

THE LITTLE CORELLA IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION

During a survey of the Long-billed Corella *Cacatua tenuirostris** population in South Australia between May 1982 and June 1983 (Emison and Beardsell 1985), the Little Corella *C. pastinator gymnopsis* was observed in the South-East of the State. These two corellas are similar in general appearance and behaviour so the Little Corella, which was present in the South-East of South Australia in much lower numbers than was the Long-billed Corella, could be easily overlooked.

Features useful in distinguishing the two species of corellas in the field include: the Little Corella has a shorter upper mandible and bare, blue-grey eye orbital patches; the Long-billed Corella has pink feathers forming a conspicuous bar across the throat; and the call of the Little Corella can be distinguished from adult Long-billed Corellas by its longer duration and deeper tone (*pace* Simpson & Day 1984). It is our experience that the most likely way one could mistake an immature Long-billed Corella for a Little Corella would be to attempt identification by call during the two or three months after fledging. We did not attempt to identify corellas by call at that time of year. However, even during the rest of the year most of our identifications were based on visual characteristics rather than on call.

SIGHTINGS IN THE SOUTH-EAST

- (1) Thirty-five sightings of Little Corellas were made by the authors in the South-East of South Australia during the 1982-83 survey. All sightings were immediately recorded on

standard data cards, copies of which are available for examination through the authors. Details of each sighting are presented in Table 1.

- (2) The map of the distribution of the Little Corella in the Atlas of Australian Birds (Blakers *et al.* 1984) shows that the species occurs in the northern part of the South-East of South Australia, in the one degree block centred at 36°30'S, 140°30'E. The atlas sheets from which this map was drawn were examined and it was found that four observers made seven sightings of the Little Corella in this one degree block. These seven sightings were made in the districts of Keith (one sighting), Bordertown (three sightings), Bordertown East (two sightings) and Mundulla (one sighting). Details for one of the sightings in the Bordertown district were: a mixed flock of over 100 Little Corellas, Long-billed Corellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos seen on 10 January 1981 at Poocher Swamp (36°18'S, 140°40'E).

DISCUSSION

Parker and Reid (1983) do not list the Little Corella as occurring in the South-East of South Australia and indeed no literature records, other than that of Blakers *et al.* (1984), were found of the species occurring in this area. Jarman (1979), Schodde *et al.* (1979), Forshaw (1981) and Blakers *et al.* (1984) suggest that in south-eastern Australia the Little Corella is expanding its range southward. Unpublished data from our studies in western Victoria, south-western New South Wales and the Murraylands Region of South Australia confirm this southward expansion. Data presented in this note suggest that the range of the Little Corella now includes the northern part of the South-East of South Australia. However, the sightings in the southern part of the South-East may only represent a southward movement of the species in response to the drought conditions of 1982-83.

* Nomenclature for corellas in this and other papers recently published in this journal follows Schodde *et al.* (1979). However, it is acknowledged that *C. p. pastinator* and *C. p. gymnopsis* may be reproductively isolated from each other, thus warranting differentiation at the specific level, as discussed in Schodde *et al.* (*op. cit.*). — Ed.

Latitude (S) and Longitude (E)	District	Date	No. seen	Other spp* present	Habitat
36°16';140°35'	Cannawigara	1/6/82	200	LbC;G	River Red Gum
36°17';140°47'	Bordertown	2/2/83	2	LbC;G	Pasture
36°17';140°51'	Wolseley	1/6/82	2	LbC;ScC	S.A. Blue Gum
36°18';140°30'	Kongal	10/6/82	2	LbC;G;ScC	River Red Gum
36°18';140°35'	Cannawigara	1/6/82	500	LbC;G	Sunflower Stubble
36°18';140°39'	Poocher Flat	28/7/82	800	LbC	River Red Gum
36°18';140°39'	Poocher Flat	2/2/83	30		River Red Gum
36°18';140°40'	Poocher Flat	28/7/82	51	LbC;ScC	River Red Gum
36°18';140°40'	Poocher Flat	12/4/83	10	LbC;ScC	River Red Gum
36°19';140°39'	Poocher Flat	2/2/83	25	LbC;G	River Red Gum
36°19';140°55'	Wolseley	28/7/82	8		Pasture
36°20';140°41'	Mundulla	12/4/83	100	LbC;ScC	River Red Gum
36°20';140°58'	Serviceton	1/6/82	2	LbC;G	Golf Course
36°21';140°28'	Carew	28/7/82	100	ScC;G	Germinating Barley
36°22';140°44'	Mundulla	3/2/83	30	LbC	S.A. Blue Gum
36°26';140°54'	Custon	3/2/83	1	LbC;G;ScC	Ploughed Paddock
36°27';140°50'	Pooginagoric	26/10/82	4		Pasture
36°35';140°25'	Padthaway	26/5/83	100	LbC;G;ScC	Sunflower Stubble
36°36';140°25'	Padthaway	26/5/83	200	LbC;G	Sunflower Stubble
36°38';140°25'	Padthaway	10/6/82	30	LbC;G;ScC	Sunflower Stubble
36°49';140°53'	Binnun	6/2/83	4	LbC	River Red Gum
36°51';140°53'	Kybybolite	6/2/83	4		River Red Gum
36°58';140°57'	Hynam	4/2/83	2		River Red Gum
37°01';140°24'	Lucindale	1/8/82	100	LbC;G	Germinating Oats
37°03';140°50'	Struan	26/5/83	20	LbC;ScC	Pasture
37°08';140°59'	Wrattonbully	5/2/83	21	LbC	Pasture
37°09';140°58'	Wrattonbully	5/2/83	50	LbC	River Red Gum
37°10';140°57'	Wrattonbully	5/2/83	20	LbC;ScC	River Red Gum
37°13';140°40'	South Killanoola	2/8/82	20	LbC	River Red Gum
37°14';140°38'	South Killanoola	16/4/83	10	LbC;ScC	Pasture
37°14';140°41'	South Killanoola	7/2/83	6	LbC;G	Pasture
37°15';140°22'	Callendale	7/2/83	2	LbC	Sugar Gum
37°31';140°45'	Kalangadoo	26/10/82	1	LbC;G	Pasture
37°32';140°31'	Mt Burr	27/10/82	6		Roadside
37°33';140°37'	Kalangadoo	26/10/82	1		River Red Gum

* LbC = Long-billed Corella; G = Galah; ScC = Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Table 1. Sightings of Little Corellas made by the authors in the South-East of South Australia

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