

Note on the Discovery of *Malurus pulcherrimus* (Gould) in the State of South Australia.

By Edwin Ashby.

In Vol. VI, page 10, of "The S.A. Ornithologist" Mr. J. W. Mellor described a new Chestnut-shouldered Wren under the name of *Malurus lamberti eyrei* from a specimen collected by himself at Woranda Creek, Eyre Peninsula, in October, 1909. Through the kindness of Mr. Mellor I have now had the opportunity of comparing his skin with a specimen in my collection of *Malurus pulcherrimus* (Gould), which specimen came from the type locality, Wongan Hills, Western Australia, and was collected by Mr. Conigrave on 12th October, 1903. I find that the two skins are conspecific without doubt. Mr. Mellor's skin is an extremely fine specimen and has been filled out much more fully than my skin. The only difference is that the purple of the throat and breast is duller in the South Australian skin than it is in that from Western Australia. This feature is, of course, only discernible in brilliant sunshine. If this difference was absolutely constant it might be found desirable to distinguish the two races, in which case Mr. Mellor's name *eyrei* would have to be revised as a subspecies of *pulcherrimus*, and not *assimilis*, which latter has a black throat and breast. The possibility of the two forms being conspecific was suggested to me a long time back by Mr. A. J. Campbell, but until now I have never had the opportunity of viewing Mr. Mellor's skin. Personally I consider Mr. Mellor's achievement in extending the range of *M. pulcherrimus* so far into South Australia as far more interesting than the mere establishment of a new subspecies or race. When one remembers the great number of years that elapsed from the time of its first description by Gould till Mr. Conigrave's rediscovery of it, Mr. Mellor's find is made still more

remarkable. We may assume that this bird exists in suitable localities over the thousand miles or more that stretch between the two localities, and this fact emphasizes the great need of increasing the number of student collectors to whom we must look to work out the numberless unsolved problems that confront Australian ornithologists.
