

BIRD NOTES

ROSE ROBINS AT SOUTH PARA RESERVOIR. The occurrence of Rose and Pink Robins *Petroica rosea* and *P. rodinogaster* in South Australia has been reviewed by Reid *et al.* (1984). They listed many sightings of the Rose Robin in the Mount Lofty Ranges in the years 1968 to 1982. All observations were between April and October. This note reports the sighting of two Rose Robins in the Mount Lofty Ranges in May and June 1991.

Between 1450 and 1515 hrs on 31 May 1991, RK observed a partly coloured robin at South Para Reservoir, Mount Lofty Ranges, in the picnic area south of the spillway. The weather was overcast with occasional glimpses of sun through thin cloud, cool to mild (*ca* 20°C) with a gusty NE breeze. The habitat was artificial with introduced vegetation on the shoreline edge of the picnic ground where the bird was feeding in a grove of golden wreath wattle *Acacia saligna*.

The bird's behaviour was typical of a Rose Robin. It was very active, usually remained still for no more than five seconds and upon alighting cocked its tail and drooped its wings heavily. The wings were occasionally opened slowly and quivered while the robin spread its tail. It flitted to the ground, from branch to branch, sometimes caught insects in mid-air and never returned to the same perch, as other robins sometimes do. It was quite inquisitive, was not bothered by the presence of RK and no reaction to or by other species was noted.

Description: *Head:* crown mid-grey but sides of face paler grey-brown. Orbital ring whitish, especially noticeable under lower half of eye. Small buff spot on forehead at base of bill. *Upperparts:* mid-grey nape and back. Wings a darker grey-brown with two bars on each. First bar (nearest head) white and running across covert-tips then parallel along primaries. Lower bar less distinct but still white and running across secondaries and primaries, in a broken manner. Tail long, well forked, mid-grey with distinct white outer rectrices shown clearly when tail spread and in flight. *Underparts:* throat mid-grey meeting neatly with pink of breast. Breast blotchy pale pink, diffuse toward lower breast and brightest at upper-breast edges. Rest of underparts whitish-grey. *Softparts:* legs and eye black. Bill fine and short with upper mandible black but pale buff base to lower mandible.

Two days later, 2 June 1991, a fully coloured robin was seen by RK, SH, Ross Frick and other SAOA members at South Para Reservoir, adjacent to the South Para River bridge. The weather was heavily overcast, still, drizzly and cold (*ca* 12°C). The bird spent most of its time flitting busily in low kangaroo thorn *Acacia paradoxa* and after being observed for about 10 minutes from a distance of 0.5 to 10m (height 1 to 5m above the ground) it flew to the canopy of a nearby blue gum *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and was lost. This bird showed the same behaviour traits as the bird of 31 May, including the quivering of wings. It did not stay still for more than five to 10 seconds, was inquisitive and was not bothered by the presence of the observers. No reaction to or by any other species was noted.

Description: slate-grey upperparts, darker primaries. Slate-grey tail not as forked as that of the earlier bird. White outer rectrices and pure white spot on forehead clearly visible. Rose-pink breast. Lower breast to undertail coverts, white. Throat, crown and head slate-grey like back.

The white wing bars, whitish eye-ring and pale pink breast identify the bird of 31 May 1991 as an immature male. The plumage characters of the bird of 2 June belong to those of an adult male. The white outer rectrices, proportionately long tail, slate-grey upperparts and general behaviour serve to separate both from the similar Pink Robin.

REFERENCES

Reid, N., Lindsey, T., Carpenter, G., Harper D. and Kernot, R. 1984. New records of Rose Robins in South Australia, with comments on plumage and previous reports of Rose and Pink Robins. *South Australian Ornithologist*, 29, 100.

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Received: 17 June 1992