

Notes on the Birds of the Port Lincoln District.

By J. Burton Cleland, M.D.

During the last week of May, 1923, I was able to spend a few days in the Port Lincoln district. After a few days spent amongst the dense scrub near the town and by the small bays leading out of the harbour, a move was made to Lake Wangary, Mt. Dutton Bay, and the Marble Range, thirty miles west.

In "The Emu," vol. ix, 1910, p. 126, a list is given of the birds met with on Eyre Peninsula during the camp-out of the R.A.O.U. in September and October of 1909. This list is much fuller than the one I am able to give as a result of a week's visit. The only interesting addition is the occurrence of *Charadrius bicinctus* near Port Lincoln itself as a winter or late autumn visitor.

The following is a list of the birds seen, to which are added a few notes on individual species:—

Unless otherwise indicated, all the birds mentioned were seen within a radius of four or five miles of the town of Port Lincoln itself. Mt. Dutton Bay and the Marble Range are situated about 30 miles west of Port Lincoln, Wangary being the village here on the main road to Streaky Bay. The numbers refer to the "List of the Birds of South Australia" compiled by J. Sutton and published in this journal in October, 1923.

Quail, (No. 11) *Geopelia placida*, Bronzewing Pigeon (?), (No. 55) *Sterna bergi*, (No. 57) *Larus novae-hollandiae*, (No. 58) *Gabianus pacificus*, Skua, (No. 62) *Haematopus ostralegus*, (No. 63) *H. unicolor*, (No. 65) *Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*, (No. 69) *Charadrius bicinctus*—several birds were seen on the shore of a bay south of the town, (No. 71) *C. ruficapillus*, (No. 101) *Notophox novae-hollandiae*, (No. 103) *Demiegretta sacra* (Slate-coloured), (No. 106) *Chenopsis atrata*, (No. 113) *Anas superciliosa* (eight miles west), (No. 128) *Sula serrator* (also a skin secured near Mt. Dutton Bay was seen, (No. 132) *Circus approximans* (?) (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 136) *Uroaetus audax* (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 149) *Teracidea berigora*, (No. 156) *Trichoglossus novae-hollandiae*, (No. 158) *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*, (No. 177) *Barnardius zonarius* (13 miles west), (No. 185) *Neophema petrophila* (*Neophema* seen on the mainland near Port Lincoln may have been this species; *N. petrophila* was secured on the mainland on a hill-slope at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 196) *Dacelo gigas* (13 miles west), (No. 209) *Hirundo neoxena*, (No. 214) *Petroica multicolor*, (No. 216) *P. goodenovii* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 218) *Melanodryas cucullata* (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 219) *Rhipidura flabellifera* (13 miles west), (No. 220) *Rh. leucophrys* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 221) *Seisura inquieta* (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 224) *Eopsaltria griseogularis*, (No. 228) *Pachycephala rufiventris* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 232) *Colluricincla rufiventris* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 234) *Graucalus novae-hollandiae*, *Hylacola* (?) (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 244) *Pomatostomus superciliosus* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 247) *Calamanthus campestris* (on the heathy slopes of the Marble Range), (No. 251) *Epthianura albifrons* (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 263) *Acanthiza hamiltoni* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 269) *Geobasileus chrysorrhoeus* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 275) *Sericornis maculata* (amongst the dense undergrowth, and also in the Paper-bark Tea-trees, present also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 276) *Malurus cyaneus* (also 13 miles west), (No. 291) *Artamus cyanopterus* (13 miles west), (No. 292) *Grallina cyanoleuca* (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 293) *Aphelocephala leucopsis* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 303) *Zosterops lateralis* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 312) *Melithreptus brevirostris*, (No. 316) *Glyciphila melanops* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 320) *Meliphaga virescens* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 329) *Meliornis novae-hollandiae* (also 13 miles west and at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 333) *Anthochaera carunculata*, (No. 324) *A. chrysoptera* (?), (No. 335) *Acanthagenys rufi-*

gularis (Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 338) *Anthus australis* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 340) *Zonaeginthus guttatus* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), *Corvus* sp., (No. 350) *Corcorax melanorhamphus* (Mt. Dutton Bay), *Strepera intermedia* (also at Mt. Dutton Bay), (No. 354) *Cracticus torquatus*, (No. 355) *Gymnorhina hypoleuca* (also 13 miles west and at Mount Dutton Bay), Sparrows, Starlings, and Goldfinches.

Charadrius bicinctus.—Several birds, mixed with *C. ruficapillus*, were seen on the shore of a bay near Port Lincoln. A ♀ was secured; iris very dark brown, bill black, pharynx flesh-coloured, legs sage-greenish, toes dark greyish-brown and pallid below, total length $7\frac{1}{4}$ in., span of wings 16 in.

Ieracidea berigora, Mt. Dutton Bay, ♂, iris hazel, bill bluish-grey-horn, blackish towards the tip, legs bluish-grey-horn, total length $16\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Neophema petrophila was secured on a hillside half a mile from Mt. Dutton Bay; ♂, iris dark brown, bill dark greyish-horn, legs greyish-brown, pharynx greyish-flesh-coloured, total length $9\frac{1}{2}$ in., span of wings $13\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Eopsaltria griseogularis, ♂, iris dark brown, bill black, legs dark brown, pharynx whitish-flesh-coloured, total length $6\frac{1}{2}$ in., span of wings $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. These birds were common in the scrub near Port Lincoln.

Colluricincla rufiventris, Mt. Dutton Bay, ♀ (?), iris dark reddish-brown, bill brown and paler below, pharynx greyish-flesh, legs greyish-brown, total length $8\frac{3}{4}$ in., span of wings 15 in.

Calamanthus campestris.—These delightful little singers were in numbers amongst the rocks on the steep slopes of the Marble Range 30 miles from Port Lincoln. Though numerous and heard on every side, they were rarely to be seen, and it was very difficult to secure a specimen. The bird obtained (sex doubtful), compared with *C. campestris* from Kuitpo and Encounter Bay, has decidedly less rufous, and is darker on the head, its back is greyer, and the throat is the colour of the breast, and not white. Iris dark brown round the pupil with the periphery yellowish-white, bill dark brown and paler below, pharynx greyish, legs fleshy-brown.

Acanthiza hamiltoni is the Tit common to the district. This species appears to differ from *A. apicalis* in the head, being greyer rather than brown. From *A. pusilla* it differs in the large white tips to the lateral tail feathers, in the back being less olive-coloured and the flanks browner. Port Lincoln, ♂, iris reddish-brown, bill, pharynx, and legs black, total length $4\frac{1}{4}$ in., span of wings $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Sericornis maculata inhabits the dense scrub on the hills, and also the Paper-bark Tea-trees near the swamps of the Bay. Port Lincoln, ♂, iris whitish, bill and legs brown, pharynx whitish-flesh-coloured, total length $4\frac{3}{4}$ in., span of wings $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. Lake Wangary, sex (?), iris whitish, bill brown and paler below, pharynx whitish, legs brown.

Strepera intermedia.—These birds were, as is usual with the species, very wary and difficult to approach. A male, testes small, was secured near Port Lincoln, iris bright orange-yellow, bill and legs black, gape pale maize-yellow, with the adjacent part of the inner aspect of the mandible yellow, pharynx black, tongue black, except a trace of yellow near the tip, the inner side of the lower bill with traces of yellow in the mid-line, total length $19\frac{3}{4}$ in. *Strepera intermedia* was described by Sharpe in 1877 from Port Lincoln, and in 1905 Ashby ("The Emu," vol. i, p. 27) gave the name *S. fusca* to birds from the same district (with Yorke Peninsula in addition). Mathews considered *S. intermedia* (and its synonym *S. fusca*) as a variety of *S. versicolor* (*S. versicolor intermedia*). The South-West Australian *S. plumbea* he considers also as a variety of *S. versicolor*. The general colour of my specimen, together with two others in the South Australian Museum from this district, is exactly that of *S. melanoptera* from other parts of South Australia, the only essential difference being the conspicuous white patch on the under side of the wing. In this it resembles *S. plumbea*, but differs in its general colour, not being so grey, but like that of *S. melanoptera*. Dr. Morgan informs me that young birds of *S. melanoptera* have a tendency to a white patch in this situation, and skins of adults from near Booleroo also show such a tendency, but the patch is not so conspicuous as in the Eyre Peninsula birds. There seems, therefore, to be as much justification for calling these birds a variety of *S. melanoptera* as for designating them a variety of *S. versicolor*, and nearly as much reason for calling *S. melanoptera* itself a variety of *S. versicolor*. It would seem as though *S. plumbea* were the western representative of *S. versicolor*. If so, how can we explain the geographical interposition between these closely similar eastern and western *Streperas* of two darker forms, *S. melanoptera* and *S. fusca*, one devoid entirely, or almost so, of any white on the wing? As *S. versicolor* spread along the south coast from the east coast, did it become darker and lose its white patch (*S. melanoptera*), then reassume it (*S. fusca*), and finally become greyer again (*S. plumbea*)? Or was the extension *vice versa* from the west coast birds? Or have there been two descending

streams, one along the east and one along the west, with the gradual evolution from one or other or both of the two forms found in South Australia? In any case, it would seem that we are justified in maintaining Sharpe's *S. intermedia* as of specific rank and in restoring it to the check-list of the birds of this State.

A Butcher-bird (*Cracticus torquatus*) was seen making darts at something in a Prickly Acacia (*A. armata*) bush. On walking up to the bush, which was an isolated one, a full-plumaged male Blue Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) was found, very much perturbed, hopping about in the centre amongst the prickles, and relatively safe from the Butcher-bird's attacks. It clung so closely to its refuge that I had actually to poke at it several times with my umbrella before it left its retreat and dashed low down into an adjacent bush.
