

Bird Notes from the Lake Frome District
of South Australia.

--By J. Neil McGilp, R.A.O.U.—

On the 24th July. 1920. I visited Moolawatana Station. situated on the North-western shores of Lake Frome. This lake is a large salt-basin. and only contains water after very heavy rain, but at the time of my visit had been dry for three years,

A severe drought had raged over this district for almost two years, and many of our birds had sought new feeding grounds, but after fairly good rains in June, quite a number of our friends were finding "home, the best place." Upon my arrival, I found that several of the migratory species had already arrived. Of course, a stray bird or two of the species, is often seen throughout the year, but about June and July they come along in numbers to pass southwards, after a short stay with us. The Pallid Cuckoo, Narrow-billed Cuckoo, Black-faced Graucalus, and White-shouldered Caterpillar Eater (in full plumage), seemed quite at home in the large gum creek in front of our homestead—the first time I "worked" the creek.

On the 28th July, I noticed a small flock of Masked Wood Swallows, but although these increased in numbers daily, it was not until the 14th August that I saw some White-Browed Wood Swallows in company with newly arrived Masked species. This year these splendid creatures came along from due north, where as last year, they came from the North-east direction. Not a single representative of the Sordid Wood Swallow was noted. The Black Faced, and White Rumped species are with us all the year, the latter being in very small numbers along the bore streams.

On the 7th August, the first Red-backed Kingfisher was noted, and several more had arrived by the 24th August—the date of my departure from the district.

I am surprised that the Bee-eater had not put in an appearance, for it is generally with us by the first week in July, often remaining to breed in tunnels in the gently rising ground along banks of the creek.

The Accipiter family, is much later than usual in attending to nesting, the only exception being the little Nankeen Kestrel. This family is not nearly as well represented as in most years.

I found a beautifully constructed nest of the *Leggeornis lamberti assimilis* (Purple-backed Wren). It was made solely of the inner bark of the Ti-tree, which had been worked down into soft long strips, and woven together very strongly. This was snugly lined with rabbit fur, camel hair, and fine soft feathers. The nest was unusually small, but compactly made, measuring just less than 41 inches in height, and 21 inches in width, the entrance measuring exactly one inch. It was placed amid fallen brushwood (dry) only 9 inches clear of the ground. and completely hidden from view. The mouse-like movement, of the female as she left the pile of brushwood, and the alarmed actions and notes of the beautiful male bird, caused me to hunt carefully for the nest. It contained four fresh eggs.

The following birds were noted breeding, or attending to building operations, eggs, or young-

Ocyphaps lophotes.—Crested Pigeon.

Peltohyas australis.—Aust. Dotterel.

Cerchneis cenchroides.—Nankeen Kestrel.

Ducorpis gymnopsis.—Bare-eyed Cockatoo.

Eolophus roseicapillus.—Rose-breasted Cockatoo (Galah)

Hirundo neoxena.—Welcome Swallow.

Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi.—Tree Swallow.

Cheramoeca leucosternum stonei.—Sand Martin.

Whiteornis goodenovii.—Red-capped Robin.

Smicromnis brevirostris viridescens.—Greenish Tree Tit.

Lewinornis rufiventris maudeae.—Rufous-breasted Whistler..

Cinclosoma castanotum.—Chestnut-backed Ground Bird.

Samuelia cinnamomea.—Cinnamon Ground Bird.

Morganornis superciliosus.—White-browed Babbler.

Pomatostomus ruficeps.—Chestnut-crowned Babbler.

Aurepethianura aurifrons.—Orange-fronted Chat.

Ashbyia lovensis._____Desert Chat.

Acanthiza pusilla hamiltoni.—Red-rumped Tit.

Geobasileus chrysorrhous addendus.—Yellow-rumped Tit.

Hallornis cyanotus.—White-winged Wren.

Leggeornis lambent assimilis.—Purple-backed Wren.

Colluricincla rufiventris.—Buff-bellied Shrike Thrush.

Gymnorhina tibicen.—Black-backed Magpie.

Aphelocephala leucopsis whitei.—Whiteface.

Pardalotinus striates ornatus.—Red-tipped Pardalote.

Myzantha flavigula.—Yellow-throated Minah.

Anthus australis adelaidensis.—Pipit.

Corvus coronoides.—Australian Raven.

Corvus bennetti.—Bennett's Small-billed Crow.