

Birds Recorded from the Early Days up to the Present Time for the Reed Beds District.

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We find in the early records of the Colony that the Adelaide Plains teemed in game when white man first put in his appearance. I know from the records of my forebears, who settled at the Reed-beds in 1836 that the district of the Reed-beds was the haunt of much bird life. This would be expected, for the River Torrens emptied itself out on to the land forming great swamps, which in their turn supported much cover for water fowl and other birds, the surrounding high sandy rises supported scrub chiefly composed of banksia and other shrubs bearing honey-laden flowers, which produced copious food for honey-eating birds. The big gum timber growing along the river formed the home for such birds as Tree Creepers and Giant Kingfishers, the Night Herons in hundreds roosted in

these giant trees, and on their limbs the Whistling Eagles, and White-fronted Herons built their nests. Amidst the low rushes and sedges on swampy ground the beautiful Ground Parrakeet was flushed to drop like a quail again to cover. The Swift Lorikeet came from Tasmania and visited the flowering gums, and the White Cockatoos screeched amidst the timber. Most of these birds have for ever gone from this district, while in some instances they are extinct as far as South Australia is concerned.

Thinking that it would be as well to record those species which have come under the writer's observation during his life time, and that of his father's, many of which have quite disappeared now, while there are a few species still hanging on to a small island of timber, an island unfortunately assailed on all sides by the devastating hand of so-called advancing civilization, and becoming smaller and smaller each year from these causes. Even property which has been in the family since the very first, and the timber thereon most jealously guarded, has of late come under the despoiler's hand, and the few remaining species of native birds are confined to a restricted area which threatens them with extinction. The original owners of the country (the Whites) are gradually dying out, and as we play our part, and leave the stage upon which we fought for the fauna and flora of the district, so gradually does the hand of nature disappear around us, and with the last member's exit (probably the writer) from this world's stage, so will the last vestige of the old times Reed-beds disappear. It is for these reasons above stated, that the writer believes that it would be well to record those birds as far as possible which once inhabited the Reed-beds district.

Dromiceius novaehollandiae (Emu).—Once abounded in numbers upon the Adelaide Plains, but they were not within my recollection.

Coturnix pectoralis (Eastern Stubble Quail).—This bird was extremely plentiful in the eighties, and I have seen hundreds in a day amidst the long grass near the swamps, their short but loud note is still to be heard in the spring time, but where there is one now there were hundreds in the old days. When they nested profusely nearly every tussock of grass sheltered a nest.

Austroturnix velox (Eastern Little Quail).—Was almost as numerous in the old days as the preceding species. I have flushed and seen dozens in flight at the same time; they also nested in numbers, but are rare now.

Phaps chalcoptera.—There are records by my father of this bird having been plentiful in the district, and I have an excellent water colour painting of the bird executed by him. This bird had disappeared before my time.

Perzana fluminea (Eastern Spotted Crake).—Was a common bird in my early days, and nested in the swampy country every year. I can well remember how delighted I was upon finding the first nest.

Zapornia pusilla (Eastern Little Crake).—This was an exceedingly common bird in the time of my boyhood, but it has not been seen for years now.

Porzanaoides plumbea (Eastern Spotless Crake).—This was the least common of the three species, yet at times they put in an appearance in numbers. They are never seen now.

Microtribonyx ventralis whitei (Eastern Black-tailed Native Hen).—Appeared in great numbers in days gone by. Still visits us in small numbers; one in the garden this month, September.

Gallinula tenebrosa (Black Moorhen).—Very plentiful in days gone by, when they nested. Have not seen them for some years now; the last nest remembered was in 1904. The nest contained eight eggs.

Porphyrio melanotus (Eastern Bald Coot).—I have seen these birds in 1885-6 come out of the flags and reeds like a mob of sheep at sunset to feed along the water's edge. They are seldom seen now for the cover is gone.

Fulica atra tasmanica (Eastern Coot).—During very big floods when miles of country were under water these birds visited us in large parties. It is many years since they have been seen.

Podiceps cristatus (Australian Tippet Grebe).—The writer can remember these birds very distinctly, for they were often seen in the swamp in the early days.

Tachybaptus ruficollis novaehollandiae (Black-throated Grebe).—Was to be seen all through the year, in the large open waters in the winter, and in the deep dark pools fringed by high reeds and flags in the summer.

Poliiocephalus poliiocephalus (Hoary-headed Grebe).—A common bird in the old days; visits us occasionally now.

Gelochelidon nilotica macrotarsa (Australian Gull-billed Tern).—Often seen in small parties skimming over the water. Hardly ever absent in the early days during flood times.

Hydroprogne tschegrava strenua (Australian Caspian Tern).—This fine bird was often seen patrolling the swamps with its large red bill pointing downwards, and its strange harsh cry often heard.

Thalasseus bergii poliocercus (Crested Tern).—The writer has often seen a party of these terns resting closely together on a spit or sandbar.

Bruchigavia novaehollandiae ethelae (Southern Silver Gull).—Always appeared in numbers during flood time as they do to this day.

Gabianus pacificus (Pacific Gull).—These splendid birds were regular visitors in the winter time, and it was seldom two or three were not about calling to each other in their loud harsh voices. Not seen for years now.

Erythrogonyx cinctus (Red-kneed Dotterel).—A common bird in days gone by, and bred here every year. A nest was seen three years ago.

Lobibyx novaehollandiae (Spur-winged Plover).—A very common bird up to recent years; is still to be met with in the district. The fox is wiping the bird out. Bred every year in the district, but it is some years since a nest has been seen.

Zonifer tricolor (Black-breasted Plover).—A very common bird, and has bred every season in the district up to the present day.

Cirrepidasmus bicinctus (Double-banded Dotterel).—This was an occasional visitor to the samphire flats in the early days, but it is a long time since they have been seen.

Leucopolius ruficapillus (Red-capped Dotterel).—A common bird, nesting to this day on the bare drift sand.

Elseya melanops (Black-fronted Dotterel).—Once a very common bird nesting on the bare sand back in the grass land; have not seen a nest for many years now, although an odd bird or two are to be seen.

Himantopus leucocephalus (White-headed Stilt).—A regular spring and winter visitor, and they have bred in numbers up to quite recently.

Cladorhynchus leucocephalus (Banded Stilt).—An occasional visitor, but it is many years since they have been seen in the district.

Recurvirostra novaehollandiae (Red-necked Avocet).—Only remember seeing these birds once or twice in the district during my life time.

Numenius cyanopus (Australian Curlew).—A wary bird, but often seen amidst the swamps during flood times, and if disturbed more than once they made over the sand dunes to the sea.

Vetola lapponica (Barred-rumped Godwit).—Occasionally seen during flood times.

Pisobia minuta ruficollis (Red-necked Stint).—Small parties of these birds were to be seen along the muddy margin of the water, or where the flood waters were drying up on the grass lands.

Limnocinclus acuminatus (Sharp-tailed Stint).—Still to be seen in large flocks wherever there is sufficient water. It was not uncommon to see these birds mingling with the preceding species as well as the following one. The three species of birds moving quickly in one huge mass over the wet mud where the receding waters had left much food for them.

Erolia ferruginea chinensis (Eastern Curlew Sandpiper).—A common bird up to the present time.

Rostratula australis (Australian Painted Snipe).—This was a common bird, and bred in the district. An odd pair is to be seen almost every year.

Stiltia isabella (Australian Pratincole).—Visited the district many years ago, and nested at Black Forest.

Burhinus magnirostris (Eastern Stone Plover).—Once a very common bird, nesting in numbers. One would flush a dozen or more in an hour's walk, but they have almost completely disappeared. The fox is taking heavy toll of these birds.

Austrotis australis (Australian Bustard).—Once a regular visitor in the Autumn when they came after the black crickets, and it was quite a common sight to see several of these fine birds stalking over the fields and plains, but it is many years since one has been seen in the district.

Mathewsia rubicunda (Australian Crane).—These birds were plentiful when my grandfather settled in the district early in 1836, but the writer has never had the pleasure of seeing them here.

Threskiornis molucca strictipennis (White Ibis).—Once a fairly common bird; an odd bird or two is still to be seen in flood time. About three or four years ago while the district was under flood a flock of 20 to 30 of these birds was in the district for eight or ten days; they were very conspicuous in

their beautiful white plumage as they flew from the swamp to the gum trees to roost for the night.

Carphibis spinicollis (Straw-necked Ibis).—Seldom misses paying the district a visit during the winter months, especially during a wet winter. These visits will end soon, for every time they come their ranks are thinned by the vandal with the gun.

Plegadis falcinellus (Glossy Ibis).—According to my father they often appeared in the old days, and there is not the slightest doubt that there was one with a flock of *C. spinicollis* in the district two years ago.

Spathero dia regia (Black-billed or Royal Spoonbill).—An odd bird or two often came with *P. flavipes*, but they have never been seen in numbers in my time.

Platibis flavipes (Yellow-billed Spoonbill).—A regular visitor in fair numbers in days gone by, but it is many years since they have been seen.

Herodias alba symmatophora (White Egret).—These birds were never plentiful, but an odd bird here and there could be seen in wet winters up to quite recently.

Notophox novaehollandiae (White-fronted Heron).—Always a common bird in the district, but of-course much more so in days gone by. They breed every year in the district. Several pairs are nesting at the time of writing.

Myola pacifica (White-necked Heron).—Once a regular visitor in the winter, but not seen now for some time.

Nycticorax caledonicus australasiae (Australian Night Heron).—Roosted in great numbers in the giant gum trees over my grandfather's home, the first in the district. There are still 20 to 30 birds left, and which return after nesting season to the pines at "Wetunga", going out to feed in the swamps at night, and returning to the pines to roost by day. They are gradually getting less and less.

Botaurus poeciloptilus (East Australian Bittern).—Now for ever gone, when they once could be found in numbers, their deep, weird, booming sound could be heard so frequently echoing along the thick flag and reed swamps.

Chenopsis atrata (Eastern Black Swan).—Always winter visitors, in the old days in numbers, but now in ones and twos. At time of writing there are four birds in the swamps.

Anserana semipalmata (Pied Goose).—My father records this bird for the district.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae (Cape Barren Goose).—In the old days often seen on the grassy flats, but it is many years since the last was seen.

Chenonetta jubata (Wood Duck or Maned Goose).—A very common duck twenty years ago, but has not been seen in the district for many years.

Casarca tadornoides (Mountain Duck).—Once a common bird, but seldom seen now.

Anas superciliosa (Black Duck).—Once with us all through the year, nesting in large numbers, now an odd pair or so may have the luck to hatch a brood. Last season three young ones were brought to the river, by the parent birds.

Virago castanea (Red-breasted Teal).—These birds are not nearly so numerous as the following species. They come each year in the winter, but not in numbers; there has been a small party on the water this week.

Virago gibberifrons (Grey Teal)

Visits the district in great numbers when there is water about, but one can see the thinning of their ranks each year.

Spatula rhynchotis (Australian Shoveler).—These birds have visited the district in great numbers in days gone by, and nested in hundreds amidst the clover in the fields near the swamps.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus (Pink-eared Duck).—A regular visitor in the old days, but seldom seen now.

Stictonetta naevosa (Freckled Duck).—During dry seasons in the interior this duck has visited this district in great numbers, but has not come under notice for some time now.

Nyroca australis (White-eyed Duck).—Visit the district with other ducks, but have not been seen in large flocks for some time now.

Oxyura australis (Blue-billed Duck).—My father records this duck, but the writer has not observed it.

Biziura lobata (Musk Duck).—Once very plentiful, never seen now.

Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae (Black Cormorant).—A common bird once; seldom, if ever, seen now. Observed a party on the sea beach which is only separated by the sand dunes from the swamps this year, 1919.

Mesocarbo ater (Little Black Cormorant).—Also a common bird formerly, but not seen now.

Hypoleucus varius hypoleucus.—Another common bird in days gone by; a few seen at times now.

Microcarbo melanoleucus (Little Cormorant).—Once a very common bird; an odd one or two may still be seen on the river at times.

Catoptropelicanus conspicillatus (Eastern Pelican).—In days of old this fine bird was often seen; but not now.

Circus approximans gouldi (Swamp Hawk).—Once a common bird as it soared over the Reed-beds and flags with elegant flight. It nested in the reeds and flags in numbers gone.

Leucospiza novaehollandiae (White Goshawk).—Recorded by my father, but not observed by the writer, although seen twenty miles to the north.

Urospiza fasciata (Australian Goshawk).—Once very numerous; still to be seen at times.

Accipiter cirrocephalus (Collared Sparrow Hawk).—Not been observed for a long time now.

Uroaetus audax (Wedge-tailed Eagle).—Once fairly common. Only seen at a great height, and very seldom now.

Hieraetus morphnoides (Little Eagle).—Never plentiful, never seen now.

Haliastur sphenurus (Whistling Eagle).—Quite a common bird up to recent years, and it built and reared its young every year; very seldom seen now.

Elanus axillaris (Black-shouldered Kite).—Once a regular visitor, and nesting in the district up to two or three years ago; seldom seen now.

Falco longipennis.—Once fairly common; have not seen a specimen for years now.

Rhynchodon peregrinus macropus (Black-cheeked Falcon).—Very often visited us, but never in numbers; not seen for some years now.

Iracidea berigora occidentalis (Brown Hawk).—Once a very common bird, and nesting in numbers when the writer was a boy. Have not noted a bird for years.

Cerchneis cenchruides (Nankeen Kestrel).—Once an extremely common bird, but seldom seen now.

Spiloglaux boobook marmorata (Marbled Owl).—Once a very common bird. Now an odd bird or so comes for a

while and disappears. The strange call of boobook has something fascinating about it upon a still moonlight night.

Tyto alba delicatula (Scrub or Barn Owl).—Once very plentiful, then almost disappeared, and again for a few years seemed to be on the increase, but the great mortality amongst them this year, 1919, has thinned them out.

Trichoglossus novaehollandiae (Blue-bellied Lorikeet).—Visits us at intervals, when gum blossoms are out or fruit is ripe. Have not seen them in great numbers for years now.

Glossopsitta concinna (Musk Lorikeet).—The notes for the preceding species will apply to this one.

Glossopsitta porphyrocephala (Purple-crowned Lorikeet).—Visits us in great numbers when the gums are in flower, and make the air resound with their shrill voices.

Glossopsitta pusilla (Little Lorikeet).—A few of these birds visit us in company with the preceding species as a rule, but are never numerous.

Calyptrorhynchus funereus whiteae (Southern Black Cockatoo).—My father records this bird for the early days, and there is little doubt that they visited the *banksia* scrubs which existed then.

Cacatoes galerita (White Cockatoo).—Was a resident in the early days, but now only a few birds call once in every few years, but they do not remain, for all their feeding grounds are destroyed.

Ducorpsius gymnopsis (Bare-eyed Cockatoo).—A small flock once or twice visited us, but never remained more than a few days.

Eolophus roseicapillus (Rose-breasted Cockatoo).—Small parties have visited the district from time to time, but not to stay.

Leptolophus auricomis (Cockatoo Parrot).—Once a common visitor in the autumn. Now seldom, if ever, seen.

Platycercus elegans adeladiae (Adelaide Rosella).—Once a common bird, now an odd bird or two will visit the district, and if not shot seem to make back to the ranges.

Platycercus eximius (Rosella).—Once or twice in the writer's life time, these birds have visited the district.

Psephotus haematonotus (Red-backed Grass Parrot).—Once a very plentiful bird, nesting in nearly all the gums along the river. Now disappeared, principally due to cats and the English starlings.

Neonanodes elegans (Grass Parrot).—Recorded as plentiful by my father in the early days.

Lathamus discolor (Swift Parrot).—There is a specimen in my collection collected at the Reed-beds in 1863. The writer has not observed it in the district.

Melopsittacus undulatus (Shell Parrot).—Visited the district in great numbers in the old days, and nested here; never seen now.

Pezoporus terrestris (Ground Parrot).—Once a common bird, a specimen in the writer's collection is dated 1850, snared by Tommy, the blackfellow, at the Reed-beds. Extinct in South Australia now.

Podargus strigoides rossi (Mallee Frogmouth).—Quite common in the early days; a few remain in the big timber.

Alcyon azurea victoriae (Blue Kingfisher).—Very numerous on the river once. A bird or two still to be seen at times.

Dacelo gigas (Giant Brown Kingfisher).—Numerous in the first place, then exterminated, later reintroduced; fair number about now.

Cyanalcyon pyrrhopygius (Red-backed Kingfisher).—My father records this bird for the district.

Sauropatis sancta (Sacred Kingfisher).—Very numerous formerly, now almost exterminated in the district.

Cosmaerops ornatus (Australian Bee-eater).—Once quite a common bird in the summer, seldom if ever seen now.

Eurostopodus mystacalis (White-throated Night-jar).—Once a common bird, now disappeared, cats and foxes having a hand in their disappearance.

Micropus pacificus (White-rumped Swift).—Visitors in the summer time, have only known them to settle once in the district.

Heteroscenes pallidus (Pallid Cuckoo).—A spring and summer visitor leaving us in late summer or autumn.

Cacomantis rubricatus (Fan-tailed Cuckoo).—These birds are with us all through the year.

Neochalcites basalis mellori (Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo).—These birds arrive with wrens in mid winter, and remain through the summer, Maluri being their chief foster parents.

Lamprococcya plagosus (Bronze Cuckoo).—Once a common bird, rarely seen now.

Hirundo neoxena (Welcome swallow).—Remain in the district all through the year.

Cheramoeca leucosternum stonei (Eastern Black and White Swallow).—Once a common bird building in the sand banks; seem to have disappeared now.

Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi (Tree Martin).—Not nearly so plentiful as in the days of yore.

Lagenoplastes ariel (Fairy Martin).—Once very common, building their retort-shaped nests under verandahs and bridges in the district, but seem now to have gone.

Microeca fascians (Brown Flycatcher).—In former years very common, reduced now to one pair as far as the writer can tell.

Petroica multicolor frontalis (Southern Scarlet-breasted Robin).—Odd birds visit us in the autumn.

Littlera chrysoptera phoenicea (Flame-breasted Robin).—These birds put in their appearance in the autumn, do not stay long, and pass on. My father records this bird in the forties.

Whiteornis goodenovii (Red-capped Robin).—It is not often this bird visits this district.

Smicrornis brevirostris viridescens (Greenish Tree Tit).—Once plentiful, now gone; not seen for many years.

Pachycephala pectoralis fuliginosa (South Australian Yellow-breasted Thickhead).—Visits us rarely, but always in the Autumn.

Lewinornis rufiventris inornatus (Southern Rufous-breasted Thickhead).—Like the preceding species this bird visits us at long intervals, and in the Autumn.

Rhipidura flabellifera whitei (South Australian Fantail).—Once a fairly common bird, now a rare visitor in the Autumn.

Leucocirca tricolor (Black and White Fantail).—A fair number in the district, but not nearly as many as formerly.

Seisura inquieta (Restless Flycatcher).—An autumn visitor becoming less and less as years go by.

Coracina novaehollandiae melanops (Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike).—An odd bird to be seen throughout the year, but in the autumn and early winter visit the district in numbers.

Lalage tricolor (White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater).—Formerly this bird visited the district every spring and nested; it is years since it has been seen here now.

Morganornis superciliosus (White-browed Babbler).—My father records this bird in the early days. For a time it seems to have been exterminated, but within the last seven or eight years it has appeared again, and is nesting.

Cinclorhamphus cruralis cantatoris (Southern Brown Song Lark).—A spring visitor, remaining in the district to bring up its young. Not nearly as numerous as formerly.

Ptenoedus mathewsi vigorsi (Eastern Rufous Song Lark).—Like the preceding species visits us in the spring, and remains through the summer to rear its young. Once very numerous, now very scarce; some years they never put in an appearance.

Epthianura albifrons (White-fronted Chat).—With us all through the year.

Parepthianura tricolor (Tricoloured Chat).—Many years ago this bird came down in the summer to the samphire flats, but has not been seen for very many years.

Aurepthianura aurifrons (Orange-fronted Chat).—The notes of the preceding species will apply to this one.

Conopodera australis (Southern Red Warbler).—Once a very common bird, visiting the district to nest in thousands; now very few are seen.

Cisticola exilis (Grass Warbler).—Once very plentiful, now never seen.

Poodytes gramineus dubius (Southern Grass Bird).—Once in great numbers; now gone.

Geobasileus chrysorrhous perksi (Southern Yellow-rumped Tit).—Once a very common bird, nesting in all situations. Now it seems to have disappeared entirely.

Sericornis maculatus osculans (Allied Scrub Wren).—Recorded lately by Mr. J. W. Mellor, and no doubt occurred in the earlier times.

Malurus cyaneus leggei (Southern Blue Wren).—Remains in the district all through the year, and seems to be holding its own fairly well in spite of the domestic cat.

Campbellornis personatus munna and *C. Superciliosus* (Marked Wood Swallow, and White-browed Wood Swallow).—Visits the district at long intervals, generally in numbers, and remains to nest.

Pseudartamus cyanopterus (Wood Swallow).—Very numerous formerly, now practically disappeared.

Colluricincla harmonica victoriae (Grey Shrike Thrush).—Remain in the district all through the year, and bring up their young. Not so numerous as formerly.

Grallina cyanoleuca (Magpie Lark).—A few are always in the district where they nest; not so numerous as formerly.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota (White-backed Magpie).—Fairly numerous in the district, and are holding their own fairly well.

Falcunculus frontatus flavigulus (Green-bellied Shrike Tit).—These birds were fairly numerous in the early days; there are a few pairs still in the district, and nest each year.

Aphelocephala leucopsis (White-face).—This was a very plentiful bird twenty years or so ago, nesting in old buildings and hedges in great numbers; it is practically gone now.

Neoclima picumna australis (Southern Brown Treecreeper).—Once a very common bird; two years ago reduced to one pair, and it seems as if these have gone now.

Zosterops lateralis westernensis (Southern White-eye).—These birds still visit the gardens in summer and late autumn in great numbers.

Austrodicaeum hirundinaceum (Mistletoe Bird).—Once very plentiful; only seen on rare occasions now.

Pardalotus punctatus wanthopygus (Yellow-rumped Pardalote).—Once very numerous. My father's records in Gould's work show this.

Pardalotus striatus subaffinis (South Australian Pardalote).—Once numerous, now only seen occasionally.

Melithreptus lunatus adelaidensis (Southern White-naped Honey-eater).—A common bird years ago; hardly ever seen now.

Melithreptus gularis loftyi (Southern Black-chinned Honey-eater).—Very common thirty years ago; a pair or two still in the district.

Plectorhyncha lanceolata neglecta (Southern Striped Honey-eater).—Has been recorded for the district.

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris loftyi (Mountain Spinebill).—A few birds visit us in the autumn and early winter. No doubt they were in numbers here when the banksias formed large areas of scrub.

Meliphaga sonora (Southern Singing Honey-eater).—A common bird once, now rarely seen.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei (Southern White-plumed Honey-eater).—An exceedingly plentiful bird once; still here in numbers but decreasing very fast.

Meliornis novaeollandiae subassimilis (South Australian White-bearded Honey-eater).—A fairly numerous bird in the district, breeding here every year.

Myzantha melanocephala whitei (Southern Black-headed Minah).—Only appeared in the district in recent years; probably about six years.

Coleia carunculata tregellasi (Victorian Yellow Wattle Bird).—This bird visited the district in great numbers in the autumn years ago; seldom seen now, and then only an odd bird.

Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia (Southern Red Wattle Bird).—These birds still nest and bring up their young in the district.

Acanthagenys rufogularis cygnus (Southern Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater).—This bird has visited the district of late years; have never known any early record of it.

Anthus australis adelaidensis (Southern Pipit).—Once very numerous, nesting in numbers on the grassland; very few left now.

Mirafra javanica secunda (Lesser Bush Lark).—A common bird in the early days; seldom seen now.

Stagonopleura guttata philordi (Southern Spotted-sided Finch).—Once a regular visitor in numbers; now a few pairs visit the district to nest.

Zonaeginthus bellus (Fire-tailed Finch).—This bird is recorded by my father for this district.

Taeniopygia castanotis (Chestnut-eared Finch).—Once very numerous; a fair number still visit the district at odd times.

Aegintha temporalis (Red-browed Finch).—Very numerous once; an odd flock of ten to a dozen birds still visits us at times to nest.

Mimeta sagittata (Australian Oriole).—Visits the district occasionally in the autumn, but it does not stay long.

Corvus coronoides perplexus (Southern Raven).—Very plentiful once, visiting the district in great numbers; rarely seen now.
