

AN ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE NEAR PORT WAKEFIELD. On 7 December 1992, I was driving on my property 10 km north of Port Wakefield at about 1030 h. The weather was cool and cloudy with a strong southerly wind.

As I drove near a dead sheep I noticed an Australian Pratincole *Siltia isabella* beside it. I stopped to observe the bird and saw it feeding on flying insects attracted to the carcass. The insects were caught on the ground and also in the air. Another darker pratincole flew in near the dead sheep and also caught an insect. I identified this bird as an Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*. I observed it with 7 x 35 binoculars for about 10 minutes. Both pratincoles were fairly confiding and I had a good view from about 20 m.

The Oriental Pratincole was in non-breeding plumage. It was grey above, with dark primaries, and paler underneath, grading to almost white on the abdomen. The feature which confirmed its identification was a distinct black line around a

pale greyish throat. The bird had short black legs, a black bill and black eyes with a whitish eye-ring. It flew off and circled, showing a black-tipped, white forked tail and reddish-brown underwings.

The next morning I returned to the same location loaded with camera gear. The Australian Pratincole was again at the sheep carcass, but the Oriental Pratincole was not present. The Oriental Pratincole is rarely reported in southern Australia; e.g. see Pedler (1976) for early records in South Australia.

REFERENCE

Pedler, L.P. 1976. Oriental Pratincole in the Lower North. *South Australian Ornithologist*, 27, 111.

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