

BIRD NOTES

AN *EMBLEMA PICTUM* IN THE SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES. On 24 October 1989, while bushwalking in Mount Remarkable National Park between Mambray Creek and Alligator Gorge, we observed a single male Painted Finch *Emblema pictum* perched near and drinking from the Alligator Creek, near the area known as Redcliffs (138°04' E 32°49' S). The bird was in view for approximately two minutes during which time it presented full side, back and frontal views. Binoculars were used at distances from 60 m initially, then 30 m while the bird was drinking.

A sketch with notes made at the time recorded: red face, throat, rump and midline slash on chest; white spotting on black breast and flank; back and upper wing brown-grey; bill red with dark lower mandible. These features clearly distinguish it from the three firetail species found in South Australia and with which we are also familiar.

We lived in the Mt Remarkable National Park at Alligator Gorge between 1971 and 1977. Although familiar with the bird fauna of the southern Flinders Ranges and aware of other records from the northern Flinders (McGilp 1925; Joseph 1975; Crisp 1974; Bell 1976; Hornsby 1987) we had not recorded this species previously in those latitudes.

Almost the entire catchments of Alligator and Mambray creeks were severely burnt by wildfire in January 1988. This had resulted in large areas of the low open woodland formation on the range slopes and ridges regenerating with seeding grasses, including *Triodia* and *Stipa* species, dominating and interspersed with low eucalypts. The shrub layer was almost absent at that stage of the regeneration. This vegetation formation resembled the habitat of the Painted Finch that we had seen previously in the MacDonnell Ranges and Uluru National Park of Central Australia.

REFERENCES

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Received: December 1993