

Observations at Ooldea.

To the Editor,

South Australian Ornithologist.

Dear Sir,

In the issue of the "S.A. Ornithologist," April, 1921, Capt. White doubts the existence of the Chestnut-faced Owl, Black-backed Malurus, and Red-throat at Ooldea, and I would be glad if you would give the members of your Association my reasons for reporting them in that locality.

Black-backed Wren Warbler (*Malurus melanotus*).—Five miles south-east of the railway station, in open scrub country, I met with two flocks of Wren Warblers, one party of which had young on the wing. These were of the cyaneus group but darker in color, they were not in my opinion *Malurus cyaneus*, Ellis, and although I did not collect a specimen, I put them down as *M. melanotus*, from locality and field observation.

Red-throat—Although I had never seen a Red-throat in the flesh before, the male bird was unmistakable, as one very tame bird came within a few feet of me, as I sat under a small bush, and as I have since examined skins of this species, I am quite sure of the identification from field observations. Same class of country as the Wren was in.

Chestnut-faced Owl—I was told that owls were to be found in a blow-hole close to "Hughes Stone," and on going there the position of the particular hole was located after a long and careful search, fully an hour being spent in going over the ground in the vicinity. On looking into the hole I was surprised to see two large dark owls and not the cave owl or light form of the Masked I was expecting. The birds were only in sight for a few seconds, but they were dark brown, with absolutely no white on them, certainly darker than any phase of the Masked that I had seen, and in my opinion larger, and they could only have been the Chestnut-faced. I believe that Capt. White secured an ordinary Masked Owl from this hole or one in the

vicinity, and I hope to be able to see this skin when again in Adelaide. I hope to be able to visit Ooldea in a few weeks, and will endeavour to procure skins of all these birds, though I make it a practice never to kill a wild bird unless it is absolutely necessary.

Sydney, 29/4/21.

Yours faithfully,
A. S. LeSOUEF.
