P. Taylor, through Cave Hill, Amata, Mt Whinham, Mt Kintore, Cheesman Peak and Mt Caroline, on 31 May to 7 June 1980.
- F. By W.E. Matheson to Ernabella, Fregon, Possum Well and the permanent spring of Walyinnie Waterhole, between 29 September and 3 October 1980.
- G. By C.I. Baxter, DHC, G.S. Duggan, J.S.L. Edington, S. Hocking, P. Horton, A. McIntyre, RPJ, L.P. and J. Pedler, and A. and K. Tjilary, through Victory Downs, Amata (formerly Musgrave Park), to a site 87 km by road east of Mt Davies Camp (camp 1, near Mt Edwin) on 26 August 1980; thence through Mt Davies Camp to 12 km north-west of Krewinkel Hill (camp 2) on 27 August; to Mt Lindsay (camp 3) on 28 August; to the road junction near Coffin Hill (camp 4) on 29 August; to Turner Hill and Moolalpinna Hill (camp 5) on 30 August; to Wintiginna Hill, Currie Creek 10 km north of Mt Woodroffe (camp 7) on 1 September; to Ernabella and back to camp 6 on 2 September; to Illbillee basin, Victory Well and a site 15 km (in a direct line) south-west of the latter (camp 8) on 3 September; to Betty Well, Mimili (formerly Everard Park) and Indulkana on 4 September.

Camp 1 was on a plain with grass, saltbush, and open Desert Oak *Allocasuarina decaisneana* and Mulga *Acacia aneura* woodland, one kilometre from rocky slopes of the Mann Ranges. Camp 2 was among open mallee and mulga woodland on low sandhills, with abundant

Triodia, and shrubs of *Acacia*, *Cassia* and *Thryptomene*. Camp 3 was on a grassy plain adjoining the vast granite dome of Mt Lindsay, with a dense growth of ephemerals and shrubs at its base, and of Red Gums and shrubs in the creeks flowing from it. Camp 4 was on a grassy plain with large *Hakea* and *Grevillea* shrubs, and scattered mulga. Camp 5 was on a grassy plain with scattered mulgas, adjoining the rocky mound of Moolalpinna Hill, which had a rock hole containing water at its base, and sandhills nearby. Camp 6 was by a broad creek bed fringed with tall Red Gums and dense patches of *Melaleuca* and *Acacia* shrubs, with many Ironwoods, mulgas and other trees nearby. Camp 7 was by a smaller creek bed lined with Red Gums and scattered shrubs, and in a stony plain. Camp 8 was in open mulga woodland with shrubs and small ephemerals, near a small granite dome with a hollow containing water.

Creek beds away from the ranges were dry. There were pools in a small creek on Mt Woodroffe, and one in the creek below the Illbillee basin. The main purpose of the expedition was ornithological exploration, and to this end the participants made frequent stops during each day's journey, as well as searching around campsites in the evening and morning.

Besides these expeditions, there was one by A.B. Black through Amata, Mt Woodroffe, Kenmore Park and Marble Hill in May 1976. He gave the records which he retains, to DHC.

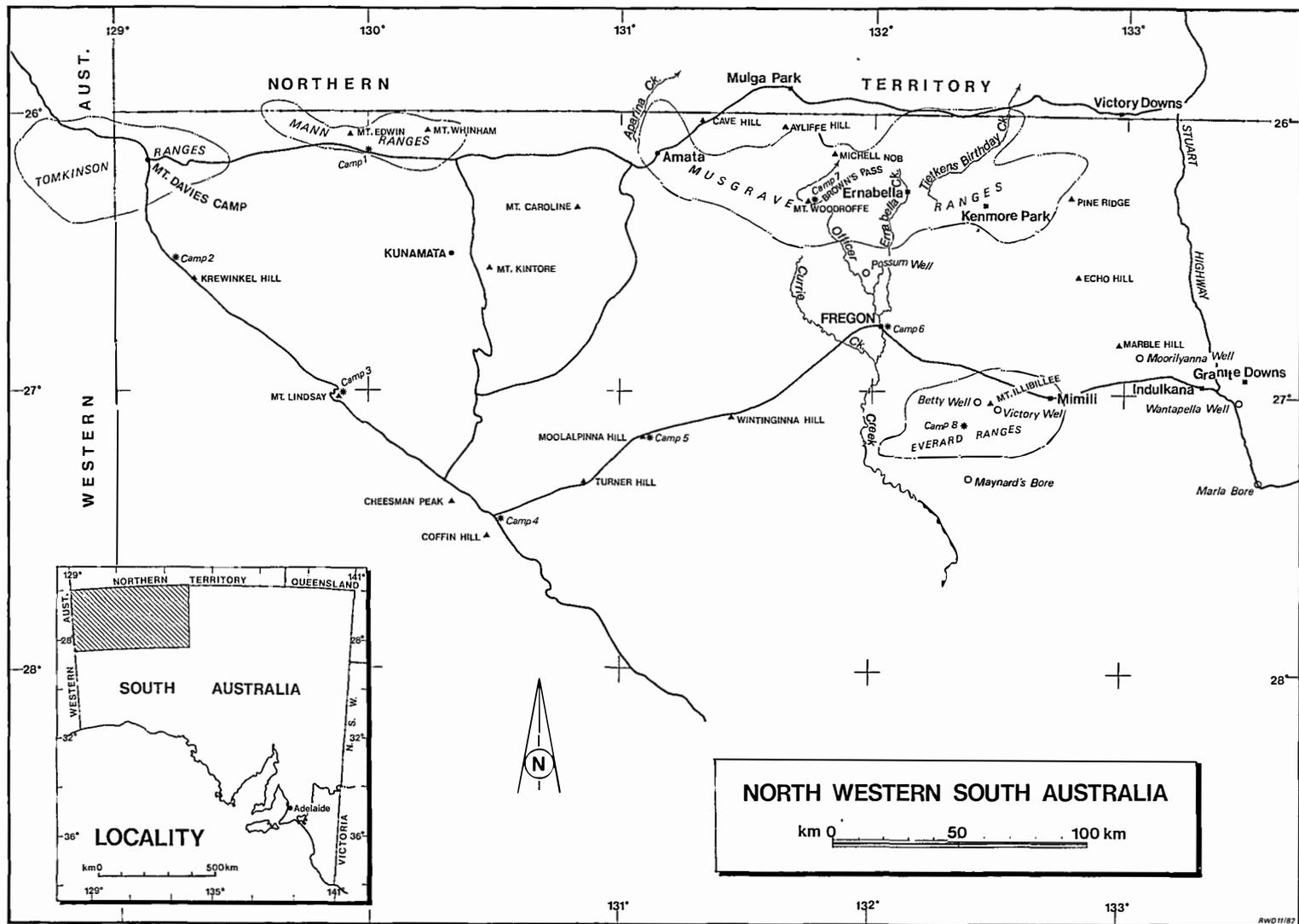
The historical records used are from the following expeditions:—

- 1) By E. Giles to the Mann and Musgrave Ranges in September 1873, the records being abstracted by Cleland (1946a).
- 2) By R.T. Maurice through the region in 1901-2, these records also having been abstracted by Cleland (1946a).
- 3) By S.A. White to the Musgrave and Everard Ranges, and the Officer Creek west of the latter, for about seven weeks in July-August 1914 (White 1915). These records form a major source of data for this paper, because of the relative thoroughness of White's survey, which is especially valuable because it occurred shortly before pastoral development of the region began. Conditions were exceptionally dry.
- 4) To the Mann and Musgrave Ranges in September-October 1928 by R. Williams (Anon. 1928).
- 5) To Ernabella in (?) August 1932 by H. Simpson (1933).
- 6) To the Musgrave Ranges at some time in 1931, in June 1934 and apparently at other times in this period, by J.N. McGilp (1935). The 1934 visit followed heavy rain in February-March. This is another important source, despite McGilp's vagueness about times and places. McGilp retained information supplied by residents, and commented on the impact of pastoral development and white settlement, which had begun "several" years before 1934.
- 7) By J.B. Cleland to the Musgraves in August 1933 (Cleland 1934). This article includes records from a simultaneous expedition by N.B. Tindale and C. Hackett to the Musgrave and Mann Ranges.
- 8) To sandhills described as "south of the Musgraves" in January 1934 (Finlayson 1935). This is a rare source for summer, but vaguely written. Some of the records look as if they may apply to the Officer Creek and Musgrave Ranges, which Finlayson also visited.
- 9) By J.B. Cleland to the Musgraves and Everards in September 1945 (Cleland 1946b).
- 10) By C. Austin *et al.* to the Everards and Musgraves in April-May 1967 (Austin 1967, 1968). Another important source, although it is not clear whether some of the records refer to this region.
- 11) By L. Smith and J. Ford in August-September 1972. Their route took them to Mt Davies Camp, Mt Lindsay, Cheesman Peak, Mt Kintore, Mt Edwin and, again, Mt Davies Camp. These records are unpublished.

Finally, notes on specimens held in the Australian Museum, Sydney, were examined.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

The area with which this paper is concerned lies north of 27° 30' S and west of 133° 20' E, so including Victory Downs and Moorilyanna Well but excluding Indulkana and the Stuart Highway (see map). Reference to Laut *et al.* (1977) and to Specht (1971) shows that the region possesses several features distinguishing



MARCH, 1984

Figure 1. Map of north-western South Australia showing localities mentioned in the text (including campsites of the August–September 1980 expedition).

it from the rest of inland South Australia. It includes all of the Northern Uplands and Alluvial Plains Environmental Region and northern parts of the Western Sandplains Environmental Region, as described in Laut *et al.* The average rainfall, which varies within the region from 20 cm p.a. on the plains to 25 cm on the ranges, is higher than to the south or east. Although very irregular it tends to be higher in summer. There are many rocky domes and mounds and extensive ranges, which rise abruptly and sometimes to considerable heights (e.g. ca 300 m for Mt Ilbillee and ca 700 m for Mt Woodroffe) from the surrounding plains of deep soil. These uplands are granitic, whereas at Indulkana and further east they are of sandstone. The ranges shed much water into creeks and adjacent flat ground, which thus tends to be densely vegetated.

The occasionally high summer rainfall produces a relatively dense growth of mulga, which is the dominant tree of the plains away from the ranges. The uplands are all vegetated quite thickly with *Triodia irritans*. There are scattered and dense clumps of Native Fig on the lower slopes, and restricted areas of mallee on adjacent flat ground. On the plains south of the Mann Ranges, and also north of Coffin Hill, there is open casuarina woodland, which in the former case includes the large Desert Oak. West of about 131° 30' E, and south of about 26° 20' S, there are extensive sandhills. South of the Everards these support many Native Poplars *Codonocarpus* and grevilleas *Grevillea nematophylla*. Further west the sandhills are covered with mallee woodland, which includes *E. pyriformis* and *E. socialis*, and is associated with *Triodia*, *Thryptomene*, *Cassia* and *Acacia*. On flats among these sandhills there is open mulga woodland. The creeks running from the ranges throughout the region are lined with Red Gums, and are thickly vegetated with *Melaleuca* close to the ranges. Bloodwood *E. terminalis* or *dichromophloia* grows in places among the ranges.

Gibber plains are absent, and saltbush plains restricted, but both become extensive immediately to the east and south-east of this region. The changes in habitat and bird life as one passes eastward through Indulkana are described in White (*op. cit.* pp 709-722).

The physical features described above account, or seem to, for the following ornithological characteristics of the region. Species of bird which are found within it, but are scarce, absent or localized further east or

south are (see the Annotated List for their scientific names):— Dusky Grasswren, Slate-backed Thornbill, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Painted Finch, Spotted Bowerbird, Pied Butcherbird, Little Woodswallow and Torresian Crow. Species that are relatively common or widespread further east or south, but apparently absent from the region, are:— Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*, Australian Pratincole *Stiltia isabella*, Thick-billed Grasswren *Amytornis textilis*, Cinnamon Quail-thrush *Cincoloma cinnamomeum*, Chestnut-breasted Whiteface *Aphelocephala pectoralis* and Gibberbird *Ashbyia lovensis*. In addition the Galah, Corella, Orange Chat and Banded Lapwing are comparatively scarce. Wetlands are small or ephemeral; and so waterbirds of all kinds are rare.

The north-west region delineated in Parker *et al.* (1979, p.41) extends further eastward, to 135° E. We have not considered the case for including this additional area, because we have few recent data for it.

Comparison of historic and recent records below reveals some changes of status. The Black Kite, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Magpie-lark and Australian Magpie have increased since White's expedition. The Common Bronzewing and Grey Butcherbird may also have increased. The Australian Bustard, Plumbed Pigeon, and Bush Thick-knee have obviously declined in the same period, and the Malleefowl, Princess Parrot, Scarlet-chested Parrot, Redthroat and Grey Currawong may have done. The factors apparently responsible for most of these changes are: grazing by sheep and cattle, the spread of modern (as distinct from aboriginal) settlements, hunting with firearms, and the trapping of parrots.

ANNOTATED LIST OF SPECIES

In the following notes, the capital letters A—G refer to the expeditions described above. If the capital letter is unaccompanied by information about a record, it is because no such information was given to the authors. Each record on G was at least two kilometres from another, and may include more than one bird. If allowance is made for obvious cases of species that are relatively conspicuous or, inconspicuous, one can use the number of times a species was recorded on G as a rough index of its relative status. The distances given on G are by road unless otherwise stated, and so are usually slightly greater than direct distances. No attempt is made to provide a comprehensive

list of historic records. General comments on the long-term status of a species are made only when they seem appropriate.

EMU *Dromaius novaehollandiae*

A: three sub-adults killed by aboriginals some time in 1975-76.

E: two at Mt Kintore.

G: an adult and six young, seven kilometres NW of Mt Lindsay; three adults on grassy flat by Mt Lindsay; fresh dung at camp 5, and 20 km WSW of Wintiginna Hill.

The data of White, Simpson and McGilp support the impression given by recent observers that the species is uncommon. Finlayson, however, found tracks to be "fairly plentiful".

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae

B. F: two in Ernabella EP.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax* sp.

McGilp was told that "two large black and white Shags" visited Ernabella WH. He listed them under the Black-faced Shag (a marine species); they are almost certainly referable to the Pied Cormorant *P. varius* (S.A. Parker, pers. comm.).

PACIFIC HERON *Ardea pacifica*

A: one at Victory Well (no date).

McGilp was told of this species at Ernabella WH.

WHITE-FACED HERON

Ardea novaehollandiae

A: one at Victory Well, December 1975.

F: two at Ernabella EP, and one at Walyinnie WH Creek.

McGilp was told of this species at Ernabella WH.

STRAW-NECKED IBIS

Threskiornis spinicollis

E: one at Amata.

FRECKLED DUCK *Stictonetta naevosa*

D: an adult male on Ernabella EP on 15 February 1980.

BLACK DUCK *Anas superciliosa*

One in Ernabella EP on F and G. Also recorded on D.

GREY TEAL *Anas gibberifrons*

C: seven ca 5 kilometres N of Mt Woodroffe in creek.

F: one on Ernabella EP, two at Walyinnie WH. One on Ernabella EP on D and G.

Giles reported large numbers in Mann and Musgrave Ranges in September 1973. Conditions must have been exceptionally wet.

PINK-EARED DUCK

Malacorhynchus membranaceus

E: one at Amata.

HARDHEAD *Aythya australis*

F: one at Ernabella EP.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE

Elanus notatus

A: one in September 1975, and one in April 1976.

D. E: one at Mt Kintore.

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

A: May 1975

E: numerous, widespread.

F: 4-5 over Ernabella, and 3-4 over Fregon.

G: moderately common over Ernabella, and 17 records of 1-3 in all areas except between Mt Davies camp and Fregon.

No historical records.

The species seems, therefore to have increased, so that it is now widespread in small numbers around the ranges, and is especially to be found around settlements and water.

BLACK-BREASTED KITE

Hamirostra melanosternon

A: Sep. 1975, one in Bloodwood Valley.

B: one on Officer Creek, eight kilometres SSW of Mt Woodroffe (slide shown to Curator of Birds at S.A. Museum, S.A. Parker).

WHISTLING KITE

Haliastur sphenurus

A: one ca 30 km W of Indulkana in May.

B. D. E: 1976 several, widespread.

F: one at Possum Well.

G: eight records, all of 1-2 birds, and near ranges or creeks; one bird flushed from nest in Red Gum at camp 7.

White did not find it, but McGilp found it "Fairly common" along creeks.

BROWN GOSHAWK*Accipiter fasciatus*

A: September 1975; October 1981.

D. G: six widely separated records, in mallee, mulga and Red Gums. One flushed from nest (lined with green leaves but empty) at camp 7.

The only historical record, by McGilp, is of a pair near Ernabella.

COLLARED SPARROWHAWK*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*

A: April, May (a female in basin, and an immature male on nearby plain, harassing a Pied Butcherbird, apparently in play), September 1976; October 1981.

D. E: one at Cave Hill.

G: four records, two of them in mulga plains, and two in gum-lined creeks. A pair at Camp 6 was building a nest which seemed almost ready for laying.

The only historical records are by White who found one or two waiting at water for prey.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE*Aquila audax*

A: all visits.

D. E: numerous, widespread.

G: 29 records covering all areas, one of six birds, one of four, two of three, and the rest of one or two. A nest 29 km ESE of Fregon, lined with green mulga phyllodes, contained a week-old chick, an (addled?) egg, and two partly eaten rabbits. A nest with a week-old chick in a Bloodwood nine kilometres SE of Krewinkel Hill, in mallee-mulga woodland.

White reported "seldom seen", but Finlayson and McGilp saw it frequently in the Musgraves. Austin found 8+ near his camp in the Everards.

The species seems to have been common, at least since the 1930's.

LITTLE EAGLE*Hieraaetus morphnoides*

A: two in May 1975.

C: one.

D. F: one at Walyinnie WH.

G: five records of which two were in mallee sandhills, and two in gum-lined creeks. At camp 6 two birds, one darker than the other, attended a nest. The fifth record was of a light-phase bird in a nest 15 m above ground in a Red Gum at Betty Well.

No historical records.

SPOTTED HARRIER*Circus assimilis*

D. G: one in open mallee 12 km SE of Krewinkel Hill.

The only historical record is of an adult seen by McGilp.

BLACK FALCON*Falco subniger*

D. E: one at Amata.

G: one chasing a corvid around trees and buildings at Victory Downs HS; one at camp 1; one at camp 7.

No historical records.

PEREGRINE FALCON*Falco peregrinus*

A. B: Black saw one flying over Red Gums along Officer Creek S of Mt Woodroffe in May 1976.

D. G: two perched on, and flying around, cliff at Mitchell Nob; two flying around similar granite dome in Illbillee basin, apparently breeding there.

No historical records.

AUSTRALIAN HOBBY*Falco longipennis*

A: a pair in September 1975; one in May 1976; recorded in October 1981.

D. E: three at Mt Caroline.

G: five records — one bird flying low over plain by Moolalpinna Hill; three records in gum-lined creeks; a bird carrying stick and frequenting nest in Red Gum at Betty Well.

Recorded by White, Williams, and Austin. White saw it several times preying on Zebra Finches.

GREY FALCON*Falco hypoleucos*

C: two soaring and swooping over Brown's Pass.

D: one ca 10 km N of Ernabella on 27 January 1980.

No other records.

BROWN FALCON*Falco berigora*

Historical and recent records show it to be common in all conditions and areas. Recorded in February, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, December.

G: 54 records covering all habitats, including a nest with three eggs two kilometres SE of junction near Coffin Hill; nest with three eggs,

chipping, at Wintiginna Hill; nest with three eggs at camp 7; nest lined with bark strips, with two eggs, in mulga at camp 8.

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL

Falco cenchroides

Recent records show this as common throughout. Recorded in February, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, December.

G: 50 records in all areas, with a pair nesting at Mitchell Nob. Shurcliff saw dependent young being fed October 1981.

White noted the species as widespread; McGilp as "not at all plentiful"

The data suggest that the species is not consistently as common as the Brown Falcon.

MALLEEFOWL

Leipoa ocellata

McGilp (1944): a fairly recently formed mound observed in mulga south of the Everards.

No recent records, perhaps through relative lack of attention to mallee areas.

Giles found four mounds with eggs somewhere near Mann Ranges in October 1873. White found old mounds but no birds. McGilp found a recently used mound. The species has evidently been rare for all of this century.

STUBBLE QUAIL

Coturnix pectoralis

G: two at Wintiginna Hill, in grassy open area, with flowering ephemerals on sand.

McGilp found it in crabhole and watercourse areas which were still half-green, in June 1934, and L. Smith and J. Ford collected one and saw ca 12 others at Mt Davies Camp on 6 September 1972.

LITTLE BUTTON-QUAIL

Turnix velox

D. G: one, 22 km SE of Krewinkel Hill in scattered tussock grass and shrubs; four, 27 km NE of Coffin Hill in same; three near Turner Hill on sand sparsely vegetated with *Triodia* and mulga.

Recorded by White and Williams, and by McGilp, who found chicks in June 1934.

This species has proved widespread, and may possibly be common in favourable conditions.

AUSTRALIAN BUSTARD

Ardeotis australis

G: tracks, 27 km NE of Coffin Hill; feathers four kilometres NE of same; two at camp 8 where the vegetation included grass and ephemerals, and there were many grasshoppers.

White and McGilp reported substantial numbers in some places.

This bird has evidently declined as elsewhere in southern Australia.

BUSH THICK-KNEE

Burhinus grallarius

No recent records.

Recorded by White, Simpson, McGilp and Cleland (in his 1946 visit). McGilp commented that it seemed to be declining rapidly in northern South Australia.

MASKED LAPWING

Vanellus novaehollandiae

D. No other records.

BANDED LAPWING

Vanellus tricolor

Recorded once, by McGilp.

RED-KNEED PLOVER

Erythrogonys cinctus

E: five at Amata.

BLACK-FRONTED PLOVER

Charadrius melanops

D. F: two in Ernabella Creek, and two in Walyinnie WH.

McGilp saw one at rock-hole near Echo Hill.

WOOD SANDPIPER

Tringa glareola

D: two at WH a few kilometres S of Ayliffe Hill.

GREENSHANK

Tringa nebularia

D: one in Ernabella EP.

DIAMOND DOVE

Geopelia cuneata

A: Dec. 1975; Sept. 1976; Oct. 1981.

C: 10 near Mt Woodroffe.

D: Finlayson included this among his most frequently recorded species, although the habitat which he implied that he found it in (sandridge country) seems unsuitable for it. The only other historical record is by McGilp, who found it in gum-lined creeks and thought it "not at all common". McGilp's impression of status is supported by recent observations.

COMMON BRONZEWING

Phaps chalcoptera

A: May, June, Sept. 1975; April 1976, Oct. 1981.

B. D. G: several in Victory Creek, and four at camp 8 at rockhole with water. The characteristic wingclap of a flushed bird was heard by DHC, in mallee and mulga in two places elsewhere.

White and McGilp found it uncommon, the latter seeing a few drinking from sheep troughs.

The species may have increased because of the provision of water for stock.

CRESTED PIGEON

Ocyphaps lophotes

A: April, May, Sept. 1975; April, May (seen at water in numbers up to 50) 1976; Oct. 1981.

B. C: large numbers.

D. E: numerous, widespread.

F: common in *Acacia victoriae* at Ernabella; several at Walyinnie WH: several at Fregon.

G: 22 records in all areas; a bird flushed from empty nest near Mt Woodroffe.

While Finlayson included this among his most frequently recorded species, White apparently failed to find it. McGilp reported it as rare, noting residents' view that it was increasing because of the provision of water for stock. This trend has evidently continued.

PLUMED PIGEON

Petrophassa plumifera

B. C: 10 adults, 5-10 km NE of Mt Woodroffe, and a twig nest on ground sheltered by a bush, with an egg and a chick.

G: eight at Mitchell Nob; one on Mt. Woodroffe; one at Betty Well. These birds were all on rocky slopes with *Triodia*.

Maurice found large numbers. So did White, who also recorded eggs of the species, in the Everards. McGilp apparently found the species to be scarce, and thought that grazing by sheep had caused it to decline. Austin found a few pairs in Everards. L. Smith and J. Ford collected one on the lower slopes of Mt Edwin on 5 September 1972.

McGilp's belief in its decline is supported by the scarcity of birds seen recently.

RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO

Calyptorhynchus magnificus

No recent records.

Cleland saw four between Moorilyanna and Ernabella on 6-7 Aug. 1933. McGilp was told

by residents that it was "sometimes seen"; it is probably just a very occasional straggler to the area.

GALAH

Cacatua roseicapilla

A: Sept. 1976; May (seen congregated at water but not in large numbers), Dec. 1976; Oct. 1981 (entering tree hollows).

B. C: numerous.

D: (breeding).

E: numerous, widespread.

F: common.

G: 21 records in all areas, but only four of the records were between Mt Davies camp and Fregon; mainly near creeks and water.

Rare early this century. White found only a few birds, on Officer Creek. McGilp found a few on Pine Ridge, and wrote that the species was "rapidly working westerly." This trend has obviously continued.

LITTLE CORELLA

Cacatua pastinator

C: two.

Finlayson saw 39 at Pundi Soak 90 miles SW of Ernabella; McGilp saw a few near Echo Hill. S.A. Parker (in prep.) considers that these were probably Pink Cockatoos *C. leadbeateri*. Unlike the Galah, this species has remained uncommon.

PINK COCKATOO

Cacatua leadbeateri

McGilp (1944) saw several small flocks in the Everards; L. Smith and J. Ford saw two, ca 64 km SE of Krewinkel Hill on 30 August 1972.

E: two at Mt Whinham.

G: one at Turner Hill, flying over sandy area with mulga and *Triodia*.

PRINCESS PARROT

Polytelis alexandrae

McGilp reported it as "fairly numerous" and breeding in (apparently) 1933.

COCKATIEL

Nymphicus hollandicus

A: Dec. 1975; Dec. 1976; Oct. 1981.

C. D. G: recorded in mallee with *Triodia* near camp 2; one at camp 6.

White and McGilp failed to find it, but Simpson and Austin reported large numbers.

BUDGERIGAR

Melopsittacus undulatus

A: Sept., Dec. 1975; April, Dec. 1976; Oct. 1981 (many flocks feeding on *Triodia* seed, entering Red Gum hollows and probably breeding).

C. D. G: 11 records, including eight records of small numbers in mallee and mulga between camp 2 and 5. The others were of birds heard at camps 6, 7 and 8.

White found only one small party. Finlayson, McGilp and Austin found it abundant on grassland.

PORT LINCOLN PARROT

Barnardius zonarius

Recent and historical records show it to be common, especially along gum-lined creeks. Recorded in all months except March and Nov.

G: 21 records, of which 17 were among ranges, and only four in sandhill-dominated country between Mt Davies camp and Fregon. In two places, birds were entering or leaving hollows. Dependent young seen by Shurcliff in Oct. 1981. Several feeding on *Enchylaena* at camp 1. Birds mist-netted, or watched closely, in Everards on A had all-black heads, with no visible traces of red on their foreheads.

MULGA PARROT *Psephotus varius*

Recent and historical records show it as common throughout. Recorded in Jan., Feb., April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.

G: 39 records, each of small numbers, in all areas and all types of woodland. Most (27) records were in the mainly sandhill country between Mt Davies camp and Fregon. At camp 6 a male fed a female, which entered a hollow. Shurcliff saw dependent young in Sept. 1975.

BLUE BONNET *Northiella haematogaster*

E: two at Cave Hill.

McGilp reported "odd pairs seen in mulga country".¹

BOURKE'S PARROT *Neophema bourkii*

In May 1976 DHC saw ten, 12 km SW of Maynard's Bore, and five between Mimili and Victory Well, while A.B. Black saw a flock at Marble Hill.

E: common N of Amata.

G: 10 records, in all areas, of which two records were in sandhills with mallee and *Triodia*, and five in grassy open mulga woodland. At Iltunga rockholes with water

(near Coffin Hill) J.S. Edington and DHC saw 100+ just after sunset. A watch was maintained for them at dusk, without success, at rock holes with water near camps 5 and 8.

Earlier observers (e.g. White, Austin) found the species widespread, with large numbers assembling at water. McGilp found it breeding. L. Smith and J. Ford noted small flocks 34 km S of Mt Davies and 40 km SW of Mt Lindsay on 29 August, 1972 and 1 September, 1972, respectively.

The species seems fairly common but inconspicuous except at water.

SCARLET-CHESTED PARROT

Neophema splendida

McGilp was told that it had bred in recent years. His statement that most of the captive birds then in S.A. originated here suggests a reason why few have been seen since. L. Smith and J. Ford saw one 70 km SE of Krewinkel Hill on 30 August 1972.

PALLID CUCKOO *Cuculus pallidus*

A: common in mulga on plains and sandhills S of Everards in May 1976.

C: one.

E: several, widespread.

G: 17 records in all areas, in mallee, mulga and Red Gum.

BLACK-EARED CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx osculans

A: an immature netted and photographed Oct. 1981.

G: two records in mallee on sandhills between Krewinkel Hill and Mt Lindsay, and one in mulga 14 km SE of Fregon.

White recorded "quite a number" especially in mulga. McGilp found a juvenile fed by Red-throats in a saltbush.

HORSFIELD'S BRONZE-CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx basalis

A: Sept. 1975.

E: several, widespread.

G: 24 records in all areas and habitats, 14 in the mainly sandhill country between Mt Davies camp and Fregon. A juvenile fed by Inland Thornbill at camp 1; one fed by Chestnut-rumped Thornbill at camp 8.

White found only one, and McGilp none.

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK

Ninox novaehollandiae

A: April, Dec. 1975; May 1976.

D.G.: five records, all in gum-lined creeks, one at Mt Lindsay, two near Fregon, one near Ernabella and one near Mt Woodroffe. The Mt Lindsay bird was seen to be paler than southern ones. This feature has been noticed by several previous observers.

These, and previous records, indicate that the species is consistently quite common along creeks.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*

G: four eggs in Red Gum hollow 14 km S of Mt Davies camp; one bird at Moolalpinna Hill; one in Red Gums at camp 6. No previous records.

TAWNY FROGMOUTH *Podargus strigoides*

A: May 1976 (one bird); Sept. 1976.

White found very few (including one incubating) and McGilp found only one.

AUSTRALIAN OWLET-NIGHTJAR

Aegotheles cristatus

A: May, Sept. 1975; May 1976 (in ranges).

B.C: one.

D.E: several, widespread.

G: heard near camp 2; one at Mt Lindsay; one at camp 6; one at camp 7.

White and McGilp each recorded (only?) one.

It seems then to be widespread in small numbers.

SPOTTED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus guttatus*

G: heard near camps 2 and 3.

McGilp saw one, and collected an egg.

RED-BACKED KINGFISHER

Halcyon pyrrhopygia

A: Sept., Dec. 1975; Sept., Dec. 1976; Oct. 1981.

B.F: one at Ernabella.

G: 12 records, each of 1-2 birds, in all areas including mulga plains, mallee sandhills and gum-lined creeks. Near Mt Lindsay a pair was breeding in a termite mound. Near Mt Woodroffe calls heard often, during day and night.

White recorded it infrequently. McGilp found birds making a nesting tunnel.

RAINBOW BEE-EATER *Merops ornatus*

A: Aug. 1975 (three only); Oct. 1981 (two only).

F: several at Ernabella, several at Walyinnie WH.

G: 4+ at Currie crossing 25 km WSW of Fregon; 4+ at camp 7.

White did not mention it. McGilp was told by residents that it occasionally appeared.

WHITE-BACKED SWALLOW

Cheramoeca leucosternum

A: April 1975; April, May (in two places on plains) 1976.

B.C: five.

D.E: at Mt Kintore and Mt Whinham.

F: one on road N of Fregon.

G: eight records, of which five were in sandhills, one at Mt Woodroffe, two in plains near Everards.

White and McGilp found it often, with many instances of breeding.

WELCOME SWALLOW *Hirundo neoxena*

A: May 1975; April, May (in two places near water), Dec. 1976; October 1981.

F: two at Possum Well.

G: at Victory Downs HS; two at Victory Well; four at Betty Well.

White and McGilp found a few, the latter with evidence of breeding.

TREE MARTIN *Cecropis nigricans*

C: 40.

D.F: common on Ernabella Creek; several at Walyinnie WH; several at Possum Well.

G: common, breeding, at camp 6; on Ernabella Creek six km S of Ernabella; at Ernabella; moderately common, breeding, at camp 7.

White did not mention it; but McGilp evidently found it common along gum-lined creeks. Austin found many breeding at Ernabella.

FAIRY MARTIN *Cecropis ariel*

A: Dec. 1975 (breeding).

G: Six records near Wintiginna Hill; several at camp 6; old nests at Mitchell Nob; several birds, with old nest, at Mt Woodroffe; several birds at Victory Well; many (old?) nests in caves in Illbillee basin; ca 20 old nests, and one active one, at Betty Well. In all records, nests were on rock. L. Smith and J. Ford found old nests on Mt Lindsay, 31 August 1972. No earlier records.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Recent and historical records show it to be common throughout. Records in all months except Mar. and Nov.

G: 28 records in all areas; at Wintiginna Hill it was common and feeding young.

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina novaehollandiae

Recent and historical records show this to be quite common, with records in all months except Jan., March and Nov.

G: 16 records in all types of woodland and all areas; a group of 5-7, including immatures, at Victory Well; one bird carrying a stick at Betty Well. Calls were noted to differ from those of southern birds. Cleland found a nest with eggs at Ernabella in Sept. 1946. Shurcliff found a bird in a nest in Oct. 1981.

WHITE-BELLIED CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina papuensis

Austin reported a pair at Ernabella. He gave no description, but reported the Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike also.

GROUND CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina maxima

A: April 1975 (three); Oct. 1981 (three E of Mimili HS).

D.G: two 40 km W of Victory Downs; one, 22 km W of Amata; one, five km SE of Fregon among old mulga; one, six km SE of Fregon.

No certain historical records; White and McGilp failed to find it, and Austin's record may have been outside this region.

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage sueurii*

A: Sept. 1975.

E: several near Mt Whinham.

F: one near Ernabella.

G: 12 records, each of a few birds, in all parts of journey, except between Fregon and Mt Woodroffe, and in all types of woodland. White saw many but McGilp and Austin noted very few.

RED-CAPPED ROBIN *Petroica goodenovii*

A: April, May, Sept. 1975; May (quite common everywhere) 1976.

B.C: several, widespread.

G: 11 records in all areas except between Fregon and Mt Woodroffe. Dependent young 14 km SE of Fregon.

White, McGilp and Austin found it common, especially in mulga.

HOODED ROBIN *Melanodryas cucullata*

A: April, May, Sept. 1975; April, May (quite common on plains, less so than Red-capped Robin) 1976.

D.E: several, widespread.

G: 23 records in all sectors, including one bird carrying nesting material near camp 4; two carrying food, and agitated, at Mitchell Nob; two feeding young at Victory Well.

White and McGilp reported it as common.

JACKY WINTER *Microeca leucophaea*

E: two at Cave Hill.

G: two records in mulga-mallee sandhills between Mt Davies Camp and camp 4.

J. Ford saw one 13 km NW of Krewinkel Hill, 29 August 1972.

No other records.

RUFIOUS WHISTLER

Pachycephala rufiventris

A: all visits, being noted as quite common everywhere in May 1976.

C: one.

E: several, widespread.

F: one near Ernabella.

G: 30 records, covering all areas, and noted as common 39 km NW of Mt Lindsay, and moderately common at camps 5 and 8; nest with three eggs near camp 2.

White and Austin found it widespread; McGilp saw only three. White noted that it had a different song to southern birds, and Austin found it paler.

GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH

Colluricincla harmonica

Early and recent observers have found it common, especially in ranges and nearby creeks. Records all months except Jan., March, Nov.

G: 14 records in all areas; common in Illbillee basin, two fledglings found here in different places; nest-building at Betty Well.

CRESTED BELLBIRD *Oreoica gutturalis*

Early and recent observers have found it common and widespread. Records all months except March and Nov.

G: 37 records in all areas, 25 of them in or near sandhill country between 26 km S of Mt Davies camp and one km W of Wintiginna Hill. McGilp found it breeding.

SATIN (?) FLYCATCHER

Myiagra cyanoleuca

For possible sighting in April 1976, see Shurcliff (1977).

GREY FANTAIL *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

A: Sept. 1975 (one); April 1976 (one, "gone within two weeks").

G: 1 + at Krewinkel Hill in mallee-*Triodia*-shrubland; one at Betty Well among scattered Red Gum and thickets of Dead Finish *Acacia tetragonophylla*.

Austin saw one in Everards.

WILLIE WAGTAIL *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Early and recent observers have found it widespread. Records all months except March and Nov.

G: 47 records covering all areas and habitats. Shurcliff found breeding in September 1975.

CHIMING WEDGBILL

Psophodes occidentalis

A: May (in sandhills SW of Maynard's Bore and mulga ca 10 km E of Mimili HS), Sept. 1976.

G: eight records - one, 6 km ENE of Amata on plain with shrubs; one, 26 km W of Amata in grassy parkland; near camp 4. Other records in sandhills with mulga.

Historical records support the impression given by the above that it is widespread in plains and sandhills vegetated with mulga and shrubs.

CHESTNUT QUAIL-THRUSH

Cinclosoma castanotum

No recent records, although on G much habitat that seemed suitable (e.g. mallee around Krewinkel Hill) was explored.

White and Williams collected specimens and White took eggs also.

CHESTNUT-BREASTED QUAIL-THRUSH

Cinclosoma castaneothorax

(*C.c. marginatum*, the 'Western Quail-thrush').

Recorded in extreme south-western Northern Territory and adjoining parts of Western Australia (Ford 1970). McGilp (1944:6) saw, at a spot in or near the Everard Ranges, a quail-thrush probably of this form: "The very rufous chest and underpart of the breast decided me not to record it as the Cinnamon or the Chestnut-backed Quail-thrush. It may be *C. castaneothorax*". At the time McGilp wrote this, *marginatum* and *castaneothorax* were considered to be one and the same form; (Parker *et al.* (forthcoming) and Ford (1983) regard them as subspecies of the single species *C. castaneothorax*, which they separate from *C. cinnamomeum*).

WHITE-BROWED BABBLER

Pomatostomus superciliosus

Early and recent observers have found it common in woodland and shrubland everywhere, including Illbillee basin. Records all months except January, March, November.

G: 22 records in all areas.

White found much breeding activity.

RUFIOUS SONGLARK

Cinclorhamphus mathewsi

A: May, December 1975.

D.G: 12 records in all areas, eight of them between nine km SE of Krewinkel Hill and 17 km NE of Wintiginna Hill; several in grassy open area near camp 5.

No earlier records.

BROWN SONGLARK *Cinclorhamphus cruralis*

A: May 1976 (a male 15 km SW of Maynard's Bore).

D.G: 23 records in all areas, especially grassy ones.

McGilp noted "a fair number" in 1931.

SPLENDID FAIRY-WREN

Malurus splendens

Early and recent observers have found it widespread and locally common in mulga plains with shrubs, and in shrubs along creeks. In May 1976, DHC found 20-30 together in mulga with much *Grevillea nematophylla* and other shrubs ca 10 km E of Mimili.

G: 20 records in all areas, one bird in *Acacia victoriae* in Amata settlement; several groups at camp 8.

VARIEGATED FAIRY-WREN

Malurus lamberti

A: all visits, being noted by DHC in May 1976 to be common among ranges but absent elsewhere.

B.C: one.

D.E: one group at Mt Woodroffe.

F: five or six on rocky outcrops 20 km NE of Ernabella, and three or four on same at Walyinnie WH.

G: 14 records, of which seven were in sandhill country between Mt Davies camp and Moolalpinna Hill; three along gum-lined creeks in Musgraves; and four in Musgrave and Everard Ranges themselves; a juvenile being fed in Illbillee basin.

White did not mention it. McGilp found it mostly along watercourses.

WHITE-WINGED WREN

Malurus leucopterus

A: May, September 1976 (both times along Officer Creek SW of Everards).

D: breeding.

G: six records - 1+ in Amata settlement in *Acacia victoriae*; at camp 1; several birds near camp 5; along creeks near Fregon and Ernabella.

White and McGilp found it widespread but scarce.

STRIATED GRASSWREN *Amytornis striatus*

G: specimen taken one km SE of Krewinkel Hill; tracks seen, and calls heard nearby.

Cleland (1934) referred to a specimen taken by N.B. Tindale and C. Hackett eight miles NW of Kunamata on 17 July 1933.

DUSKY GRASSWREN *Amytornis purnelli*

Historical and recent records show it as common in granite hills vegetated with *Triodia* in Mann, Musgrave and Everard Ranges and Mt Lindsay. Recorded all months except January, March, November.

G: recorded in eight places including Mann Ranges and Mt Lindsay. A short-tailed juvenile in Illbillee basin; a female with brood patch 27 km W of Victory Well; a bird carrying a moth at Mitchell Nob; also recorded on Mt Woodroffe. Cleland found a nest with young near Ernabella in September 1946. The bird's habit of hopping or calling on bare granite away from cover (sometimes several metres) accounts in part for frequency of observation.

RUFIOUS-CROWNED EMU-WREN

Stipiturus ruficeps

Said by Condon (1969) to occur in the North-West of South Australia. His remark was presumably based on the map in Keast (1957) which, erroneously, included the far North-West of South Australia in the range of *S. ruficeps (sensu stricto)*. There are, in fact, no records of the bird from this region. It does occur in the Simpson Desert in Queensland (e.g. May 1977).

REDTHROAT *Sericornis brunneus*

A: April 1975 (three together in plains a few km E of Mimili).

G: several birds 23 km NW of junction near Coffin Hill in plains with many shrubs; three at camp 4 in plains vegetated with shrubs and mulga.

Contrary to experience of recent observers, White and McGilp found it common in ranges and watercourses, in shrubs and sometimes *Triodia*.

CALAMANTHUS *Sericornis campestris*

G: one near camp 5 in base of Corkwoods and Native Poplars.

White looked for it without success. McGilp found a few in saltbush. The species is clearly uncommon.

WEEBILL *Smicrornis brevirostris*

A: May, September, 1975.

B.C: two.

D.E: several at Cheesman Peak.

F: several near Ernabella.

G: recorded five times between camp 2 and 20 km WSW of Wintiginna Hill; once in Red Gums six kilometres S of Ernabella, and once at camp 7.

White and McGilp found it along gum-lined creeks. McGilp considered it fairly common and found a recently used nest.

WESTERN GERYGONE *Gerygone fusca*

D.G: 2+ calling in *Allocasuarina decaisneana* over *Triodia* 62 km W of Amata; 2+ calling in canopy of mixed woodland 107 km E of Mt Davies camp; several in *A. decaisneana* at camp 1; several in mallee and mulga at camp 2; one in mulga near camp 5; one or two near *Melaleuca* and *Acacia* shrubs, low bushy Red Gums, and Corkwood and mulga trees at camp 7; three pairs in plains 14 km SE of Fregon.

White and McGilp each recorded it only once. Austin wrote vaguely that he found it frequently in mulga from Welbourne Hill (on Stuart Highway SE of this region) northwards; see Ford (1981).

Apparently, then, the species fluctuates in numbers.

INLAND THORNBILL *Acanthiza apicalis*

Historical and recent records show it to be widespread and fairly common, being found in large shrubs with mallee on sandhills, and with mulga on plains, and also along watercourses. Recorded all months except January, March and November.

G: 11 records in all areas; young being fed in nest in mulga at camp 1.

CHESTNUT-RUMPED THORNBILL*Acanthiza uropygialis*

Historical and recent records show it to be widespread, and common in all types of woodland: mulga, mallee, desert oak, Red Gum and, at Moolalpinna Hill, in fig. Recorded in February, April, May, June, July, August, September.

G: 17 records in all areas. Near camp 2 it frequented mallee in preference to mulga, but it was found in mulga in several other places. At camp 8 two pairs were feeding young, and another feeding a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo; here a bird imitated a White-browed Babbler.

White found a nest with three eggs, and McGilp a nest with two young.

SLATE-BACKED THORNBILL*Acanthiza robustirostris*

A: May, September 1976; in May recorded only once in extensive search of plains S of Everards, the record being of two *ca* 40 km SSW of Victory Well, feeding in *Acacia kempeyana* and *Dodonaea* shrubs among mulga.

G: 14 records, one in mallee-*Triodia*, the rest in mulga; 2+ birds, 49 km W of Victory Downs; several, 26 km S of Mt Davies; moderately common at camp 2, feeding at all heights in mulga in preference to nearby mallee; five more records between here and 11 km NE of Wintiginna Hill; 1+, 14 km SE of Fregon; one at camp 8.

White found it "fairly plentiful" in dense mulga between Musgraves and Everards. McGilp thought he saw a few. Austin found it only near Musgraves.

These records suggest that it becomes more common N of Everards, perhaps because mulga is denser.

YELLOW-RUMPED THORNBILL*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*

Historical and recent records show it as quite common throughout. Recorded all months except January, March and November.

G: 18 records, in nearly all areas from 107 km E of Mt Davies camp onwards; moderately common 14 km SE of Fregon and near Victory Well; one carrying food at camp 7. Shurcliff found dependent young in October 1981.

SOUTHERN WHITEFACE*Aphelocephala leucopsis*

Historical and recent records show it as common throughout, and abundant in more open

plains. Recorded in February, April, May, June, July, August, September, October.

G: 34 records in all areas, in six cases birds seen carrying food or nesting material, or feeding young. At 16 km SE of Mt Lindsay, and at camp 8, birds fed young in nest in hollow of a mulga; in latter case the nest was grass and the tree dead. White found nest with three eggs in August.

BANDED WHITEFACE*Aphelocephala nigricincta*

E: five at Mt Caroline.

Cleland (1934) referred to three specimens collected by Tindal and Hackett at Kunamata on 17 July 1933. McGilp found old nests. Austin referred vaguely to records N of Welbourne Hill. L. Smith and J. Ford noted two, 37 km WSW of Mt Edwin, 6 September 1972.

VARIED SITTELLA*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*

Historical and recent records show it as widespread in rather small numbers in all types of woodland: Red Gum, mallee, desert oak and mulga. Recorded in May, June, July, August, September.

G: four records, one each near camps 1, 2, 3 and 4. At camp 1 there were 5-10 birds including a dependent juvenile.

WHITE-BROWED TREECREEPER*Climacteris affinis*

A: May 1975; May (quite common in plains with much dead mulga), September 1976.

G: nine records in all areas except between Amata and Mt Davies camp and in Musgraves. One record among shrubs and dead trees on sandhills 29 km NW of Mt Lindsay. Three records were among desert oaks with mulga near camp 4. The rest were in mulga near camps 4, 5 and 8, and nine kilometres E of Mimili.

Both White and McGilp found it quite common, the latter mainly in mulga, and occasionally in the ranges.

SPINY-CHEEKED HONEYEATER*Acanthagenys rufogularis*

Historical and recent records show it as common throughout.

Recorded in all months except January, March and November.

G: 43 records in all areas, and all habitats which included trees or large shrubs. McGilp found several old nests.

YELLOW-THROATED MINER

Manorina flavigula

Historical and recent records show it as common wherever there are trees, especially Red Gums. Recorded all months except January, March, November.

G: 53 records in all areas. Nest with three young in mistletoe on mulga near camp 5; nest with one young and at least one egg in mallee 20 km WSW of Wintiginna Hill. Shurcliff saw young fed in October 1981.

SINGING HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus virescens

Historical and recent records show it as common throughout. Recorded all months except January, March, November.

G: 28 records in all areas. Shurcliff recorded it breeding in September. McGilp found a nest with two advanced young in a tall saltbush, and noted that it favoured large saltbushes and *Melaleuca* along watercourses.

GREY-HEADED HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus keartlandi

All observers have found it common among or near ranges, and occasionally elsewhere. Recorded in all months except January, March, November, December. Recorded in Mann, Musgrave, Everard Ranges, also Mt Lindsay and Mt Kintore.

G: eight records: one in red-flowering exotic eucalypt in Amata settlement; among mulga at camp 1, and nine km SE of Mt Lindsay; moderately common in mallee in Illbillee basin and Victory Creek. In May 1976 A.B. Black saw birds in Red Gums in gully ca 20 km SE of Amata, surrounding trees being *Callitris* and Bloodwood. White found advanced young in Everards in August.

GREY-FRONTED HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus plumulus

All observers have found it to be localized. Shurcliff recorded only one bird, in April 1976.

E: on *Triodia*-covered hill ca 35 km W of Amata.

G: 12 records in all; moderately common in patch of mallee (*E. socialis*) 54 km E of Mt Davies camp, and widespread (11 records) in mallee between Krewinkel Hill and 20 km WSW of Wintiginna Hill. Feeding dependent young at Krewinkel Hill. White also found dependent young.

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus penicillatus

All observers have found it common along gum-lined creeks, and restricted elsewhere. Recorded all months except January, March, November.

G: 1+ at Amata; on creek 14 m S of Mt Davies camp; the other 12 records in all areas from Currie Creek onwards. In Victory Well area they were in all habitats which had trees. DHC found it in mulga plains ca three kilometres from Everards in May. 1976. Shurcliff found it breeding in September 1975, and noted dependent young being fed in October 1981.

BROWN HONEYEATER

Lichmera indistincta

For records at Mt Lindsay, Ernabella and Victory Well in 1980 see Matheson (1981). In October 1981 Shurcliff found 2+ in Illbillee basin, feeding on mistletoe flowers.

WHITE-FRONTED HONEYEATER

Phylidonyris albifrons

A: April 1975; April 1976.

C: one.

D.E: numerous, widespread.

G: 10 records, four of them in plains with mallee and mulga in areas of camps 4 and 5; also at camps 7 and 8, and in Victory Well area, on rocky slopes and in *Melaleuca* along creek.

White found many in flowering *Eremophila*. McGilp found many in saltbush along creeks.

GREY HONEYEATER *Conopophila whitei*

For two records on margin of this region see Paton (1981).

BLACK HONEYEATER *Certhionyx niger*

G: moderately common at Krewinkel Hill in mallee which included some flowering *E. socialis*, with shrubs which included flowering *Thryptomene*, flowering *Acacia*, and *Triodia*; no other records.

PIED HONEYEATER *Certhionyx variegatus*

G: a female 22 km SE of Krewinkel Hill in patches of mulga and mallee *E. socialis* in burnt area, with grass and dwarf shrubs.

White found it at Moorilyanna Well.

CRIMSON CHAT *Ephthianura tricolor*

A: September 1975.

D.E: several, widespread.

F: one near Ernabella airstrip.

G: 45 records covering all areas; feeding young near camps 5 and 8.

White, McGilp and Austin found it numerous, and preferring open grassy flats.

ORANGE CHAT *Ephthianura aurifrons*

D: near Ayliffe Hill.

E: several, widespread.

G: four records, all on open plains: two on grassland near camp 5; one bird at eight, and one at 10 km S of Mitchell Nob; one 27 km ENE of Mimili in saltbush with *Eremophila* and mulga.

White and McGilp seem, unlike recent observers, to have found it quite common, although in McGilp's case only on some visits.

MISTLETOEBIRD *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

A: all visits, and common everywhere in May 1976; dependent young caught in October 1981.

B.D.E: numerous, widespread.

G: 17 records in all areas, 10 of them in sandhill country between 26 km S of Mt Davies Camp and 17 km NE of Wintiginna Hill; especially numerous in Illbillee basin.

White found very few, and McGilp apparently found it to be localized.

RED-BROWED PARDALOTE*Pardalotus rubricatus*

A: September 1975; May 1976; October 1981. A.B. Black saw it in Red Gums ca 20 km SE of Amata.

D.E: numerous at Mt Whinham.

F: several near Ernabella.

G: heard 12 km NE of Mt Davies camp; six records between Krewinkel Hill and Wintiginna Hill, in mallee or mulga; one at camp 7; two records in Everards.

White found only a few along gum-lined creeks. McGilp found it fairly common along same, and inspected a nesting tunnel in use. L. Smith and J. Ford noted one bird on Mt Lindsay on 31 August 1972.

It seems therefore to be widespread in small numbers.

STRIATED PARDALOTE *Pardalotus striatus*

A: September 1975; May 1976 (heard in Red Gums on Officer Creek).

B.C: five.

F: common in Ernabella Creek.

G: four sightings in Red Gums near Mt Woodroffe, Ernabella, Fregon and Victory Well.

White did not mention it, but McGilp found it fairly common on gum-lined creeks.

The foregoing records are confined to Red Gums from Mt Woodroffe eastward.

PAINTED FIRETAIL *Emblema picta*

G: 8-11 half-way up Mt Woodroffe, flying at ca 10 m over rocky slopes vegetated with *Triodia* only, and perched near pools in a small creek.

White found it rare and only in Musgraves. McGilp could not find it. Austin saw two drinking at a rock pool in Everards.

ZEBRA FINCH *Poephila guttata*

All observers have found it abundant throughout, especially near water. Recorded all months except March and November.

G: 40 records covering all areas and habitats; in three places nests were found in raptors' nests. Shurcliff found it breeding in September 1975 and October 1981.

WESTERN BOWERBIRD*Chlamydera guttata*

Although White did not mention it, later observers have found the species to be widespread in small numbers, always in or near Native Fig in rocky rises. Recorded in all months except January, March, November. Recorded in Mann, Musgrave and Everard Ranges, Moorilyanna Well and Mt Lindsay. Some sites are isolated, e.g. a small granite dome 16 km SE of Mt Lindsay, where a bower was found on G. Recorded in nine widely separated localities on G. Active bowers have proved easy to find, always under Figs, but no one has reported other evidence of breeding.

MAGPIE-LARK *Grallina cyanoleuca*

Recent observers have found it widespread in small numbers, more so near artificial than natural waters. Recorded in February, May, June, August, September; and at Amata, Fregon, Ernabella, Mimili, Victory Well, Betty Well, and bore 107 km E of Mt Davies camp. Debus found it breeding.

White failed to find it, and McGilp found it only at an artificial well ca 65 km S of Ernabella.

Presumably it has increased with the provision of water for stock.

WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus leucorhynchus

G: eight at camp 7. No other records.

MASKED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus personatus

D.G: recorded in five widely separated localities, over all types of woodland, including 200+, 18 km SE of Fregon, milling low in dense flocks over mulga with shrubs.

White saw several large flocks, and McGilp saw "fair numbers" some time in 1931.

WHITE-BROWED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus superciliosus

G: 1+, at Krewinkel Hill over flowering mallee; 4+, 18 km SE of Fregon.

White and McGilp reported large numbers.

BLACK-FACED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus cinereus

Although White found it thinly scattered and less numerous than further south, later observers have found it numerous throughout. Recorded in all months except March and November.

G: 86 records in all areas. A nest (a grass cup) with one egg in hollow of dead mulga at camp 8. McGilp found a nest with two advanced young in a fork of a mulga branch in June 1934.

LITTLE WOODSWALLOW *Artamus minor*

A: September, December 1976; October 1981.

D.G: three, 6 km NE of Amata; two at Mt Lindsay; 8+, on Mitchell Nob; 5+, on Mt Woodroffe (among flock of Fairy Martins); 6+, in Illbillee basin; three at Betty Well; one 17 km N of Victory Well; 6+, 16 km N of Victory Well. Debus found it breeding. L. Smith and J. Ford recorded ca 12 on Mt Lindsay on 31 August 1972.

No historical records; was it overlooked?

GREY BUTCHERBIRD

Cracticus torquatus

A: April, September 1975; May (common in plains), September 1976.

B.E: several, widespread.

G: 22 records in all areas.

Historical records are, strangely, scarce. White found it "very rare", and McGilp reported only one pair.

PIED BUTCHERBIRD

Cracticus nigrogularis

Although White and McGilp noted only a few, later observers have found it common and widespread among ranges. Recorded in all months except January, March, November.

G: 35 records, about half of them among or near ranges. Some records were in plains with mulga and desert oak, and at least two records in mallee (22 km SE of Krewinkel Hill, 11 km N of Coffin Hill). Most records were of one or two; but there were several birds at camp 1, and 8+ at camp 7. A nest with four eggs at camp 7, and 3+ juveniles at Victory Well. Debus found it breeding, and Shurcliff found dependent young in October 1981.

Evidence that it extends east to the Macumba River is a record on G of two adults and three immatures 77 km ESE of Indulkana on 25 August 1980. The birds were catching grasshoppers on the ground, in open mulga woodland with shrubs and ephemerals. A creek lined with large gums was visible to the south, and a low range beyond.

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

Gymnorhina tibicen

Recent observers have found it widespread and moderately common. Recorded in February, April, May, June, August, September, October, December.

G: 38 records covering all areas, most of them on plains near Mann, Musgrave and Everard Ranges; seven of them in sandhill country. Active nests were found twice in mulga, and twice in Red Gum. Debus found it breeding.

Observers agree that the great majority of birds had bands on the back as broad, or almost as broad, as on nominate race *G. t. tibicen*, the Black-backed Magpie. DHC found that, of 23 birds examined between Mt Illbillee area and 130 km SE of Mimili, 22 scored 4A on the Burton-Martin scale (Burton & Martin 1976), and one scored 3A. A.B. Black saw many pure or almost pure Black-backed Magpies in the Musgraves, as well as two scoring 2, one scoring 3 and one scoring 3-4.

White did not report the species. McGilp found it "very rare" and was told by residents that it had appeared only after white settlement. Cleland seems to have found it only at Mimili in September 1945.

Its range has evidently increased.

GREY CURRAWONG

Strepera versicolor

No recent records.

White found a few and some breeding activity, in Musgraves and Everards. Cleland (1933) and McGilp found it a few times in Musgraves.

Apparently it has become rare.

CROWS *Corvus* spp

Records of the two following species are limited by reluctance of observers to differentiate between corvids. On G, there were 22 records of identified corvids, and three of unidentified.

LITTLE CROW *Corvus bennetti*

A: DHC recorded none in May 1976, and noted few corvids on plains.

C.D.E: numerous, widespread.

G: seven records : a nest at Turner Hill, six metres up a mulga, lined with bark and grass, and containing five eggs; heard near camp 5; a nest with young in mulga two kilometres WSW of Wintiginna Hill; recorded 28 km WSW of Fregon; heard at camp 7; recorded at camp 8; 50 km ENE of Mimili in open mulga. Debus also found it breeding. McGilp could not find the species.

Perhaps scarce near the ranges.

TORRESIAN CROW *Corvus orru*

DHC found it moderately common in Everards in May 1976.

D.E: several, widespread.

G: recorded in 15 localities in Mann, Musgrave and Everard Ranges and Mt Lindsay. Recorded away from ranges, at 14 km SE of Mt Davies camp, and nine and 11 km SE of Mt Lindsay. Debus reported it breeding.

McGilp's data supported the finding of recent observers that it is quite common among the ranges but not elsewhere.

¹ These records are especially noteworthy. Despite extensive fieldwork, Badman (1979) did not record the Blue Bonnet in the western Lake Eyre Drainage. The nearest known occurrences of the bird appear to be those from the vicinity of Commonwealth Hill and the Cooper Creek system, some 350 km south-south-east and 500 km east of the Everard Ranges, respectively. The isolate *narethae* is, similarly, known only from areas far to the south and south-west of the area under discussion (see Forshaw 1981). Either the present records refer to a largely unknown (? isolated) population, the taxonomic status of which would be most interesting, or are erroneous (perhaps being mis-identifications of female-phase Mulga Parrots). --Ed.

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