

## BOURKE'S PARROT IN THE GAWLER RANGES

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Eckert (1975) reviewed the status of Bourke's Parrot *Neophema bourkii* in South Australia and pointed out that any records of the species from west of Port Augusta and south of the Trans-continental Railway would be important additions to knowledge of its range.

On 9 October 1983, L. Dewhirst and I observed a pair of *N. bourkii* at ca 130 km W of Port Augusta, between Nonning and Kolendo in the Gawler Ranges. One of the pair was perched quietly in a Western Myall *Acacia papyrocarpa* and was observed for approximately two minutes. It was identified as *N. bourkii* by its small size (*i.e.* smaller than a Mulga Parrot *Psephotus varius*), pink underparts, which were noticeably richer on the abdomen, and prominent white eye ring. The other bird, perched nearby on a dead tree, was seen only just before the two birds flew off. It was clearly of the same proportions as the first bird although it was not seen well enough to obtain a description of its plumage. A search to relocate the pair was unsuccessful. The habitat in the vicinity of the sighting was Myall woodland with a chenopodiaceous ground cover.

The nearest record of *N. bourkii* to the above locality seems to be that from Kootaberra (64 km N of Port Augusta) discussed in Eckert (1975).

The Gawler Ranges contain much Myall woodland, a habitat probably not unsuitable for *N. bourkii* but in which it does not appear to have been recorded before. Possibly the species has been overlooked by previous observers in the Gawler Ranges owing to its crepuscular habits; however, given the number of previous observers who have visited the Gawler Ranges (see Joseph and Black 1983) this may be unlikely. Alternatively, this record may be of a truly isolated occurrence of *N. bourkii* in the Gawler Ranges. It may thus be an example of the species' movements, which although not clearly understood, seem to be the result of complex interactions between environmental factors, such as rainfall, and innate behaviour patterns (see Badman 1981).

### REFERENCES

- Badman, F.J. 1981. Bourke's Parrot in the western Lake Eyre Drainage. *S. Aust. Orn.* 28:161-164.  
Eckert, H.J. 1975. Bourke's Parrot in South Australia. *S. Aust. Orn.* 27:18-19.  
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