

THE SUNBIRD



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THE QUEENSLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY BIRD REPORT, 1985

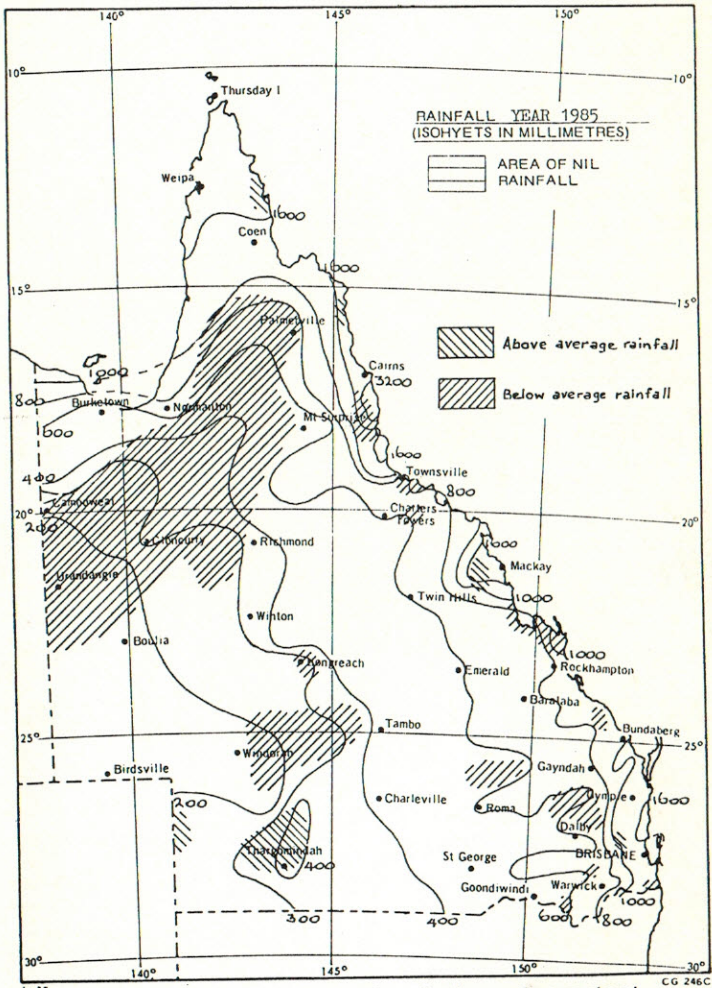
D.C. NILAND

This third annual report, giving the more interesting Queensland bird records for 1985, has again covered a wide variety of species and habitats. Our annual reports are useful in showing unusual changes of population size or distribution and bringing to notice populations in localities where they were not previously known. It is also important that we keep a reliable record of the status of Queensland birds so that we can make informed comment whenever necessary. This information will become increasingly relevant as the loss of good natural habitat continues.

This year there was only one new species added to the State list, a South Polar Skua sighted off Pt. Lookout, North Stradbroke Island, but nevertheless many interesting observations have been made. A major feature of the year was the dry conditions experienced inland (Fig. 1), especially in the north where a broad band from Urandangie north-east to Palmerville had below-average rainfall. This drought was associated with significant movements of a number of species towards the Gulf of Carpentaria and north-east Queensland coast. These species included the Crimson Chat and Orange Chat.

METHODS

Records submitted have been vetted by the compiler and an informal committee. In addition to those sent to the Q.O.S., other records came from searching all the 1985 issues of *Cosmic Flashes*, The Bird Observers' Club Newsletter, Queensland Ornithological Society Newsletter and the R.A.O.U. Newsletter. Exclusion from this Report in no way implies that a record was considered erroneous.



Adapted from Monthly Weather Review - Queensland
Bureau of Meteorology
Department of Science

Fig. 1 : Rainfall Summary for 1985

The format used here largely conforms to that used in previous Q.O.S. Bird Reports (see Palliser 1985). Nomenclature follows the R.A.O.U. (1978). The regional location (Fig. 2) for each locality of sighting is given, in parenthesis, with the first reference to that locality. Initials of the observers appear after the date of observation in each record.

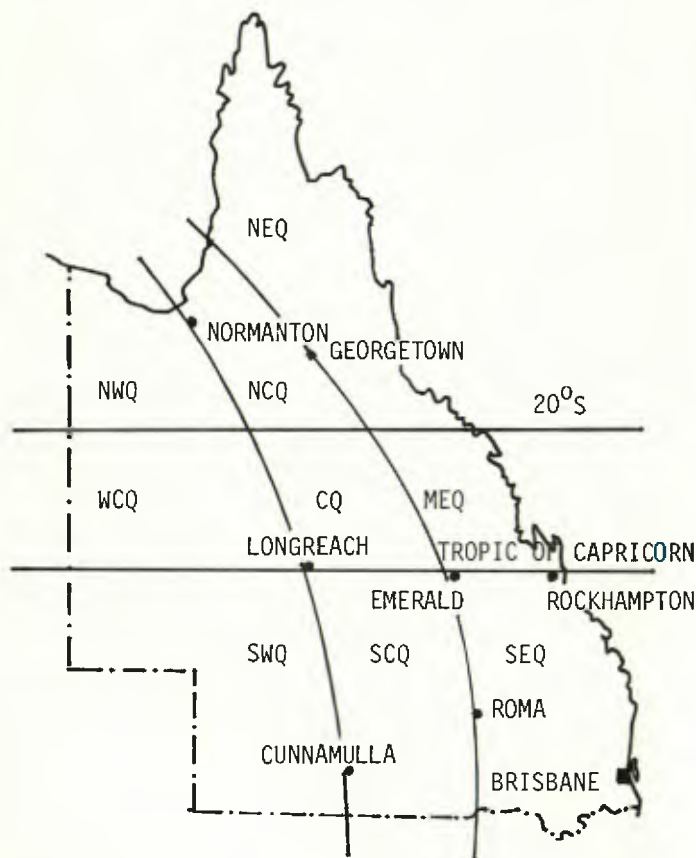


FIG. 2. Queensland districts mentioned in the text.
(from Dahms, in Palliser 1985)

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PG P. Grier	JN John Noyce	JWi Jo Wieneke
SG Steve Garnett	PO Peter Ogilvie	LW Liza Wise
HH Harry Hines	CP Chris Pavey	MW Malcolm Wilson
MH Marie Higgs	GP Graham Palmer	RW Rod Wallace
		JZ Jenny Zimmerman

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

bw beachwashed	L. Lake	R. River
E. East	N. North	S.W. South-West
I. Island	NP National Park	W. West
km kilometre	Pt. Point	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to all those Q.O.S. members and friends who contributed to this report. I particularly wish to thank Noela Marr (who did the literature search), Anita Smyth, Dawn Magarry, Ian Venables and Tony Palliser for their assistance and advice. Glen Ingram and Wayne Longmore again kindly provided access to Queensland Museum specimens and records.

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- R.A.O.U., 1978. Recommended English Names for Australian Birds. *Emu* 77 : Supplement.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*. Few reports, one at the Tarong Powerhouse Lake (SEQ) Dec. 21 - MTT.
- Hoary-headed Grebe** *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*. Nine at Toomba Lake, about 80 km west of Charters Towers (MEQ) July 6-30 - PB.
- Wandering Albatross** *Diomedea exulans*. One sighted earlier than previously, off Pt. Lookout, N. Stradbroke I. (SEQ) May 5 - AS, CC, CP, TP, DS.
- Black-browed Albatross** *Diomedea melanophrys*. Off Pt. Lookout, May 5 - AS, CC, CP, TP, DS.
- Southern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialisoides*. One bw on Teewah Beach (SEQ), Sept. 30 - JW.
- Cape Petrel** *Daption capense*. One off Fraser I. (SEQ) July 8 - RH.
- White-headed Petrel** *Pterodroma lessonii*. Ten off Fraser I., July 8 - RH. These represent only the second record for Queensland.
- Providence Petrel** *Pterodroma solandri*. The second record for Queensland. Sighted off Pt. Lookout, May 5 - AS, CC, CP, TP, DS.
- White-necked Petrel** *Pterodroma externa cervicalis*. One off Pt. Lookout, Feb. 1 - AS, CC.
- Lesser Broad-billed Prion** *Pachyptila salvini*. One bw along the ocean beach at Fraser I., July 8 - RH.

- Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*. Three off Pt. Lookout, Feb. 1 - AS, CC, CP; and one there Feb. 2 - NM, DS, LG.
- Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra*. One off Pt. Lookout, Feb. 1 - CC.
- Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*. One off Pt. Lookout, May 5 - AS, CC, TP, DS.
- White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus*. One off Pt. Lookout, May 5 - AS, CC, TP, DS.
- Great-billed Heron** *Ardea sumatrana*. A downy young at a heronry on the Flinders R. (NWQ) Apr. 12 - SG.
- Pied Heron** *Ardea picata*. At Cairns (NEQ) Jan. 29 - FM; and also Mar. 18 - DM, AM; and fledged young at the Flinders R. and Bynoe R. (NWQ) heronries, Apr. 12 - SG.
- Great Egret** *Egretta alba*. Four on nests on Bynoe R., Apr. 12 - SG.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*. Over 100 fledglings at Flinders R., Apr. 12 - SG.
- Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia*. Over 100 fledglings at Flinders R. and four at Bynoe R., Apr. 12 - SG.
- Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis*. Nesting at Chelmer (SEQ) Dec. - NM.
- Black-necked Stork** *Xenorhynchus asiaticus*. Many records in the Brisbane region, although the regular nest at Bald Hills (SEQ) is apparently destroyed. One at Mitchell (SCQ) Mar. 31 - DA.
- Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopica*. Over 30 nestlings at Bynoe R., Apr. 12 - SG.
- Royal Spoonbill** *Platalea regia*. Over 50 nestlings at Flinders R. heronry and over 20 at Bynoe R., Apr. 12 - SG.

Magpie Goose *Anseranas semipalmata*. As in 1984, recorded at quite a number of locations around SEQ with the largest a group of over 100 at Carbrook, July 25 - DAc. Nesting activity was observed at Goomboorian (SEQ) in October - CF.

Wandering Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*. 200 at Centenary L., Cairns on Jan. 13 - DM, AM, an unusually large number.

Plumed Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*. Records for a number of areas in SEQ including over 400 at Goomeri, Apr. 6 - MTT.

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*. A significant northerly record at Forsyth (NCQ) July 2 - BC, over 150 sighted at Dynevor Lakes (SWQ) Sept. 3/4 - GL, CW, PH, HH, and two at Nanango (SEQ) Nov. 3 - MTT.

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*. A bird observed at Cairns, July 21 - FM. Probably an escapee from a local nature park.

Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchos*. Unusual occurrences along the coast include two at Townsville (NEQ) Mar. 6 - SG; six at Benowa (SEQ) Apr. to July - TR; six at Deception Bay (SEQ) May 19 - NM; and ten at Toomba L., July to Sept. - PB.

Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*. Noted at most waterholes in NCQ and NWQ, and unusual marine sightings at Cairns Esplanade, Apr. 21 - LN, and 3 at Deception Bay, May 19 - NM.

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*. One at Inglewood (SEQ) July 14 and two at Dynevor Lakes, Sept. 3, 4 - GL, CW, PH, HH.

Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*. An unusual inland record at Forsyth, July 2 - BC.

Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*. Single birds at Greenvale (NEQ), July 4, and Charters Towers, Apr. 4, Sept. 25 - PB; and at Yeppoon (MEQ), Sept. 25 - MC.

- Black-breasted Buzzard** *Hamirostra melanosternon*. One at Charters Towers (MEQ) Apr. 28 - PB; and Thargomindah (SWQ) Sept. 3 - GL, CW, PH, HH.
- Wedge-tailed Eagle** *Aquila audax*. One sighted over suburban Corinda (SEQ), May 30 - DN.
- Little Eagle** *Hieraaetus morphnoides*. One at Karumba (NCQ), June 29 - PB; and at Cairns, Aug. 28 - DM, AM.
- Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis*. A minor influx around Charters Towers during May and June - PB; and it was noted on Magnetic Island, off Townsville, June-July - JWi.
- Black Falcon** *Falco subniger*. Wallaville (SEQ), May 25 - WL; and one at Karumba, June 29 - PB.
- Stubble Quail** *Coturnix novaezelandiae*. Over 130 at Thargomindah, Sept. 2 - GL, CW, PH, HH.
- Brown Quail** *Coturnix australis*. Plentiful at Mitchell, Jan. 7 - DA.
- Red-backed Button-quail** *Turnix maculosa*. Sighted at Brookfield (SEQ), Mar. 20 - NT, and two tiny chicks found at Townsville, Mar. 6 - SG.
- Painted Button-quail** *Turnix varia*. A dead bird found in suburban Coorparoo (SEQ), Mar. 17 - PG.
- Buff-breasted Button-quail** *Turnix olivei*. A southerly extension to the range with sightings at Davies Creek, near Mareeba (NEQ), Apr. 8 - JS, and Kuranda (NEQ), May 23 - JS, JMCK.
- Red-chested Button-quail** *Turnix pyrrhothorax*. Two at Mingela (NEQ), Jan. 26 and two at Toomba Lake, Nov. 29 - PB.
- Buff-banded Rail** *Rallus philippensis*. A record west of its usual Queensland range of a juvenile caught at Karumba, Apr. 10 - SG.

Lewin's Rail *Rallus pectoralis*. Two at Conway Beach, Proserpine (NEQ), Jan. 17 - PB; one netted near Dayboro (SEQ), Apr. 25 - AW; and other records at Mt. Nebo (SEQ), Apr. 5 - AS, CC, OJ, LP; Mt. Glorious (SEQ), May 12 - LB, MB; and Indooroopilly (SEQ), Aug. 3 - RC.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*. Up to 23 at Mingela, Jan. 23 - Feb. 15; single birds at Charters Towers, May 1-5, Nov. 7 - PB; two at Townsville, Jan. 9 - SG.

Australian Crake *Porzana fluminea*. Four at Mingela, Jan. 26 and one at Charters Towers, Jan. 29, 30 - PB; one or two at Townsville, Jan. 16, Feb. 27 and Apr. 21; and at least two on the Karumba Plain, Apr. 16 - SG. Nesting at Deception Bay in Dec. - NM.

Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis*. One flushed from a nest with 4 eggs, near Nanango, Nov. 10 - MTT.

White-browed Crake *Poliolimnas cinereus*. One at Mingela, Jan. 23 - PB.

Bush-hen *Gallinula olivacea*. Again recorded in the western suburbs of Brisbane and on N. Stradbroke I., including two chicks at Everton Hills, Jan. 1 - RE.

Black-tailed Native-hen *Gallinula ventralis*. An influx occurred across North Queensland with the largest sighting of 500 at Karumba Plains, Apr. 16 - SG.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. Over 300 at Karumba Plain, Apr. 16 - SG.

Brolga *Grus rubicundus*. 1400 counted at Lake Powlathanga, about 40 km SW of Charters Towers, Apr. 19 - PB.

Bustard *Ardeotis australis*. Dry conditions inland appear to be causing a significant movement onto the coast. Unusual records include Cairns, Jun. 23 - JC; Ingham (NEQ), Aug. 27 - DM, AM; between Bowen and Home Hill (NEQ), Apr., June, July - JW; and at Kuttabul (MEQ), Aug. 26 - DM, AM. Also in the Bell district, SEQ, July 1 - MW.

- Beach Thick-knee** *Burhinus neglectus*. Nesting at Yeppoon, Sept. - MC.
- Painted Snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis*. Two at L. Powlathanga, Feb. 2 and 9 - PB; one female at Karumba, Apr. 10; six at Townsville, Apr. 26 - SG; and a male at Benowa, Aug. 24 - TR.
- Banded Lapwing** *Vanellus tricolor*. Sighted at Boulia (WCQ), June 26 - DM, AM.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*. Eight at Swan Bay, N. Stradbroke I., Jan. 27 - GP, AD; and at Cairns Esplanade, Sept. 10 - DM, AM.
- Lesser Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*. Observed at Toomba L., Nov. 9; and at Charters Towers, Nov. 4, Dec. 6 - PB.
- Red-kneed Dotterel** *Erythrogonys cinctus*. Possibly a minor coastal influx with 14 at Deception Bay, Mar. 7 - NM; and a record for Cairns Esplanade, Apr. 21 - LN.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*. One at Townsville, Feb. 5 - SG.
- Mongolian Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*. Two at Toomba L., Dec. 22 - PB.
- Red-capped Plover** *Charadrius ruficapillus*. 150 at L. Buchanan (CQ), June 16 - PB.
- Red-necked Avocet** *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*. Several flocks the largest with 8 at Bowen, Jan. to June - JW; six at L. Powlathanga, June 14, and 80 at Karumba, June 30 - PB; 12 at Townsville, Dec. 1984 to Apr. - SG; and 330 at Deception Bay, Sept. 15 - NM.
- Little Curlew** *Numenius minutus*. 2000 at Karumba in April - SG; and an unusual winter record at Forsyth, July 2 - BC.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*. Two at Lytton (SEQ) on Jan. 19 - AS, CC, DS, TP; and two at Abbott Point (NEQ) on Nov. 19 - JW.

- Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes*. An unusual inland sighting at the Burdekin Weir, Charters Towers, Oct. 8 - PB.
- Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*. One in breeding plumage at Bowen, July 27 - JW.
- Common Sandpiper** *Tringa hypoleucos*. Two at Woodgate NP (SEQ), Jan. 13 - FW; one at Yeppoon (MEQ) in Feb. - MC; and at Noosaville (SEQ), Sept. 30 - JN.
- Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*. 59 at Karumba, June 30 - PB. An unusually large number for this time of year.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*. Unusual winter records from near Richmond (NCQ), June 21-22; and two at L. Powlathanga, July 6 - PB.
- Terek Sandpiper** *Tringa terek*. An unusual inland record at Toomba L., Oct. 19 - PB.
- Latham's Snipe** *Gallinago hardwickii*. Charters Towers in Jan. - Mar., Aug. and Oct. - PB; and 60 km W. of Mundubbera (SEQ), Apr. 6 - GL.
- Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*. Clontarf (SEQ), Mar. 14 - NM and Thorneside (SEQ), Apr. 5 - OJ, LP.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. Several flocks the largest with 9 at L. Powlathanga, Feb., Apr., and June and 11 at Toomba L., Nov. 29 - PB.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*. One at Toomba L., Nov. 9 - PB.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata*. 50 at Dynevor L., Sept. 3 - GL, CW, PH, HH.
- Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*. One at Bowen, Mar. 4, 10 - JW.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*. Four at Karumba, June 30, including one in breeding plumage; 18 at Toomba L., Sept. 22 - PB; and three at Dynevor L., Sept. 3-4 - GL, CW, PH, HH.

- Sanderling** *Calidris alba*. Scarborough (SEQ), Jan. 6 - AW, HH, GL; and ten on southern end of N. Stradbroke I., Jan. 27 - GP, AD.
- Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*. One at Townsville, Feb. 25 - SG.
- Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*. One at L. Powllathanga, Feb. 9 - PB.
- South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki*. Sighted off Pt. Lookout, May 14 - AS, CC, TP. This is a new species for Queensland.
- Silver Gull** *Larus novaehollandiae*. Seen at Georgetown (NCQ), Jan. 26 - DM, AM, 270 at L. Buchanan, June 16, and 9 at Richmond, June 21 - PB.
- White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucoptera*. An immature at Cairns, Mar. 31 - DM, AM; over 200 at Mudgeeraba (SEQ) in Mar. - TR; flocks of up to 2600, mostly in breeding plumage at Armstrong Plain S.W. of Normanston (NWQ), Apr. 8 - SG.
- Fairy Tern** *Sterna nereis*. Four sighted on Masthead I. (SEQ), Dec. 12 - PO.
- Lesser Crested Tern** *Sterna bengalensis*. One at Bribie I. (SEQ), Aug. 4 - FW.
- Common Noddy** *Anous stolidus*. Sighted at Lake May near Yeppoon, Feb. - MC.
- Superb Fruit-dove** *Ptilinopus superbus*. One at Kelvin Grove in inner Brisbane, Jan. - MSA; one at Indooroopilly (SEQ), Apr. 1 - BJ.
- Woompoo Fruit-dove** *Ptilinopus magnificus*. Two unusual records for suburban Brisbane at Nathan, Apr. 1 - DJ; and Corinda, June 5 - SK.
- Torresian Imperial-pigeon** *Ducula spilorrhoa*. Nine flying south at Mackay (MEQ), Oct. 2 - PB; and many present on Magnetic Island all year - JW.

- Topknot Pigeon** *Lopholaimus antarcticus*. An unusual suburban record at Mt. Gravatt (SEQ), Aug. 1 - JWa.
- White-headed Pigeon** *Columba leucomela*. A sighting at Byfield (MEQ), Aug. - MC.
- Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia*. A white form seen on Heron I. (SEQ), Sept. - PBr.
- Brown Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia amboinensis*. A westerly record at Ooline Gorge in Sundown NP (SEQ) - PH.
- Diamond Dove** *Geopelia cuneata*. A rare coastal visitor recorded at Pullenvale (SEQ), Mar. 10 - WT; at Yeppoon, June - MC; and at Abbott Point on Aug. 22 - JW.
- Common Bronzewing** *Phaps chalcoptera*. An unusual visitor to Magnetic I., Sept. 4 - JWi.
- Flock Bronzewing** *Phaps histrionica*. Over 600 on the plains south of Normanton, Apr. 8 - SG.
- Squatter Pigeon** *Petrophassa scripta*. 30 at Mt. Moffatt NP (SCQ), June 26 - MW.
- Spinifex Pigeon** *Petrophassa plumifera*. Located in the Thylungra District (SWQ), Aug. 22 - LS; and at Georgetown (NCQ), Apr. 8 - DM, AM.
- Wonga Pigeon** *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*. Sighted 60 km W. of Mundubbera (SEQ), Apr. 6 - GL.
- Long-billed Corella** *Cacatua tenuirostris*. Seven aviary escapes at Hope I. (SEQ), June 20 - MS, VS.
- Little Corella** *Cacatua sanguinea*. 43 at Hope I., June 20 - MS, VS; two at Indooroopilly (SEQ), July 4 - RC; and also at Coombabah (SEQ), Oct. - TR.
- Musk Lorikeet** *Glossopsitta concinna*. 7 at Moggill (SEQ), June 12 - MR.
- Red-winged Parrot** *Aprosmictus erythropterus*. Cooloola NP (SEQ), July 29 - MT, JG.

- Cockatiel** *Nymphicus hollandicus*. A probable escapee at Centenary L., Cairns, Nov. 13 - DM, AM.
- Budgerygah** *Melopsittacus undulatus*. There appeared to be an easterly movement during winter with sightings north and south of Toowoomba (SEQ); over 20 at Widgee (SEQ), June - PHu; and flocks of over 60 around Bowen in Apr., July, Sept. and Dec. - JWa.
- Crimson Rosella** *Platycercus elegans*. An unusual record at Yeppoon, Feb. 3 - MC.
- Red-rumped Parrot** *Psephotus haematonotus*. Isolated populations at suburban Rocklea, Cannon Hill and Lytton. Also recorded at Mitchell, Oct. 10 - RS.
- Blue-winged Parrot** *Neophema chrysostoma*. S.W. of Windorah (SWQ), June - BS.
- Turquoise Parrot** *Neophema pulchella*. Moggill, Aug. 10 - IV; and at Fernvale (SEQ), Aug. 31 - GB.
- Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*. One banded at Petrie (SEQ), Jan. 20 - DMc; sightings at Burpengary (SEQ), Apr. 1-16 - GC, DS, CC; and on Magnetic I., Apr. - JWi.
- Shining Bronze-cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx lucidus*. One of the New Zealand race at Burpengary, Apr. 6 - CC, DS, GC.
- Little Bronze-cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx malayanus*. One at Deception Bay, Jan. 2 - NM.
- Channel-billed Cuckoo** *Scythrops novaehollandiae*. One being fed by a Torresian Crow at Townsville as late as May 1 - SG.
- Rufous Owl** *Ninox rufa*. A pair nesting at Townsville Common, Oct. - SG.
- Powerful Owl** *Ninox strenua*. One at Eungella NP (MEQ), June 14 - JSu.
- Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*. One at Albert Park near the centre of Brisbane, June 4 - RM.

- Eastern Grass Owl** *Tyto longimembris*. Ingham, July 7 - LW; Ingham Aug. 27 - DM, AM; 80 km N. of Maryborough (SEQ), Sept. 5 - PBe; and on Magnetic I., Sept. 17 - JWi.
- Marbled Frogmouth** *Podargus ocellatus*. Sighted at Cooloola NP, Aug. 3 - CW, RW, RCa, SCa.
- Australian Owlet-nightjar** *Aegotheles cristatus*. At Georgetown, Apr. 4 - DM, AM.
- Fork-tailed Swift** *Apus pacificus*. 50 sighted with a flock of White-throated Needletails *Hirundapus caudacutus* at Cooktown (NEQ) on Nov. 28 - JM.
- Blue-winged Kookaburra** *Dacelo leachii*. An unusual record from Burbank on the southern side of Brisbane, Aug. 6 - JWi.
- Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher** *Tanysiptera sylvia*. Magnetic I., Nov. 28 - JWi.
- Red-bellied Pitta** *Pitta erythrogaster*. The first winter sighting at Lockhart R. (NEQ), June 24-28 - JZ.
- Noisy Pitta** *Pitta versicolor*. One in the old Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Sept. - GC.
- Tree Martin** *Cecropis nigricans*. About 8000 birds in two roosts at the mouth of the Bynoe R., Apr. 7 - SG.
- White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina papuensis*. Windorah, Aug. 17 - RS, LS.
- White-winged Triller** *Lalage suevii*. One at Cairns, Oct. 10 - DM, AM.
- Rose Robin** *Petroica rosea*. Near Eungella NP, one on May 30 and two on June 12 - WL.
- Scarlet Robin** *Petroica multicolor*. Mudgeeraba (SEQ), July 10 - HK.

- Red-capped Robin** *Petroica goodenovii*. Beyond its normal range: at Scarborough, May 22 - MH; in Mt. Isa (NWQ), May, June; Burketown, May 7; and Georgetown, May 4 - DM, AM. There was an influx around Charters Towers May - Aug. and 10 sighted near Richmond, June 21-23 - PB.
- Hooded Robin** *Melanodryas cucullata*. Georgetown, Apr. 7 - DM, AM.
- Pale Yellow Robin** *Tregellasia capito*. Fraser I., June 10 - AW.
- Crested Shrike-tit** *Falcunculus frontatus*. Moonie R., E. of St. George (SCQ), Aug. 24 - NM, RI.
- Little Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla megarrhyncha*. Three near Karumba, Apr. 10 - SG.
- Spectacled Monarch** *Monarcha trivirgatus*. Five to ten seen with varying amounts of rufous on the breast at Heron I. (MEQ), Sept. 1-11 - PBr.
- White-eared Monarch** *Monarcha leucotis*. Sighted in Tallebudgera Valley (SEQ), Jan. 20 - DC; and at Mt. Nebo (SEQ), Apr. 5 - AS, CC, OJ, LP.
- Eastern Whipbird** *Psophodes olivaceus*. A record for Byfield (MEQ), June 14 - WL.
- Clamorous Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*. Over 25 at Nanango, Sept. 15 - MTT.
- Little Grassbird** *Megalurus gramineus*. Four at Townsville, Apr. 8 - SG.
- Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis*. Two on the Flinders R., Apr. 12 - SG.
- Brown Songlark** *Cinclorhampus cruralis*. Three at Mingela, May 22, June 5; and also at Toomba L., July 13 - PB.
- Western Gerygone** *Gerygone fusca*. Around Georgetown, Apr. - DM, AM; Charters Towers, May 26, 29 - PB; two at Gympie (SEQ), June - PHu; and two at Colinton in the upper Brisbane Valley, July 20 - JN.

- White-browed Treecreeper** *Climacteris affinis*. At Coopers Creek (SWQ) in Aug. - NM.
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater** *Acanthagenys rufogularis*. A winter influx towards the coast at Cunningham's Gap (SEQ), May 23 - RJH; Yeppoon in June - DC; and at suburban Inala (SEQ), July 11 - PBe.
- Grey-headed Honeyeater** *Lichenostomus keartlandi*. As in the 1984 Report at Eulo (SWQ), Aug. 25 - NP, apparently an isolated population.
- Eungella Honeyeater** *Lichenostomus hindwoodi*. Cathu State Forest, N. of Mackay, June 8 - WL.
- Brown Honeyeater** *Lichmera indistincta*. Almost as far west as the Grey Range (SWQ), Aug. 26 - GL.
- Painted Honeyeater** *Grantiella picta*. Nesting near Chinchilla (SEQ) in Mar. - RHa; and three sighted between Croydon (NCQ) and Georgetown, July 2 - PB.
- White-fronted Honeyeater** *Phylidonyris albifrons*. Near Barcardine (SCQ), June 30 - DM, AM.
- Bar-breasted Honeyeater** *Ramsayorins fasciatus*. Yeppoon, Sept. - MC.
- Banded Honeyeater** *Certhionyx pectoralis*. Mareeba (NEQ), Oct. 19 - DM, AM.
- Scarlet Honeyeater** *Myzomela sanguinolenta*. A pair near Charters Towers, Aug. 24 - PB.
- Crimson Chat** *Epthianura tricolor*. There was an influx across north Queensland during the period April to August with reports from Lawn Hill (NWQ), Mt. Isa (WCQ), Burketown (NWQ) and Gilbert R. (NCQ) - DM, AM; and from Cloncurry (WCQ), Charters Towers, and 60 at L. Buchanan - PB.
- Orange Chat** *Epthianura aurifrons*. An influx across N. Queensland with sightings at Lawn Hill and Georgetown - DM, AM; Mt. Isa - DM, AM, JW, PB; 60 at Richmond, L. Toomba - PB; and 21 at Townsville - SG, from April to August.

- Yellow-bellied Sunbird** *Nectarinia jugularis*. One at Smithburne R., about 60 km N. of Normanton, June 20 - SG.
- Painted Firetail** *Emblema picta*. Noted at Georgetown, May 4 -DM, AM.
- Zebra Finch** *Poephila guttata*. Numbers increasing in the north-east coastal areas with a large flock at Townsville, during winter - JWi.
- Masked Finch** *Poephila personata*. Noted at Georgetown, Apr. 5, May 4 - DM, AM.
- Plum-headed Finch** *Aidemosyne modesta*. A flock of 200 west of Sarina (MEQ), June 12; a sighting at Mt. Crosby (SEQ), Aug. 2 - WL; and also at Townsville, Apr. 3 - SG; Georgetown, May 5 - DM, AM; Colinton, July 20 - JN; and Bowen, July 27 - JW.
- Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** *Lonchura castaneothorax*. 12 at Flinders R., Apr. 12 - SG; and in unusual high winter numbers (20-30) at Magnetic I. - JWi.
- Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*. A possible extension of the range with sightings at Blackall (SCQ), July 1; and Quilpie, July 4 - DM, AM.
- Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*. 100 Magnetic I., Oct. 23 - JW.
- Spotted Bowerbird** *Chlamydera maculata*. Bunya Mountains, Apr. - PC.
- Paradise Riflebird** *Ptilaris paradiseus*. One in relatively open forest at L. Manchester, near Ipswich (SEQ), Aug. 10 - IV.
- Trumpet Manucode** *Manucodia keraudrenii*. Kuranda (NEQ) on Sept. 22 - TB.
- White-winged Chough** *Corcorax melanorhamphos*. Longreach (CQ), June 29 - DM, AM on the western edge of its range.
- White-browed Woodswallow** *Artamus superciliosus*. Exceptional numbers (over 400) near Charters Towers, Feb. 17 -PE

Dusky Woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus*. Well west of its range at Thylungra (SWQ) on July 5 - DM, AM.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*. West of its range, about 100 km north-west of Longreach, early in July - SH.

SPECIES OMITTED FROM THE 1984 REPORT

Least Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*. A sub-adult female at Beaver Cay, on the Barrier Reef E. of Tully (NEQ), Apr. 25 - PB.

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*. Six at L. Corella, W. of Cloncurry (NWQ), June 27; and five near Richmond, June 29 - PB.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*. A male shot at L. Buchanan, Aug. 26 - PB.

Black Falcon *Falco subniger*. One S. of Charters Towers, July 7 - PB.

Lesser Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*. One at Charters Towers, Nov. 20 - PB.

Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*. Nine at Townsville, Dec. 12 to Jan. 1985 - PB.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. One at freshwater pools at Alva Beach near Ayr (NEQ), Mar. 25 - PB.

D.C. NILAND, 88 Clewley St., Corinda. Q. 4075

ORIGIN OF NAME EMU

J.D. McDONALD

ABSTRACT

Emu is not an Australian aboriginal word but comes from Arabia. It is derived from the name of the ostrich, written in non-Arabic script as *Na Amrah*. This curious connection resulted from two major historical events, the expansion of the Moslem empire in the 7th to 9th centuries and the oceanic explorations of the Portuguese in the 15th to 16th centuries. In Portugal the name became *ema*, and in this or similar form was given to the Cassowary by mariners in the East Indies. The Australian bird was first named New Holland Cassowary and New Holland Emu, finally just Emu.

It is often mistakenly assumed that the name Emu comes from an aboriginal language. Dictionaries and encyclopaedias usually state that it is derived from a Portuguese word, *ema*, meaning crane, sometimes adding, also ostrich and other large birds. This interpretation was put less positively by Fletcher (1907) who wrote, "said to be derived from the Portuguese word Ema or Emea, signifying crane - but formerly applied to the Cassowary and Rhea".

The identification of *ema* with crane was firmly opposed by McClymont (1920), "no authority is quoted to prove that *ema* signified, or ever signified, crane", a disclaimer not accepted or overlooked by dictionaries. Earlier, the crane theory had been ignored by Collingridge (1909) who concluded, "the term emu, which is of Arabian origin and had been adopted by the Portuguese, once applied to ostriches, cassowaries and rheas". McClymont emphasised the cassowary connection, "The Arabic name of the cassowary is *neâma* and there were many Arab traders in the Malay Archipelago at the time when the Portuguese first navigated it".

The doubtful meaning of the word *ema* and the probability that it had been acquired, in some form, by Portuguese navigators from Arab traders in the far east, does little to clarify the question posed by Fletcher, "how is it that a word of Portuguese origin has become the vernacular name of the Struthious bird of Australia when the Portuguese had no share

in the colonisation of the country?" The answer lies in historical events spanning many centuries.

In the first place, Prof. Fr. Bernis of Madrid states (pers. comm.) that the correct Portuguese name of the European crane is, and always has been, *grulla*, derived from Latin *grus* - also the root of the English word crane. Therefore *grulla* is a name given to a particular species, whereas *ema*, as used in Portuguese, is a general or collective term for several large crane-like species. The word *ema* originated in the name specifically given to the Ostrich in Arabia. This source has been verified (pers. comm.) by a teacher of Arabic, Dr. Mohammed Wassel, who gave the name, in script intelligible to non-Arabic readers, as *Na'amah*, pronounced like 'na-ema', and stated "the word emu (with all its variants) comes from the same root": an apparently cognate name in Hebrew is *Ya'anah*; it means 'greed', because of the Ostrich's indiscriminate diet.

Arabia, and the desert borders of Palestine, may seem a strange distribution for the Ostrich, a bird now usually associated with arid Africa, but it was common in the north-west of the Arabian region from very early times until its numbers shrunk to extinction about 1940. But as it did not occur in southern Europe in recent geological times how then did its name become a familiar word in the Portuguese language? Not as McClymont suggested by seamen borrowing an Arabic name for the Cassowary in the far east but overland from Arabia long before Portuguese explorers ventured far from home. It was through the Moslem occupation of the Iberian Peninsula when, in the 7th to 9th centuries, Arabs extended their empire through Egypt and North Africa (as explained in a recent television program, *The Arabs*). They left many permanent impressions in the countries they occupied. Of their language Wells (1932) wrote, "because it was a fine language, and because it was the language of the Koran, Arabic continued to spread until it had presently replaced Greek and became the language of educated men throughout the whole Moslem world". Many Arabic words are included in Aryan languages.

It seems highly probable, therefore, when Arab immigrants in the western regions of their empire first saw cranes it would be natural for them to exclaim, in Arabic of course, "There's an ostrich" - *Na'amah*, which became *ema* in Portugal; just as

English explorers in the antarctic dubbed the large aquatic birds they found there as penguins, after the Great Auk or Garefowl of the North Atlantic which originally bore the name Penguin, because it was flightless or pinion-winged.

Two questions now emerge: how did the name *ema* get out of Portugal and why did it persist in Portuguese and not in Spanish, when Moors and cranes were equally common in both countries? Answers are provided by McIntyre (1977). Early in the 15th century Portuguese navigators set sail in their caravels to discover and conquer the world. The Spaniards also took up the quest with the result that eventually, and inevitably, there were arguments, of one kind or another, regarding claims to ownership of territory. Finally it was agreed, by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1485, and with the blessing of the reigning Pope, that the world should be divided between the two countries. Portugal was to have the section between longitude 51°W and 129°E; that is through South America to include Brazil, and in the east taking in the East Indies, now Indonesia, but not New Guinea (if Australia had been known it would have divided in half).

In this vast Portuguese empire there were, in addition to the African ostrich, two other similar large birds, one in Brazil and the other in the East Indies. Each was given some variant of name *ema*. In a history of the province of Santa Cruz in Brazil published in 1576 it is spelt *hema*, and in a work on Brazil dated 1648 it is listed as *ema*. Later it was named in English and science, American Ostrich, *Struthio americana*, until elevated to a unique status in the genus *Rhea*, named after the Titaness goddess. *Rhea* also became the common name. Native names were mentioned from time to time but none became popular.

The other large bird, at the eastern extremity of the Portuguese realm, was also named *ema*. In a publication of 1613 it was written as *emia* and *ema*. This title was adopted by the Dutch, who competed for the valuable spices of the region, a caption 'eme' appearing on an illustration of the bird published in Amsterdam in 1674. At the same time the native name became established in popular use. In a record of 1678 it is given as *casuaris*, with later variants like *kesuari* (from Papuan words *kasu* and *weri* meaning 'horned head'), which eventually became Cassowary.

Clearly, therefore, the Portuguese in their extensive lands had opportunities for regular contact with ostrich-like birds and ample use for the word *ema*, whereas in the Spanish half of the world there were none of that description (New Guinea, in the Spanish zone, with its abundant Cassowary population, was almost unknown), and therefore if the word *ema* had a place in Spain's domestic vocabulary it was unlikely to have been taken out of the country and became obsolete.

When Australia with its 'large bird' came into the picture the names emu and cassowary, in various spellings, had more or less equal standing among Portuguese and Dutch in the east. Perhaps the Portuguese saw and named the bird *ema* if we accept McIntyre's persuasive thesis that they explored the east coast long before the arrival of Cook, but so far there does not seem to be any recorded proof that they did. The bird was first mentioned by a Dutchman in 1697 when in the Swan River area he saw footprints of men and other impressions "like those of a dog and cassowary" (see Heeres 1899).

Cook and his industrious naturalists, Banks and Solander, missed the bird, but with the arrival of the first fleet in 1788 it soon attracted attention. In letters sent home it was described, for instance, as "A very large bird of the ostrich kind which we call *amues*" (Collingridge 1909), and in White's journal (1790) "A New Holland Cassowary was brought into camp". Remotely in Britain it was classified by Latham (1790) as Cassowary. There was, however, some bias in favour of emu, weighted apparently by the evidence of the only 'bird book' available, that of Goldsmith (1774), where an illustration of the rhea bears the caption 'Emu'.

A certain Captain Tench must have had access to the book for he wrote (1793) that the bird was "a species of ostrich, approaching nearer the Emu of South America, than any other bird we know of". New Holland Cassowary became "Emu of New South Wales" in Collins' (1802) account of the colony. It was not until 1817 that science disclaimed the identity Cassowary and elevated the bird to a unique status.

Subsequently, science and common usage ended the trail from the original *Na'ama* of Arabia and the 7th century *ema* of Portugal by accepting in the 19th century the name Emu for the large bird of Australia.

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- J.D. McDONALD, 20 Gleneagle Street, Kenmore, Brisbane, 4069.

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- FLEAY, D.H. 1937. Nesting habits of the brush turkey. *Emu* 36: 153-163.
- FRITH, J.H. 1976. Mallee fowl. In *Complete Book of Australian Birds* (H.J. Frith consul. ed.) pp 136-137. Sydney: Reader's Digest.
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