

The Birds of Kuitpo Forest.

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Through the kindness of Mr. H. Corbin, consulting Forester to the Government and Lecturer in Forestry at the Adelaide University, the writer has made several very enjoyable trips to the forest under his supervision, at first, on bird observing and pleasure bent, and later an official inspection, as the Chariman of the Forestry Committee of the Advisory

Board. The Forest of Kuitpo is about 30 miles south of Adelaide, situated in the ranges, the nearest railway station is 12 miles away, at Willunga. Some of the highest peaks and ridges reach 1,200 to 1,300 feet above the sea, and the average rainfall must be about 30 inches. The Forest comprises some 8,000 acres, and is as yet mostly covered in native trees. The red gum (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) covers much of the creek flats which are heavily soaked with water for five or six months of the year. Most of the big trees have been felled, and a regeneration of healthy saplings is covering the ground, and in many places forming a fine timber belt along the valleys. Many of the slopes and ridges are covered in stringy bark (*E. obliqua*) but in most cases the ravages of fires have left their marks only too noticeable upon the trees. In places there is some thick scrub consisting of a stunted form of *Eucalyptus cosmophylla*, stunted Blue Gum *E. leucocylon*, and Pink Gum (*E. fasciculosa*), scrub She-Oak (*Casuarina aistila*), and white-flowering *Leptospermum*. This scrub is growing on the poorer parts of the Forest lands. Large areas have been planted with *Pinus insignis* and *Pinus maritima*, these are in plots of different ages and are doing well. Large areas of the native timber are being cleared off, all marketable timber going through the mill and then a fire is passed over the area to make ready for the planting of soft woods. The first thing that strikes an Ornithologist is the absence of bird life in the pine forests, it is only when some native trees have grown up among the introduced timber that any of our small birds will be found in ordinary weather, but when strong winds are blowing many birds take shelter in the warm dry pine forest. The Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus whiteae*) visits the pines in numbers to feed upon the seeds. It must be said that bird life is really scarce over the forest area, and this is due no doubt to the felling of the natural timber and the burning off after felling. The nesting places of many species are destroyed as well as the old feeding trees, and as the pine areas are extended so the majority of the birds must find a home elsewhere. There are parts of the area which are being planted with hard woods principally various members of the *Eucalyptus* family. These will form feeding grounds for any species of birds, also a sanctuary, but these trees will not be allowed to stand long enough to form nesting hollows for many useful birds.

The following is a list of the birds observed during the writer's short trips to Kuitpo Forest, but it should be under-

stood that the list is not an exhaustive one, for there may be many birds which visit the forest at different times of the year.

Ortygodes varius (Eastern Painted Quail)—Observed one bird only on the hill side amidst fairly thick scrub country.

Cerchmeis cenchroides (Nankeen Kestrel)—One bird seen in the open timbered country.

Spiloglaux boobook marmorata (Boobook Owl)—Heard a bird calling during the night in the red gum country.

Trichoglossus novaehollandiae (Blue-bellied Lorikeet)—A small flock of these birds flew overhead on their way probably to some feeding trees.

Glossopsitta porphyrocephala (Purple-crowned Lorikeet)—A blue gum (*Eucalyptus leucowylon*) being in blossom it was pleasing to watch these active little birds diligently searching every flower in search of honey, invariably hanging head downwards in reaching the flowers at the extreme end of the branches.

Calyptrorhynchus funereus whiteae (Southern Black Cockatoo)—There seems to be quite a number of these birds which spend most of the year in the forest, they have discovered the oily and sweet pine seeds. Hearing the strange calls of these birds I moved quietly and noiselessly over the soft pine needles, right under them while hard at work tearing open the pine cones with their powerful bills. The remains of pine cones were strewn around, torn into shreds by these Cockatoos. Mr. Corbin tells me the birds do very little damage, at times they may break off the central shoot of the pine when alighting upon it, and sometimes they will bite off the shoots. These birds prefer the seeds of *Pinus maritima* to those of *Pinus insignis*, this is easily understood when we know that the seeds of the former are larger and much more easily got at in comparison to the latter tree.

Platycercus elegans adelaidae (Adelaide Rosella)—This bird is found in many parts of the forest, their loud call notes were heard many times.

Psephotus haematonotus (Red-backed Parrot)—Several small parties of these parrots were seen.

Dacelo gigas (Great Brown Kingfisher)—This typical bird of the ranges is to be found all through the gum country in the Forest, but nowhere plentiful.

Hirundo neoxena (Welcome Swallow)—About the Forester's house, the saw mill sheds etc.

Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi (Tree-Martin)—These little swallows were met with in many parts of the Forest generally in fairly large parties.

Microeca fascians (Brown Flycatcher)—An odd pair or two met with through the gum country.

Smicroirnis brevirostris viridescens (Greenish Tree Tit)—This bird was heard in the tree tops on one occasion only.

Leucocirca tricolor (Black and White Fantail)—One or two seen in the gum country, and round the Forester's house.

Acanthiza lineata (Southern Striated Tit)—This is one of the most plentiful birds in the Stringy bark country, they are very lively little chaps, and are to be seen at the very tops of the trees searching amongst the leaves, and at other times they are hopping about in the low bushes, and at times even upon the ground, calling to one another nearly all the time.

Malurus cyaneus leggei (Southern Blue Wren)—A few small parties seen at different times but not plentiful.

Pseudartamus cyanopterus (Wood Swallow)—One or two seen in the open timbered country.

Colluricincla harmonica victoriae (Victorian Grey Shrike Thrush)—The melodious clear call of this useful bird was often heard amidst the big gum country, and at times they were met with as they flew from the ground where they had been searching for insects, grubs, etc.

Grallina cyanoleuca (Magpie Lark)—Two birds were seen out in the open timbered country along the creek.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota (White-backed Magpie)—A few birds seen at different times, but not numerous.

Neoclima picumna australis (Southern Brown Treecreeper)—The sharp call note of this bird was often heard as he ascended the tree trunks.

Pardalotinus striatus subaffinis (South Australian Pardalote)—A pair of these birds seen in the gum saplings attracted attention by their familiar call.

Melithreptus lunatus adelaidensis (Southern White-naped Honey-eater)—A small party in the tops of the Stringy bark gums calling loudly.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei (Southern White-plumed Honey-eater)—This is a fairly common bird in the red gum (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) country, and was often seen in small parties searching for food in the saplings.

Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera indistincta (Southern Crescent Honey-eater)—The clear ringing note of this bird was often heard in the thick scrub, and it seems to occasionally visit the pine forest.

Meliornis norae-hollandiae subassimilis (South Australian White-bearded Honey-eater)—This widely distributed bird was often met with both in the scrub and open timbered country, it certainly shows a preference for thick scrub when Banksia and other feeding trees abound.

Myzantha melanocephala whitei (Southern Black-headed Minab)—An odd bird or so was met with in the big gum country, they were not plentiful.

Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia (Brush Wattle Bird)—This bird was heard upon one occasion in the thick scrub, it does not seem to be a common bird.
