

PIED CURRAWONGS *Strepera graculina* NEAR MOUNT GAMBIER: CONFIRMATION OF A NEW SPECIES FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA. Pizzey and Knight (1997) state that the western limit of the Pied Currawong's range is far south east South Australia. However most other references cite the western range limit as western Victoria at or near the South Australia-Victoria (SA-Vic.) border (e.g. Blakers, Davies and Reilly 1984; Schodde and Mason 1999; Garnett and Crowley 2000). Furthermore, Pied Currawong is not in *A field list of the birds of South Australia* (SAOA 1985a).

At about 0830 h on 1 May 2002, I heard a Pied Currawong call at my property at Worrolong (c. 37°48'S, 140°49'E). On investigation I saw three Pied Currawongs in a tall bangalay *Eucalyptus botryoides* in my front garden. The call was identifiably Pied Currawong, having a long 'wu-woo, wu-woo', sometimes characterised as 'come on, Geelong', but markedly different from more typical east coast calls, which to my ear have a more strident clamorous quality. The call was quite unlike the double clink of Grey Currawong *Strepera versicolor*. The Pied Currawongs were all deep black with a small area of white on the base of the tail and vent and a narrow white wing stripe and tail tip. They had robust bills with a marked curve on the upper mandible. They then flew with an undulating, rowing flight into nearby Tasmanian blue gums *Eucalyptus globulus* and were lost to view.

Worrolong is a locality approximately 7 km NE of Mount Gambier in South Australia and about 10.5 km W of the SA-Vic. border. The dominant land use at Worrolong is hobby farming and to the north and east it is plantation forestry consisting of radiata pine *Pinus radiata* and Tasmanian blue gum. In autumn, winter and early spring, Grey Currawongs are present and conspicuous at Worrolong and in the nearby forest plantations.

After the initial sighting, I recorded Pied Currawongs almost daily throughout winter 2002 in the Worrolong locality. The maximum number seen together was seven on 15 and 16 August and I last recorded Pied Currawongs on 13 September

that year. On 2 January 2003, Peter Penney and I heard a Pied Currawong calling in Tasmanian blue gum forest in Victoria about 500 m E of the SA-Vic. border and c. 10 Km ENE of Woorolong. I then saw and heard Pied Currawongs at Worrolong on 31 March and 1 April 2003, and Colin Rogers and I found up to four there on 26 and 27 April 2003. To the best of my knowledge local bird watchers have not previously recorded the Pied Currawong in South Australia. Four Pied Currawongs were heard calling at Donovans (c. 38°01'S, 140°57'E) on the Glenelg River in South Australia (SAOA 1985b), although the description of a broad wing bar does not fit the typical Pied Currawongs at Worrolong. Two Pied Currawongs were reported from the same location on 12 February 1997, but no detailed field notes were provided (SAOA 1997). Possingham also reported them on both sides of the SA-Vic. border (c. 17 km E of Mt Gambier) near Rennick in April of 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively and at 'Snow Gums' forest block, c. 19 km SE of Mt Gambier in April 1998 (Possingham 1998; Possingham, pers. comm.). The then SAOA records secretary was reluctant to accept records that were based on call but no detailed description (Possingham, pers. comm.).

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