

Rose Robin at Wirrabara Forest.

Small numbers of Rose Robins, *Petroica rosea*, winter in South Australia, with most records from the Mount Lofty Ranges and the South East (Reid *et al.* 1984, Black 1997, Rich 1998, Higgins and Peter 2002). There are outlying records from the lower north (Truran *et al.* 1980) and north-eastern Eyre Peninsula (Reid *et al.* 1984).

At about 1000 hrs on 10 May 2007 I observed an uncoloured robin in the upper branches of a large (25 m) Radiata Pine *Pinus radiata* in the Old Nursery at Wirrabara Forest in the southern Flinders Ranges. My attention was drawn to the bird by its repeated, weak 'chank' call, that I remembered from my previous observations of Rose Robins at Belair in the 1980s (Reid *et al.* 1984). Only the pale grey underparts of the bird were visible because distance and foliage largely obscured my view. Also noted were the constantly flicked longish wings and tail, and fantail-like activity. The immediate area comprised a mixture of large mature pines with other ornamental and forestry species, and occasional River Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The weather was fine and sunny.

Because of the poor view my identification is mainly based on call. Higgins and Peter (2002) describe the quiet nasal *neep* call of the Rose Robin, "rendered as *chank* or *prrrp* by different observers". This call, given by both sexes, is regarded as distinctive of the species (Higgins and Peter 2002) and, unlike its song, is frequently given in winter. I consider that this description matches the call with which I am familiar.

The only other report of a Rose Robin in the region is Truran, Mart and Bransbury (1980)

observation of an adult male in the grounds of The Bluff HS, 11.5 km NW of Hallett, in May 1979. This locality is about 70 km south-east of Wirrabara. Also of interest is that my observation was in an area of largely exotic woodland vegetation, consistent with many of the other reports of Rose Robins in South Australia (Reid *et al.* 1984). It may be that such areas mimic the wet forested breeding habitats of the species, and thus provide favoured wintering grounds. Further observations are required to determine whether birds remain at such sites throughout the winter, or return annually. Once learned, the distinctive *neep* call should assist in locating and identifying Rose Robins that, despite their active nature, can be difficult to observe in the canopy of woodland trees in South Australia.

REFERENCES

- Black, A. B. 1997. Pink Robins in South Australia. *South Australian Ornithologist* 32: 164-166.
- Higgins, P. J. and Peter, J. M. 2002. *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic birds. Volume 6. Pardalotes to Shrike-thrushes*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Reid, N., Lindsey, T., Carpenter, G., Harper, D. and Kernot, R. 1984. New records of Rose Robins in South Australia, with comments on plumage and previous reports of Rose and Pink Robins. *South Australian Ornithologist* 29: 100-105.
- Rich, C. 1998. A female Rose Robin in the Mount Lofty Ranges. *South Australian Ornithologist* 33: 22-23.
- Truran, J., Mart, B. and Bransbury, J. 1980. A northern record of the Rose Robin. *South Australian Ornithologist* 28: 138.

Graham Carpenter:
24 Dryden Rd,
Black Forest, S.A. 5035.