

THE BIRDS OF THE ALDINGA-SELICKS BEACH SCRUB

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SUMMARY

This article documents the importance of the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub for avifauna. A total of 149 species recorded over the period 1976-83 are assessed as to status, abundance and breeding. Not only did the Scrub support 41 residents, it was visited regularly by eight migratory species (seven of which bred) and by many other species, usually on an occasional basis, outside their usual habitat or range, including two species (one breeding) rarely recorded in South Australia. Fifty-five species were recorded breeding.

INTRODUCTION

The Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub (35° 17'S, 138° 27'E) is a reserve, under the control of the State Planning Commission of South Australia. It consists of approximately 200 hectares of gently undulating dune scrub 45 km south of Adelaide, lying within the Willunga Plain. The Plain, which is bounded by spurs of the Mount Lofty Range, is an area of Recent sediments overlying Tertiary marine deposits. The Scrub itself is bounded on the west by coastal sand dunes (now heavily built on), on the north-west by the township of Aldinga Beach, and elsewhere by agricultural land with very few trees. The soil in the main area is deep white sandy loam with patches of brown loam with a thin overlay of sand (Nature Conservation Society of South Australia Inc. 1973). It is the sole remnant of coastal dune scrub of any significant size on the eastern side of St Vincent's Gulf, south of Adelaide.

H. Laybourne-Smith supplied lists of birds recorded in the Scrub from 1964-71 for the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub Report (Nature Conservation Society of South Australia Inc. 1973) from which a compilation of 76 species was made with an appendix of an additional 13 waterbird species from past records.

This article documents an additional 66 species recorded between 1976 and July 1983, and assesses the status, abundance and breeding of 149 species, six species in the earlier list not having been seen.

CLIMATE

The climate is similar to that of Adelaide, being mediterranean with hot dry summers and cold wet winters. The average rainfall is approximately 600 mm (SAOA 1977). Before diversion drainage in the 1940's run-off from the upper Aldinga-Sellicks plateau drained into

the depression in the southern part of the reserve, and beyond, forming a lagoon up to two metres deep (Nature Conservation Society of South Australia Inc. 1973). This would have afforded a more extensive and permanent wetland habitat than today when only 5 to 7 hectares, known as "the Swamp" is shallowly under water for two and a half months to four months between June and November, (rarely longer after exceptional autumn rains). The Scrub has no permanent water. Two dams and cattle troughs in adjoining paddocks are not used by many of the bushland species, some of which, however venture to garden sprinklers, bird baths of residences on the western and north-western sides and to irrigation sprinklers in pasture adjoining the north-east Scrub.

VEGETATION FORMATIONS

Dry Sclerophyll Woodland

The main area is covered by this woodland with *Eucalyptus* spp dominant. Pink Gum *E. fasciculosa* is widespread with Mallee Box *E. porosa* occurring in small patches in the northern and eastern sections, two small patches of regenerating River Red Gum *E. camaldulensis* occurring in the north-east, and several large old trees of this species in the south-east. Where the Scrub retains its original density trees have a mallee type formation seldom higher than eight metres. Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha* is also widespread, while Native Honeysuckle *Banksia marginata*, less widespread, is abundant in some areas. Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata*, prominent near the coastal dunes, declines gradually eastwards. Also notable in some areas are Wandong *Santalum acuminatum* and *S. murrayanum*, Grass Tree *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* and dense tracts of Kangaroo Thorn *Acacia paradoxa*. The mistletoe *Amyema miquelii* and *Lysiana exocarpi* are prevalent in some areas. A conspicuous understorey includes *Calythrix tetragona*, Bearded Heath, *Leucopogon parviflorus* and *L. rufus*, Grey Tea Tree *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, *Rhagodia* spp, Flame Bush *Astroloma conostephioides*, Native Cranberry *A. humifusum*, and Bracken Fern *Pteridium esculentum*. There is a good ground litter of dead wood, no significant bush fires in the Scrub having been recorded.

Grassland and Fernland

Areas of grassland occur on the northern and eastern borders, also north of Norman Road; these extend into a fernland of bracken and aliens: European Olive *Olea europaea* and African Boxthorn *Lycium ferocissimum*, are becoming prominent.

Where land was cleared for farming and proposed subdivision it has regenerated into areas dominated by *Acacia* spp and grasses.

Low and Tall Shrubland

A belt of this exists between the coastal dune and the secondary dune 400 m eastwards. The dominant species of the low shrubland adjacent to the coastal dune is *Olearia axillaris*, and that of the tall shrubland is *Allocasuarina verticillata*. Undershrubs include *Hibbertia* spp, *Goodenia* spp, *Scaevola* spp, *Grevillea lavandulacea*, *Kunzea pomifera*, as well as those listed above for the understory of dry sclerophyll woodland.

Swampland

This occupies much of the southern portion of the reserve, stretching as a narrower belt. Here notable vegetation is a Samphire *Salicornia* sp., with an area of Lignum *Muehlenbeckia cunninghamii* near Norman Road. In the north-east of the reserve are several small patches very shallowly under water in winter edged by Lignum or sedges *Juncus* spp, *Typha* sp.

A list of recorded plants for the reserve is published in the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub Report (*op. cit.*).

METHODS

Four hundred and fifteen morning visits were made averaging three and a half hours and spanning all seasons. Each was to an area comprising approximately one third of the Scrub, with equal attention given to each of the three areas. Systematic counting of numbers of each species of bird seen was begun in January 1979. Thereafter monthly totals for each species were made to give an indication of abundance, and seasonal and yearly variation. These totals were made by adding together the highest number of birds of a species seen during any one visit during each month to each of the three areas. An exception was made for those species known to cover rapidly much of the Scrub, when the highest number seen in any one area was taken, unless there was good reason to do otherwise, e.g. breeding pairs.

Each species was classified for status as:
 resident — recorded throughout the observation period.
 seasonal — recorded as present with a strong seasonal bias.
 periodic — recorded as present without a seasonal bias and over periods longer than four months.
 temporary — recorded as present without a seasonal bias and over two to four months.
 occasional — recorded on isolated occasions only.

flying over — recorded flying over the reserve.

Abundance is given as the minimum and maximum totals on those months that the species was seen e.g. Grey Fantail 11–49. From mid-1980 maps of the Scrub were used to assess habitat or plant species preference (the latter also noted by direct observation of food taken), and to assess the number of pairs or groups present of some species (mostly “resident”). These results are given in the Annotated List. Nest record cards were kept from November 1979, breeding being shown in the annotated list as follows:

Br (N): species observed with nests containing egg(s) or young.

BR (Y): species observed with dependent young.

ANNOTATED LIST

AUSTRALASIAN GREBE

Tachybaptus novaehollandiae. Occasional.

One at the Swamp, July 1979 and one at dam, February–April 1983.

HOARY-HEADED GREBE

Polioccephalus polioccephalus. Occasional.

Six at the Swamp, July 1979, one at dam, July and December 1982, and January, April and June 1983.

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN

Pelecanus conspicillatus. Flying over.

Recorded twice; nine, February 1980 and one, July 1982.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Occasional, 12–60.

Recorded twice flying over July–August 1979, and once at the Swamp June 1979.

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT

Phalacrocorax melanoleucos. Occasional.

Recorded thrice: one at the Swamp, August and October 1979, and July 1983 (when swimming below the surface in 0.3 m deep water).

PIED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax varius*.
Occasional.

One at the Swamp, August 1982.

PACIFIC HERON *Ardea pacifica*. Occasional.
One at the Swamp, August–November 1979, and one August 1980.

WHITE-FACED HERON

Ardea novaehollandiae. Resident, 1–37.

At the Swamp, dam and bushland. One to four pairs in *E. camaldulensis* and *E. fasciculosa* July–November, 1979–1981 but breeding not recorded in drought year 1982 despite search. Br (N).

GREAT EGRET *Ardea alba*. Occasional.

Recorded only once: one at the Swamp, June 1981.

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*. Occasional.

Three among cattle in field adjacent to the Swamp, June 1982.

SACRED IBIS *Threskiornis aethiopica*.
Occasional.

Recorded in adjacent grassland; one in August 1980 and two, September–October 1981 and July 1983.

STRAW-NECKED IBIS

Threskiornis spinicollis. Seasonal, 1–100.

In adjacent grassland, March–May most years, also occasionally September–December.

ROYAL SPOONBILL *Platalea regia*

Occasional.

One at the Swamp, August 1980.

YELLOW-BILLED SPOONBILL

Platalea flavipes. Occasional.

Recorded twice: one over dam, June 1982 and one at the Swamp July 1983.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*

Seasonal. 1–12.

At the Swamp and dam most years, July–November; also January–February 1981 and June 1983, and at the Swamp, April 1983.

CAPE BARREN GOOSE

Cereopsis novaehollandiae. Seasonal. 1–64.

September–November 1979 and 1980. Also flying over, April 1981.

AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK

Tadorna tadornoides. Occasional. 3–18.

August–October, 1979 and 1980 at the Swamp and dam.

PACIFIC BLACK DUCK *Anas superciliosa*.

Seasonal. 1–9.

At the Swamp most years and sometimes at dam and roadside pool. Br (Y).

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. Occasional.

Recorded only once: one at dam, March 1982.

GREY TEAL *Anas gibberifrons*. Occasional.

At the Swamp and dam most years.

CHESTNUT TEAL *Anas castanea*. Seasonal.

1–4.

At the Swamp most years.

AUSTRALASIAN SHOVELER

Anas rhynchotis. Occasional.

Recorded only once: four at the Swamp, August 1979.

HARDHEAD *Aythya australis*. Occasional.

A pair at a roadside pool, November 1978.

MANED DUCK *Chenonetta jubata*.

Occasional, 1–4.

At dam, July 1979 and October–December 1980, and at the Swamp, April and May 1983.

BLACK SHOULDERED KITE

Elanus notatus. Resident. 1–12.

Seen to harass Brown Falcon, Black Falcon, Australian Kestrel and a human, but not itself seen harassed by predators. Whilst Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Woodswallow spp, and Willy Wagtail are frequently seen harassing other predators, I have seen this kite only once harassed by any of the above (once by White-browed Woodswallow when a kite flew almost directly over the former's nest). At times hovered over the adjacent beach or flew 10–25 m out from shore when once seen harassed by Silver Gull. Of 12 seen in October 1980 many were immature. Breeding recorded most years, two nests being in large clumps of mistletoe six metres high in *E. fasciculosa*; in the side of one House Sparrows built a nest and raised young. Br (N).

WHISTLING KITE *Haliastur sphenurus*.

Occasional.

Two records of one bird, April 1979 and May 1981.

BROWN GOSHAWK *Accipiter fasciatus*.

Seasonal.

Frequent records of single birds, (usually immature) though seldom April–July. Preference for denser woodland. Two dead immature birds recovered.

COLLARED SPARROWHAWK*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*. Occasional.

Two sightings of a single bird at close hand perched and flying, January–February 1982.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE *Aquila audax*.

Occasional. 1–3.

Five records in summer 1980 and 1981.

SPOTTED HARRIER *Circus assimilis*.

Occasional.

One, August and December 1980, May 1981, March and April 1983 over adjacent grassland and coastal dune.

SWAMP HARRIER *Circus approximans*.

Occasional.

One recorded in most years in any season over adjacent grassland.

BLACK FALCON *Falco subniger*.

Temporary. 1–2.

Recorded April–July 1980, September–November 1980, June–August and December 1982, January–March and June 1983 at savannah woodland, the Swamp and adjacent grassland.

AUSTRALIAN HOBBY *Falco longipennis*.

Occasional. 1–2.

Recorded April–May 1981, September 1981, January and November 1982, and July 1983.

BROWN FALCON *Falco berigora*. Resident.

1–4.

It became more numerous with local rodent increase as assessed by the number of rodent holes under trees and around sheds in nearby almond orchards. In 1981 a pair raised young in a nest vacated a few days earlier by Australian Magpie. Br (N).

AUSTRALIAN KESTREL *Falco cenchroides*

Resident. 1–14.

In May 1980 and 1981 gathered in numbers up to 14 to take large insects from recently scarified field. Also seen feeding on a House Sparrow and a Common Starling. Usually on periphery of the Scrub or outside. Br (N).

STUBBLE QUAIL *Coturnix novaezelandiae*

Resident. 1–9.

Recorded most months at periphery of the Scrub, infrequently in grassy central areas. Plentiful in adjoining paddocks. Br (Y).

BLACK-TAILED NATIVE-HEN*Gallinula ventralis*.

Occasional. 1–4.

Seen near dam, August 1979, and in coastal dune edging the Swamp, August 1982.

COMMON COOT *Fulica atra*. Occasional.

Only record was several at Lignum swamp, August 1978.

BUSH THICK-KNEE *Burhinus grallarius*.

Occasional.

Recorded only as heard once in August 1976. The Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub list gives a record for June 1967.

MASKED LAPWING *Vanellus miles*.

Resident. 1–20.

At the Swamp, dam, peripheral fields and flying over. Bred in samphire 1980. Br (N).

BANDED LAPWING *Vanellus tricolor*.

Temporary. 2–13.

In peripheral fields most years October–December, extending to end of survey period in 1983. Bred in December 1982 and July 1983. Br (N).

RED-KNEED PLOVER *Erythrogonys cinctus*.

Occasional.

One at the Swamp, August 1979.

RED-CAPPED PLOVER*Charadrius ruficapillus*. Seasonal. 1–4.

Recorded most years June–November at the Swamp. Bred at roadside 1980. Br (N).

BLACK-FRONTED PLOVER*Charadrius melanops*. Occasional.

Two sightings of two at the Swamp, August 1979 and October 1980. Also one–two at dam March–June 1983.

BLACK-WINGED STILT*Himantopus himantopus* Seasonal 2–10.

At the Swamp most years, August–September; at dam, October–December.

BANDED STILT*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*. Occasional.

Recorded only once, one at the Swamp, October 1981.

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Occasional.

One at the Swamp, October 1980.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. Occasional.

One at dam, January 1981, and one at temporary water, September 1981.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER

Calidris acuminata. Occasional. 4–11.

At the Swamp, August–November 1980.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. Occasional.

Recorded only once; one at dam, March 1983.

AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE

Stiltia isabella. Seasonal. 1–7.

Recorded October 1980–January 1981 and December 1982. One pair bred successfully in market garden adjacent to the Scrub despite disturbance and regular drenchings by irrigation sprinklers. Br (N).

SILVER GULL *Larus novaehollandiae*.

Periodic. 2–50.

Recorded all months except January and February. At the Swamp and hawking insects over bushland.

WISKERED TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*.

Occasional. 1–3.

Recorded twice at the Swamp in October 1979 and September 1980.

CRESTED TERN *Sterna bergii*. Occasional.

One at the Swamp, October 1979.

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*. Occasional.

2–250.

On adjacent fields or flying over. Resident in the area.

SPOTTED TURTLE-DOVE

Streptopelia chinensis. Resident.

While more often recorded in open woodland it is more catholic in habitat usage than the Crested Pigeon. Recorded breeding in *Acacia paradoxa*, *A. pycnantha*, *Billardiera sericophora*, Bracken Fern, *Eucalyptus fasciculosa*. Br (N).

PEACEFUL DOVE *Geopelia placida*.

Occasional. 1–2.

Several records in May and September 1981.

DIAMOND DOVE *Geopelia cuneata*.

Occasional.

One on 10 March 1983 after several years of drought through most of Australia. This bird rose from grassland and settled in an adjacent eucalypt at a height of two metres where it was observed for one minute at a distance of 15 m. It then flew and was found soon after in grass three centimetres high where an approach was made to 18 m and observed for three minutes. The following description was made at the time:

Size and form: a diminutive dove smaller than a Blackbird. Head, neck and breast: light grey with a bluish tinge. Eye and narrow peri-orbital ring: red. Below: creamy white. Legs and feet: pale pink. Flight: silent, rapid wing beats. No call given.

COMMON BRONZEWING

Phaps chalcoptera. Occasional. 1–2.

Recorded in July 1979 and 1982 and January 1980.

BRUSH BRONZEWING *Phaps elegans*.

Occasional.

One in October 1978, August 1980 and December 1982 in thick shrubland.

CRESTED PIGEON *Ocyphaps lophotes*.

Resident. 6–42.

Prefers savannah woodland. Br (Y).

FUNERAL COCKATOO

Calyptorhynchus funereus. Occasional.

A pair feeding on seed of *Banksia marginata* in December 1979, and 20 feeding on cones of *Allocasuarina verticillata* in June 1983.

GALAH *Cacatua roseicapilla*. Resident.

4–180.

In savannah woodland, adjacent fields and flying over. Food included seed of Wild Artichoke *Cynara cardunculus*. Br (Y).

LITTLE CORELLA *Cacatua pastinator*.

Occasional. 4–250.

Recorded in April 1979 and 1980, September 1979, October 1981 and August 1982, and May–June 1983 in savannah woodland and flying over.

SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO

Cacatua galerita. Temporary.

A single bird recorded November 1980–January 1981, also one in November 1981.

MUSK LORIKEET *Glossopsitta concinna*.

Flying over.

Ten, low overhead in January 1982.

PURPLE-CROWNED LORIKEET*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*. Seasonal. 5–57.Frequently recorded feeding on flowers of *E. fasciculosa* (usually December–April) and *E. porosa* (usually October–December, but may extend to June): only once during May–August.**BUDGERIGAR** *Melopsittacus undulatus*.

Occasional. 1–2.

Two in March 1981, one in November 1981. All wild-type “green” birds.

‘ADELAIDE ROSELLA’*Platycercus elegans x flaveolus*. Resident. 1–9.**EASTERN ROSELLA** *Platycercus eximius*.

Occasional. 1–2.

Recorded infrequently, March–April and July–November. The longest stay recorded was seven days. Recorded feeding on Boxthorn berries, and nectar of mistletoe flowers.

MALLEE RINGNECK *Barnardius barnardi*.

Occasional.

One bird in October 1980.

RED-RUMPED PARROT*Psephodus haematonotus*. Resident. 1–18.

Seen more frequently in paddocks than in savannah woodland of the Scrub. Recorded feeding on Boxthorn berries and scattered baled straw.

BLUE-WINGED PARROT*Neophema chrysostoma*. Occasional.Recorded twice: One on 1 October 1980, when at 1030 a *Neophema* was seen at 15 m distance perched two metres high on a dead branch of a *E. fasciculosa* unobserved and in sunlight. Identification was based on the presence of a wide wing band of deep blue without a second shade of blue and a forehead band stopping approximately 1.5 mm short of the eye from which it was separated by a peri-orbital rim of yellow. While perched it gave a soft melodic tinkling and, on flying off, a two-note high pitched call.An injured *Neophema* was recovered at 1000 on 5 April 1983 50 m from the Esplanade Roadwhere it had probably been hit by a motor vehicle. Cared for during six weeks, it made an excellent recovery from its injury of a broken ‘forearm’ bone and was released back into the Scrub. It satisfied the criteria for a Blue-winged Parrot according to skins of *Neophema*, which I have viewed at the South Australian Museum, and was also so regarded by the veterinarian who first treated the bird and who is acquainted with this species as a caged bird.**ELEGANT PARROT** *Neophema elegans*.

Resident. 1–30.

Recorded most often in more open woodland in north-east Scrub. However, also in other habitats. A recently fledged bird, still with some down and a whitish wing patch, seen in December 1982. Recorded bathing at the Swamp. Numbers peaked April–May 1981, March–June, May–June 1983. Br (Y).

ROCK PARROT *Neophema petrophila*.

Occasional. 3–12.

Three to twelve seen in coastal dune flanking the Swamp in December 1982 and February 1983; also seven bathing at dam March 1983. The first recording was made in December 1982 when nine flew up from the sand onto adjacent *Olearia* bushes where they were viewed through 10 x 50 binoculars at 15 m. The following notes were made at the time:

Size and shape: chunkier than an Elegant Parrot; plumage dull brown-olive-green above, the same below except for yellow abdomen. Forehead: narrow deep blue band from eye to eye. Forecheek blue, (paler in some birds). Hindcheek: brown olive-green. Wing patch: narrow band of deep blue. Call: tittering at rest, “see see see see” when flying. Finally the flock flew off at constant altitude of 10 m but with erratic zig-zagging, swiftly with rapid wing beats and with occasional planing.

Three birds were seen at the same location with E.M. Ashton at 0700 and 1900 on 11 December, and I saw 12 at 0800 on 12 December feeding on over-ripe almost dry berries of Ruby Saltbush *Enchylaena tomentosa*. On this occasion, when flushed, they uttered a rather quiet tinkling note. Though variable in the different lightings, the plumage was much drabber than that of the Elegant Parrot.**PALLID CUCKOO** *Cuculus pallidus*.

Periodic. 1–2.

Appeared briefly in March 1977, then unrecorded until July–November 1982 and 19 June 1983 to end of survey period. No young have been recorded.

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO

Cuculus pyrrhophanus. Periodic. 1–3.

Recorded in all months except September and October, most often in May–June. Remains of one bird (feathers only) found at a bird bath June 1983. Immature seen in November 1979.

BLACK-EARED CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx osculans. Occasional.

Sightings of one bird, November–December 1980.

HORSFIELD BRONZE CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx basalus. Seasonal. 1–6.

Recorded yearly, late winter to early summer. However, a single bird has been recorded in each month. Hosts seen were Superb Fairywren, Grey Fantail, White-fronted Chat, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Striated Thornbill. One seen carrying an egg in its bill for 50 m on 16 October 1981. Br (Y).

SHINING BRONZE CUCKOO

Chrysococcyx lucidus Occasional.

One seen, October–November 1980.

SOUTHERN BOOBOOK

Ninox novaeseelandiae. ?Temporary. 1–3.

Recorded all months except January to March. Several nearby road kills recorded. In the absence of night surveys of this and the other nocturnal predators, their status remains uncertain.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba*. ?Periodic.

A single bird recorded yearly, each season represented; the longest period six months.

TAWNY FROGMOUTH *Podargus strigoides*.
Temporary.

A pair fledged two young in the same nest site in a *E. fasciculosa* in 1980 and 1981, and nested there again in 1982, otherwise recorded only one in January 1980, four in March 1983, and one dead bird recovered. Br (N).

FORK-TAILED SWIFT *Apus pacificus*.
Occasional. 2–200.

Seven records in December–March, each time associated with thundery weather at the edge of a tropical depression: over the Scrub hawking for 10 minutes to several hours.

LAUGHING KOOKABURRA

Dacelo novaeguineae. Resident. 1–7. One group.

They successfully raised young each year 1978–82, having to change the nest hole in *E. fasciculosa* once when taken by feral Honey Bee. Br (N).

SACRED KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta*.

Seasonal. 1–2.

Recorded in November 1979 and 1980, February 1980 and 31 May 1982 and 4 June 1983.

RAINBOW BEE-EATER *Merops ornatus*.

Seasonal. 1–9.

The earliest sighting was 30 September and the latest 4 April. A pair bred in the coastal dune 1979–1980 (when the four fledglings were taken by Australian Magpie), also in flat sandy loam in 1982 season. Br (N).

SINGING BUSHLARK *Mirafra javanica*.

Periodic. 1–12.

Recorded irregularly most years, but present continuously October 1981 to May 1983. In grassland of north-east Scrub and adjacent paddocks.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. Resident. 1–4.

In grassland of the Scrub and adjacent paddocks.

WELCOME SWALLOW *Hirundo neoxena*.

Resident. 2–17. Br (Y).

TREE MARTIN *Cecropis nigricans*. Seasonal.
3–50.

In small numbers except for a 'swarming' flock of 40 in November 1980. Sometimes in mixed flock with Fairy Martins, less often in winter.

FAIRY MARTIN *Cecropis ariel*. Seasonal.

3–50.

A regular migrant visitor late July–February, nesting each year in the same culvert. Br (N).

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*.

Resident. 2–50.

At the Swamp, grasslands of the Scrub and adjacent paddocks. Br (Y).

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE

Coracina novaehollandiae. Resident. 1–15.

Numbers fluctuated irregularly, the largest number observed feeding together on the ground was eight. Br (N).

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage sueurii*.
Seasonal. 1–8.

The earliest sighting was 14 October, the latest 12 January. In woodland. Br (N).

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* Resident.
1–10.

seven pairs. Br (N).

FLAME ROBIN *Petroica phoenicea*.
Occasional.

A pair in March 1980.

SCARLET ROBIN *Petroica multicolor*.
Resident. 1–4.

Two pairs. Recorded in the Scrub in all months, also in adjoining residential land. Br (Y).

RED-CAPPED ROBIN *Petroica goodenovii*.
Seasonal. 1–3.

One pair bred in Spring 1978. Two female-phase plumage, October to December 1982 by which latter time one bird was assuming male plumage; both present until March 1983. In open woodland. Br (Y).

HOODED ROBIN *Melanodryas cucullata*.
Resident. 7–25.

Eight to ten pairs. Prefers more open woodland or shrubland. Br (N).

JACKY WINTER *Microeca leucophaea*.
Occasional.

Few records: one bird June and October 1978, two January and December 1979.

GOLDEN WHISTLER
Pachycephala pectoralis. Resident. 6–40.
12–17 pairs.

Numbers show little variation seasonally and yearly. Prefers denser woodland. Br (Y).

RUFOUS WHISTLER
Pachycephala rufiventris. Seasonal. 1–14.
5–7 pairs.

A September–April visitor. In some years one to two stayed through winter. Br (N).

GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH
Colluricincla harmonica. Occasional.

One in October 1982, (listed in the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub Report as recorded up to 1969 only).

LEADEN FLYCATCHER *Myiagra rubecula*.
Occasional.

Recorded only once – a female-phase bird in November 1981 (Ashton and Ashton 1982b).

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER
Myiagra inquieta. Occasional.

Only two sightings of one in August 1979 and April 1980.

GREY FANTAIL *Rhipidura fuliginosa*.
Resident. 11–49. 17–20 pairs.

Widespread. A 30% decline in numbers recorded in winter for this ever conspicuous species is noteworthy. Br (N).

WILLIE WAGTAIL *Rhipidura leucophrys*.
Resident. 14–37. 15–20 pairs.

Uncommon in denser woodland. Br (N).

WHITE-BROWED BABBLER
Pomatostomus superciliosus. Resident. 4–20.
Two groups. Br (Y).

GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA
Cisticola exilis. Temporary. 1–7.
March–May 1983 in irrigated pasture adjoining the north-east Scrub, at first in *Sudex* crop, and, after this was cut, in lucerne.

RUFOUS SONGLARK
Cinclorhamphus mathewsi. Seasonal. 1–6.
Recorded October–January 1978, October–March 1979, October–November 1982. Br (Y).

BROWN SONGLARK
Cinclorhamphus cruralis. Seasonal. 1–6.
Regular arrivals between July and September, departures between January and March. Br (Y).

SUPERB FAIRY WREN *Malurus cyaneus*.
Resident. 8–30.

Nine groups, Widespread. In 1982 breeding season three groups fostered Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo. Br (N).

WEEBILL *Smicrornis brevirostris*. Periodic.
2–40.

Listed as recorded only once (1969) in the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub Report, the first record in the present survey was of two in March 1979. It bred that year and numbers soon increased; thereafter regularly seen throughout dry sclerophyll woodland. Br (N).

WHITE-THROATED GERYGONE

Gerygone olivacea. Seasonal. 1–4.

A visitor recorded September–November to January–February in 1979–1982 breeding seasons – one pair breeding each year (except two pairs in 1980 season) with fledging in 1979, 1980 and 1982 seasons. In woodland near the periphery (Ashton and Ashton 1981, 1982a). Br (N).

CHESTNUT-RUMPED THORNBILL

Acanthiza uropygialis. Occasional.

Four sightings of one: November 1980 and 1981, and October and November 1982 – whence latter twice in association with Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

YELLOW-RUMPED THORNBILL

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa. Resident. 7–50. 10 groups.

Usually recorded in savannah woodland, but may be anywhere else in bushland. Nests recorded in African Boxthorn – twice at the same location. Recorded bathing in wet grass. Br (N).

LITTLE THORNBILL *Acanthiza nana*.

Resident 2–34. Six groups.

Recorded mainly in the *Allocasuarina verticillata* zone of the western area, though one group regularly recorded elsewhere. Br (Y).

STRIATED THORNBILL *Acanthiza lineata*.

Resident. 16–52.

10 groups. Recorded bathing in wet leaves. Observed probing into *E. porosa* blossom as if taking nectar. Br (N).

VARIED SITELLA

Daphoenositta chrysoptera. Occasional.

Infrequent records of one: Thrice in December 1979, thrice in January 1980 and once in October 1980.

RED WATTLEBIRD

Anthochaera carunculata. Occasional. 1–4.

Recorded infrequently: August and October 1979, April, October and December 1980, January 1981 and May 1983.

LITTLE WATTLEBIRD

Anthochaera chrysoptera. Seasonal. 1–4.

Recorded infrequently: January–February and April 1981, February, March and November 1982, and April–May 1983.

SPINY-CHEEKED HONEYEATER

Acanthagenys rufogularis. Occasional.

One in September 1980 in shrubland.

SINGING HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus virescens. Resident. 1–6.

Usually in, or close to, the coastal dunes. (Recorded as breeding in the Aldinga-Sellicks Beach list). Food included nectar of Boxthorn flowers, berries of boxthorn and *Threlkeldia* sp.; also gleaned insects.

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATER

Lichenostomus penicillatus. Resident. 12–46.

In open woodland. Its prevalence was suspected to be unrelated to the availability of nectar. Br (N).

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER

Melithreptus lunatus. Occasional.

One bird in August 1980 in woodland.

CRESCENT HONEYEATER

Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera. Occasional.

One and two birds recorded only in August 1977 and October 1978 in shrubland.

NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER

Phylidonyris novaehollandiae. Resident. 6–80.

Conspicuous when *Banksia marginata* in flower (mainly mid-summer to autumn); also recorded feeding on flowers of *E. fasciculosa* and *E. porosa*, *Astroloma* spp (late autumn to winter), *Grevillea lavandulacea* and *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* (late winter to mid spring), *Amyema miquelii* (January to March), Salvation Jane *Echium* sp., and on the fruit of European Olive and African Boxthorn; also seen gleaning and hawking insects. Br (N).

TAWNY-CROWNED HONEYEATER

Phylidonyris melanops. Periodic. 1–30.

Recorded in shrubland, June–October 1978 and July–August 1980, and in open woodland, February–April 1981 and October 1982, and more widespread in bushland habitats May 1983 to end of survey period. Recorded feeding on nectar of *Grevillea lavandulacea*, and hawking insects.

EASTERN SPINEBILL

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris. Occasional. 1–2.

Recorded in denser woodland in April, July and September 1981. Recorded feeding on Flame Heath nectar.

WHITE-FRONTED CHAT

Ephthianura albifrons. Resident. 2–43.

In bracken, lignum and samphire. Numbers reduced in winter. Post-breeding flocks to 40 recorded. Br (N).

MISTLETOE BIRD *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*. Seasonal. 1–27.

Recorded in all months, though seldom in January–March; commonest during the fruiting of the more prevalent of the two mistletoes *A. miquelii* (August to December in Scrub). Also recorded feeding on berries of Boneseed *Chrysanthemoides monilifera* and African Boxthorn, insects and nectar of mistletoe flowers. Seen to eat 'green' mistletoe berries in July. Br (N).

YELLOW-RUMPED PARDALOTE

Pardalotus xanthopygus. Seasonal. 1–5.

Regular visitor October–November, not recorded in other months. Br. (Y).

STRIATED PARDALOTE

Pardalotus striatus. 'Resident'. 1–10.

SILVEREYE *Zosterops lateralis*. Resident. 40–300.

Widespread in bushland. A decrease in numbers occurred in December to March when a number of birds with tan coloured flanks appeared. This species was well provided with fruit and nectar throughout much of the year. Observed feeding on the fruit of *Leucopogon parviflora* (summer to early autumn), *Rhagodia* spp (winter), European Olive (including fruit on the ground), Boxthorn, *Coprosma* sp., and the nectar of *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* (late winter to mid-spring), *Banksia marginata* (mainly mid-summer to autumn), *E. fasciculosa*, and introduced *Chasmanthe aethiopia*, and the whole flowers of a Native Sarsparilla *Muehlenbeckia* sp. Mimicry of Blackbird and Weebill. Br (N).

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH

Carduelis carduelis. Resident. 10–112.

Mainly at the periphery of the Scrub and in adjoining paddocks or flying over; bred in *E. fasciculosa*; food included seed of *Allocasuarina verticillata*, *Scabiosa* sp., Malta Thistle *Centaurea melitensis* and Salvation Jane. Br (N).

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH

Carduelis chloris. Resident. 1–35.

In grassland of the Scrub or just outside, especially near pine trees. Also frequently near the Swamp where flocks up to 35 (including one in immature plumage) were recorded in June 1983. Food included berries of Boxthorn, and Wild Artichoke. Br (Y).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*.

Resident. Numerous.

Mainly in grassland or open woodland. Br (N).

RED-BROWED FIRETAIL

Emblema temporalis. Seasonal. 1–35.

Recorded July 1979, July–October 1980, May to end of survey period 1983, usually in thickets adjoining cleared areas and savannah woodland. Food included seed of *Allocasuarina verticillata* and Salvation Jane.

BEAUTIFUL FIRETAIL *Emblema bella*.

Seasonal.

Recorded June and September 1978, May 1979, 1981 and 1982 and June 1982 in Sheoak and Tea Tree, also in Kangaroo Thorn. Food included seed of *Calythrix tetragona*.

DIAMOND FIRETAIL *Emblema guttata*.

Occasional.

A small flock in savannah woodland in 1977.

ZEBRA FINCH *Poephila guttata*. Seasonal.

6–10.

In savannah woodland February - March 1979 and March 1980 and January–April 1983.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*.

Resident. Numerous.

Widespread. Occupies many of the available tree hollows in the breeding season. Br (N).

MAGPIE LARK *Grallina cyanoleuca*.

Resident. 1–10.

Usually near water. A number of nests not completed. Nested sometimes in same tree with Australian Kestrel and/or Black-shouldered Kite. Br (N).

WHITE-BROWED WOODSWALLOW

Artamus superciliosus. Seasonal. 2–4.

A migrant visitor October or November to January in 1979, 1980 and 1982 breeding seasons. Open woodland. Br (N).

DUSKY WOODSWALLOW

Artamus cyanopterus. Seasonal. 1–28.

A regular migrant visitor arriving September or October, mostly departing by May, an occasional bird overwintered in some years. In open woodland and shrubland. Br (N).

GREY BUTCHERBIRD *Cracticus torquatus*

Occasional.

One immature in September 1981.

WHITE-BACKED MAGPIE

Gymnorhina tibicen leuconota. Resident. 6–45.

Usually in savannah woodland. Preyed on fledglings of Rainbow Bee-eater in January 1980.

LITTLE RAVEN *Corvus mellori*

Resident. 1–51.

Usually seen in savannah woodland or flying over; entered denser woodland to breed. Br (N).

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS RECORDS

Six species listed in the Aldinga–Sellicks Beach Scrub Report, and probably of occasional status, were not recorded in the present survey, viz. Painted Button-quail *Turnix varia*, Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*, Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*, Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*, White-throated

Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* and White-winged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos*.

A comparison of the abundance of species as recorded in the above report with that of the present survey shows an apparent reduction during the last decade in the numbers of Common Bronzewing, Musk Lorikeet, Adelaide Rosella, Scarlet Robin and Red Wattlebird, whilst the Bush Thick-Knee has not been recorded since 1976. On the other hand there has been an apparent increase in the numbers of Weebill, Blackbird and Greenfinch (previously not recorded).

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