

## BIRD NOTES

**SOUTHERN EMU-WRENS IN THE KOPPIO HILLS AND NEAR EDILLILIE, EYRE PENINSULA.** There are published records for the Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus parimeda* to the south and west of the Koppio Hills in wet and dry heath (Eckert 1977; Schodde and Weatherly 1981; Morgan 1982). Few records of this threatened subspecies exist (Garnett 1992). In this note I give details of three observations of the Southern Emu-wren including notes on habitat.

On 28 March 1984 I observed two uncoloured Southern Emu-wrens in 'Charlton Gully' (34 33'S, 135 47'E) about 10 km east of Wanilla. The birds were in lightly grazed wet heath of *Melaleuca brevifolia* (short-leaved tea-tree) with *Juncus* sp. (sedge), various other low sedges and scattered emergent *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* (South Australian blue gum).

On 5 May 1984 I observed two males and two uncoloured birds in the same gully about 3 km downstream (34 33'S, 135 49'E). These birds were in a more diverse drier heath of *Melaleuca decussata* (totem-poles), *Allocasuarina* sp. (a small sheoak), *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* ssp. *tatanea* (Tate's grass-tree), *Astroloma conostephioides* (flame heath), and *Acacia ligulata* (umbrella bush). In the drainage 10 m below is a wetter heath dominated by *M. brevifolia* and *Gahnia* sp. (cutting grass).

On 4 April 1984 I observed a single uncoloured emu-wren along the roadside 3 km west of Edillilie. The habitat was dry heath with *Leptospermum coriaceum* (green tea-tree), *Banksia ornata* (desert banksia) and emergent *Eucalyptus incrassata* (ridge-fruited mallee). This is similar habitat to that described by Morgan (1982) for his observation in roadside vegetation 11 km further west. This record is significant because at that time over 100 ha of similar habitat occurred adjacent to the observation.

## DISCUSSION

The individuals in Charlton Gully may form part of a population that occurs in a narrow, 4 km long strip of habitat along this drainage. The total area of loosely connected suitable habitat was less than 100 ha. I searched for emu-wrens in several other likely areas in the southern Koppio Hills without success.

All three observations are close to, but outside the accepted range of the species (Garnett 1992). The records from the Koppio Hills are of interest because previous records are from the low altitude regions of southern Eyre Peninsula.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These observations were made while the author was funded by a research grant from the South Australian Department of Environment and Planning to study the Funereal Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus funereus* on Eyre Peninsula. For field assistance and advice I am grateful to L. Joseph, M. Possingham, M. Tester, F. Greenslade, M. Nicholls, S. Pillman, R. Scott, T. Morgan, G. Bishop and F. Vickery.

## REFERENCES

- Eckert, J. 1977. The distribution of the emu-wrens *Stipiturus malachurus* and *S. ruficeps mallee* in South Australia. *South Australian Ornithologist*, 27, 186-187.
- Garnett, S. (ed.) 1992. *Threatened and extinct birds of Australia*. RAOU Report No. 82. RAOU and Australian NPWS, Melbourne.
- Morgan, T. D. 1982. Further sightings of the Southern Emu-wren from Eyre Peninsula. *South Australian Ornithologist*, 29, 22.
- Schodde, R. and Weatherly, R. 1981. A new subspecies of the Southern Emu-wren *Stipiturus malachurus* from South Australia, with notes on its affinities. *South Australian Ornithologist*, 28, 169-170.
- H. P. Possingham, 61 Salop St, Beulah Park, S.A. 5067

Received: May 1992