

**CONSPECIFIC KILLING BY A WILLIE WAGTAIL.** From 1973 to 2000 we have made 290 visits to the Aldinga Reef Aquatic Reserve (35°16'S, 138°25'E) at Port Willunga c. 40 km S of Adelaide. On most visits and in all seasons, we recorded 1–4 Willie Wagtails *Rhipidura leucophrys* on the fringing shore or rocks near shore, often in two pairs at least 0.5 km apart. On 11 May 1997 we observed 5–7 minutes of a conflict between two Willie Wagtails in adult plumage at the back of the beach near dunes. The following details were recorded at the time:

After a number of flutterings close together, which included spiralling to as high as 2 m, the larger of the two stood on top of the other on the sand delivering a few pecks. There followed short flights near each other, and repetition of the above behaviour. At times the smaller bird lay sideways on the sand, and once or twice the larger bird lay for several to eight seconds alongside, but giving no pecks.

The interaction was not notable for pecking by the assailant but rather by the latter standing on the smaller bird. Our suspicion of aggression was clouded by their elegance and lack of furious movement.

Once aware that the interaction was serious, we ran to break up the fight from our observation distance of about 15 m, but found the

smaller bird dead, with one eye closed but no other external sign of injury—no absence of feathers on the head and no sign of blood. We do not know how long the conflict had been going on before our arrival, but it would seem that the smaller bird at times laid on the ground exhausted and that exhaustion likely caused its death. We have not previously witnessed a territorial dispute (the usual cause of conflict) between conspecific birds which ended in death.

The writers have not previously observed significant conspecific aggression by this species. For example, in 1984 we monitored as many as 17 active Willie Wagtail nests within 15 ha of the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park (Ashton 1987) without an observation of hostile interaction. In light of that recorded above it is possible this can occur and be mistaken by the observer as 'play' or ritual.

#### REFERENCE

Ashton, C. 1987. The breeding of birds in the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park, South Australia. *The Australian Bird Watcher*, 12, 76.

C.B. and E.M. Ashton: 218 Aldinga Esplanade, Aldinga Beach, S.A. 5173

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**FIRST RECORD OF A SOUTH GEORGIAN DIVING-PETREL FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA.** The nominate subspecies of the Common Diving-Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* breeds on islands off Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand (North Island and Cook Strait), with other subspecies breeding elsewhere (Bourne 1968). In South Australia it is found occasionally as a beach derelict, and there are six specimens in the collection of the South Australian Museum, from the South-East, Coorong, Adelaide region and Kangaroo Island.

The South Georgian Diving-Petrel *P. georgicus* breeds on subantarctic islands in the Atlantic, Indian and SW Pacific Oceans and Codfish Island, New Zealand (Marchant and Higgins 1990). The species is very similar to *P. urinatrix*

and therefore so difficult to identify at sea that its pelagic distribution is not well known. To date only one beach derelict specimen has been reported from Australia, at Bellambi Beach, New South Wales, 28 December 1958; the bird was a female of unspecified age (Gibson and Sefton 1959).

On 13 January 1985 P. Coulls collected a freshly dead, beach-washed diving-petrel at the mouth of the Eleanor River in Vivonne Bay, south coast of Kangaroo Island (35°58'30"S, 137°12'0"E). The specimen was forwarded to the South Australian Museum where it was identified as *P. urinatrix*. The record was reported by Coulls in the SAOA Bird Notes (SAOA 1985), and was listed as the first record of this species for Kangaroo Island by Baxter (1995). A year after its collection, the specimen was