

**NEST BUILDING BY THE PAINTED FIRETAIL IN THE NORTH FLINDERS RANGES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.** Pizzey (1980) described the range of the Painted Firetail *Emblema pictum* as being mainly in the arid inland regions of Australia. This range includes the northern parts of South Australia, extending as far south as Mt Ward (Arkaroola) in the North Flinders Ranges (Crisp 1974), Poontana<sup>1</sup> in the Lake Frome district (McGillp 1925), Woomera (Bell 1976) and north-eastern Eyre Peninsula (=Corunna — Ed., Joseph 1975). Joseph (1975) reported a maximum of five birds together, three immatures and two adults. It would therefore seem likely that they could have bred in the area. Crisp (1974) reported a nest with five eggs at Mt Ward.

I observed a pair of Painted Firetails between 10 and 14 December 1985 at an unnamed site in the North Flinders Ranges, overlooking the Hamilton Creek, approximately seven kilometres east of Mount Fitton HS. Each morning, the birds were actively engaged in building a nest at the base of a tussock of Porcupine Grass *Triodia irritans*.

<sup>1</sup> The exact whereabouts of this locality are uncertain. It possibly refers to an old boundary rider's hut of Wooltana Station on Poontana Creek (W. Leslie, pers. comm.) — Ed.

Maximum daily temperatures in the area at the time were between 31 °C and 36.5 °C, but the birds stopped their nest-building when the temperature rose above about 24 °C. They did not resume working on the nest in the evening but were busy in the morning from first light. They were quite indifferent to the Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies *Petrogale xanthopus* resting within one metre of the entrance to the nest site. They would land close to a wallaby and hop round it before disappearing into the base of the *Triodia*.

Unfortunately it was not possible to maintain observations long enough to see whether eggs were laid and successfully hatched.

#### REFERENCES

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 Crisp, B. 1974. Bird notes. *S. Aust. Orn. Assoc. Newsl.* 69: 13.  
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