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THE SUNBIRD

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DISTRIBUTIONAL NOTES FROM SOUTHWEST AND NORTHEAST AUSTRALIA

MARTIN L. CODY

During over eight months of full-time field work in Australia (August 1984 - January 1985 in SW Australia and September 1989 - January 1990 in NE Australia), I collected distributional data on birds in conjunction with census work in a wide variety of natural habitats. My data were collected at some 55 census sites in SW Australia and 99 sites in NE Australia; these sites are referred to with letter codes and names, and information on them is appended below in the Gazetteer. A total of 309 species (excluding raptors) was censused, providing some 3500 species X site records; a number of these records (126; 3.6% of the total) correspond to gaps within or extensions of the ranges reported in the RAOU Bird Atlas (Blakers *et al.* 1984). Some of the more interesting of these new records are reported and discussed in this note, while a complete compilation (all those that fill currently vacant 1° x 1° latitude - longitude squares) has been sent to the RAOU Atlas Committee for the convenience of future Atlas updating.

In the species list that follows, I include a) species name; b) site and latitude / longitude of the block where the species occurred in my census (corresponding to a hiatus in range in the RAOU Atlas); c) an indication of whether the species occurs in no adjacent squares (shown as ★★★★★), a single square (★★★), two (★★), three (★), or in all adjacent squares (+, where the record simply fills an interior vacancy). I also note d) whether a species appears to be within its (coarser and more contiguous) range as shown in Pizzey's (1980) field guide, using the symbols [P] if it is and {p} if it is not. Finally, e) information relevant to breeding is included where available, as territorial singing [S], nesting [N], or presence of fledglings or juveniles [F]. Density estimates D, from plots of 5 ha (forests) up to 25 ha (grasslands), are shown in

units of individuals/ha as "D = ", while other comments on the records are given where appropriate.

SPECIES RECORDS

Turnix velox **Little Button-quail**. 27°/114° (★★DR: Kalbarri, D = 0.27, [F]), 24° / 114° (★★★EB: Mooka, D = 0.41) and 28° / 145° (★★★CW: Cunnemulla, D = 0.11).

Turnix pyrrhоторax **Red-chested Button-quail**. 25° / 142° (★★★CH: Windorah, D = 0.20). All these sightings are P, but button-quail records, even for these two most widely distributed species, are very patchy in the Atlas, presumably because of the difficulty finding birds in dense cover.

Macropygia amboinensis **Brown Cuckoo-Dove**. 10° / 142° (★★★G: Lockerbie, D = 0.18, {p}). A northern range extension to near the tip of the Cape York Peninsula, where birds were calling from trees where the road fords the stream.

Phaps elegans **Brush Bronzewing**. 31°/118° (★★★EI: Burracoppin, D = 0.70, {p}). The species apparently extends considerably further inland in SW Australia, in thick mallee, than the published records indicate.

Alisterus scapularis **Australian King-Parrot**. 23°/147° (★★AJ: Bogantungan, D = 0.27, {p}). This observation (of three individuals) places this species on the inland side of the Great Dividing Range. Here it occurs in tall woodland that it shares with Red-winged Parrots *Aprosmictus erythropterus*, a species which generally replaces the King in lower woodlands to the interior and towards the northwest.

Nymphicus hollandicus **Cockatiel**, *Melopsittacus undulatus* **Budgerigar**. 31°/126° (★★★FA: Madura, D = 0.15, 1.55 respectively; {p}). These records presumably reflect a paucity of information from the Nullarbor region; other species seen at the Madura site (but not yet recorded in the Atlas) are Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*, Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*, Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*, and Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*; of course, none of these records is very surprising.

Platycercus elegans **Crimson Rosella**. 23°/149° (★★★L: Blackdown, D = 0.29, {p}). This record, of a pair in stringybark forest on the Blackdown Tableland, is particularly interesting as it helps bridge the Crimson

Rosella's range disjunction between latitudes 21° and 26° along the east coast. In the same forest, the Pale-headed Rosella *Platycercus adscitus* was found more than twice as commonly as the Crimson Rosella.

Chrysococcyx lucidus **Shining Bronze-Cuckoo**. 23°/145° ((★ ★ AS: Barcaldine) and 23°/145° (★ ★ BB: Jericho); both (p)). Found calling commonly in eucalypt woodlands, here at the inland edge of the published range.

Halcyon macleayi **Forest Kingfisher**. 29°/150° (★ ★ ★ V: Gwydir River, D = 0.33, (P)), 28°/147° (★ ★ ★ AP: Bollon, D = 0.28, (p)), and 27°/148° (★ ★ ★ AU: Mundalee, D = 0.25, (p)). These sightings indicate that the Forest Kingfisher supplants the Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta* in certain gallery woodlands (Gwydir River) or in taller (and richer: 35-40 bird species recorded) woodlands between 27° and 29° latitude on the interior edge of its range.

Coracina papuensis **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**. 23°/145° (+AS: Barcaldine, D = 0.23, (p)) This species appears to be at the extreme inland edge of its range in the Barcaldine woodlands, where I found it rather commoner than Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *C. novaehollandiae*. I recorded White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes coexisting with Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrikes *C. lineata* at 14°/143° (★ ★ ★ Z: Lakefield, D = 0.34, (P)) in mixed eucalypt woodland. This site corresponds to an Atlas hiatus in the range of the latter, which has been unreported between Iron Range to the north and the Cooktown region to the south.

Zoothera dauma **White's Thrush**. 24°/151° (★ ★ ★ K: Eurimbula, D = 0.26, [F], (P)). This thrush has been reported only patchily along the central Queensland coast, but I found it feeding fledglings in the Eurimbula rainforest.

Petroica multicolor **Scarlet Robin**. 29°/153° (+R: Mororo, D = 0.14, [F], (P)). Although of apparently questionable status on the coast, I found these robins to be quite common breeders in Mororo State Forest north of Iluka.

Pachycephala inornata **Gilbert's Whistler**. 32°/117° (★ ★ ★ EW: Tuttanning, D = 0.16, [S], (P)). Primarily a mallee species, I found this whistler southwest of its Atlas range in powderbark-wandoo woodland with a thick heath understorey.

Colluricincla megarhyncha **Little Shrike-thrush**. 26°/151° (★ ★ J: Bunya Mts., D = 0.47, (p)). This shrike-thrush is common in the Bunya Mountains, in rainforest habitat typical of the species.

Oreoica gutturalis **Crested Bellbird**. 26°/148° (★★BC: Dunkeld, D = 0.40, [P]); 20°/144° (★★★★BU: Flinders River, D = 0.73, [P]); 20°/141° (★★★★BW: Scrubby Creek, D = 0.40, {p}); 20°/140° (★★CM: Cloncurry, D = 0.11, {p}); 29°/114° (+EC: Dongara, D = 0.21, [S], [P]). This species is ubiquitous throughout acacia bushlands of the interior. The first record extends the edge of its range east to Dunkeld where Mulga *Acacia aneura*, much favoured by Bellbirds, nears its eastern limits. The next three records extend or help define the northeastern edge of the species' range; the last fills a gap on the western coast.

Psophodes nigrogularis **Western Whipbird**. 33°/120° (★★★FK: Ravensthorpe D = 0.31, {p}), and 33°/121° (★★★★FL: Munglinup, D = 0.19, [S], {p}) This species, of restricted and disjunct distribution on the southwestern and south coast, has expanded east into the disjunction from southwestern headquarters in historical times, and its further easterly extension is indicated by these two records.

Cinclosoma cinnamomeum **Cinnamon Quail-thrush**. 22°/141° (★★★★DA: MacKunda Creek, D = 0.09, {p}), 26°/114° (★★★DX: Hamelin Road), and 25°/113° (★★★★DZ: Carnarvon S). The last two are [P]. This is the quail-thrush of the sparsely vegetated interior stony plains; its range is extended to the northeast by the first record, and the last two contribute to the western limits of its distribution.

Pomatostomus superciliosus **White-browed Babbler**. 26°/146° (★★★AN: Morven, D = 1.60, and ★★★★★BF: Charleville, D = 0.98); both {p}. The common Grey-crowned Babbler *P. temporalis* of the eastern-central Queensland woodlands is replaced generally by Hall's Babbler *P. halli* and White-browed Babbler to the west in acacia-dominated scrub. My two records of White-crowned Babbler indicate the species' dominance in tall mulga sites at its northern limit.

Malurus splendens **Splendid Fairy-wren**. 25°/142° (★★CH: Windorah, D = 0.80, [P]), and 24°/114° (★★★EB: Mooka, D = 3.80, {p}). This is the common malurid of mulga across the continent, and these two records confirm its status as a 'core' mulga species in the northwestern and central-eastern parts of its range.

Sericornis pyrrhopygius **Chestnut-rumped Hylacola**. 29°/153° (★★★AA: Broadwater, D = 0.80, [F], [P]). I found this hylacola to be common in the paperbark woodlands with a thick heath understorey on the coast in Broadwater National Park.

Sericornis cautus **Shy Hylacola**. 27°/114° (★★★DR: Kalbarri, D = 0.54, [P]); 29°/114° (★★★★EC: Dongara, D = 1.37, [S], [P]); 32°/116° (★★★★EV: Congelin, D = 0.18, [p]); and 32°/118° (★★EX: Bending, D = 0.16, [P]). These four records indicate that the Shy Hylacola is rather more broadly distributed than is indicated by published records; in particular the range extends considerably further to the northwest (Dongara, Kalbarri), where the species is quite common in coastal acacia scrub.

Sericornis sagittatus **Speckled Warbler**. 23°/148° (+AB: Blackwater, D = 0.40, [P]), and 28°/147° (★★★AP: Bollon, D = 0.43, [F], [p]). Both records come from poplar-box/ironbark woodlands with brigalow or mulga understoreys, typical habitat for the Speckled Warbler.

Gerygone fusca **Western Gerygone**. 24°/151° (★★AV: Eurimbula, D = 0.13, [S], [p]). Coastal records for this species seem to be absent, but it apparently breeds in paperbark woodlands near Agnes Waters.

Acanthiza apicalis **Inland Thornbill**. 22°/143° (★★★★CF: Winton, D = 1.67, [P]); *A. robustirostris* **Slaty-backed Thornbill**. 25°/113° (★★★★DZ: Carnarvon S, D = 0.33, [P]); *A. reguloides* **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. 28°/148° (★★★AO: Mungindi, D = 1.33, [p]); *A. iredalei* **Slender-billed Thornbill**. 24°/113° (★★★EA: Carnarvon N, D = 0.16, [P]); *A. lineata* **Striated Thornbill**. 21°/148° (★★★★E: Eungella, D = 0.32, [p]). Of these five thornbill records, the most notable are the Inland Thornbill at Winton, a northeastern extension of its Queensland range in the Atlas, and especially Striated Thornbill at the Eungella rainforest, two degrees of latitude further north than its current Atlas range.

Philemon corniculatus **Noisy Friarbird**. 12°/143° (★★C: Iron Range, D = 0.4, [p]). Although present at this latitude in the centre of the Cape York Peninsula, no sightings have been recorded from the eastern coast.

Melithreptus gularis **Black-chinned Honeyeater**. 14°/143° (★★Z: Lakefield, D = 1.03); 15°/144° (★AM: Hell's Gate, D = 0.62, and AZ: Koolburra, D = 0.79); all [P]. Records of the race *laetior* (Golden-backed Honeyeater) are restricted to the western coast of the Cape York Peninsula, but I found the species widely distributed through the western woodlands there.

Melithreptus brevirostris **Brown-headed Honeyeater**. 23°/145° (★★★BB: Jericho, D = 0.30, [p]). This is an extension to the northern tip of the published range.

Phylidonyris nigra **White-cheeked Honeyeater**. 26°/148° (★★★★BJ: Bungil Creek, D=0.11, {p}). Of all of my new (Atlas) records, this is the only real anomaly! Two birds were seen in poplar-box woodland and, even following a wet winter, they were undoubtedly strays here.

Certhionyx niger **Black Honeyeater**. 26°/146° (★★★★CN: Charleville S, D=0.63, {P}), and 33°/120° (★★★★FK: Ravensthorpe, D=0.31, {P}). This species is apparently quite nomadic within its very wide, mostly inland, range. The former record is from Charleville, where the species was by far the commonest of five species of honeyeater in the spinifex-savannah just south of town, and provides an eastern range extension. The latter record is a considerable southerly extension, to near the south coast, in the western part of the range.

Certhionyx variegatus **Pied Honeyeater**. 30°/115° (★★DL: Cervantes Road, D=0.19, {p}), 29°/120° (★★EL: Riverina, D=0.72, {P}), and 31°/119° (★★EU: Moorine, D=0.69, {P}). This species has a similarly wide and patchy distribution to that of its congener, and these records extend the coastal and southern edges of its range in the west.

Epthianura aurifrons **Orange Chat**. 28°/145° (★★CW: Cunnamulla, D=0.72, {P}). A common bird in the *Atriplex* scrub 1 km east of town.

Pardalotus rubricatus **Red-browed Pardalote**. 29°/149° (★★★★BA: Weemalah, D=0.8, {F}, {p}). Several pairs were observed, one pair feeding juveniles, in low, open woodland well to the southeast of the recorded range. I also recorded the species from bloodwood-*Banksia* woodland in Deepwater National Park, south of Agnes Waters, at the eastern and coastal extremity of the range.

Zosterops lateralis **Silvereye**. 28°/147° (★★AP: Bollon, D=0.57, {p}). This sighting helps define the inland edge of the Silvereye's range in southern Queensland.

Artamus cyanopterus **Dusky woodswallow**. 29°/120° (★★EL: Riverina, D=0.48 [N], {p}). Nesting in blackbutt woodland east of town, a northern extension of the species' range in the west.

GAZETTEER

- C: Iron Range 12° 38.6'S, 143° 45.1'E. Lowland rainforest.
- E: Eungella 21° 7.4'S, 148° 31.6'E. Montane rainforest.
- G: Lockerbie Scrub 10° 46.2'S, 142° 31.1'E. Monsoon forest.
- J: Bunya Mts. 26° 48.5'S, 151° 36.9'E. Montane rainforest.
- K: Eurimbula 24° 9.8'S, 151° 48.2'E. Lowland rainforest.
- L: Blackdown 23° 51.1'S, 149° 9.9'E. *Eucalyptus sphaerocarpa* forest.
- R: Mororo 29° 20.9'S, 153° 15.2'E. Mixed eucalypt forest.
- V: Gwydir River 29° 29.7'S, 150° 6.9'E. *E. camalduensis* woodland.
- Z: Lakefield 14° 40.4'S, 143° 50.6'E. Mixed eucalypt woodland.
- AA: Broadwater 29° 4.5'S, 153° 24.8'E. *Melaleuca* woodland.
- AB: Blackwater 23° 9.7'S, 148° 43.5'E. *Acacia harpophylla* / *E. crebra*
woodland
- AJ: Bogantungan 23° 9.7'S, 147° 6.6'E. Mixed eucalypt woodland.
- AM: Hell's Gate 15° 41.4'S, 144° 36.8'E. *E. terminalis/alba* woodland.
- AN: Morven 26° 22.5'S, 146° 48.6'E. *A. aneura* / *E. populnea* woodland.
- AO: Mungindi 28° 53.5'S, 148° 55.8'E. *E. populnea* woodland.
- AP: Bollon 28° 0.6'S, 147° 26.8'E. *E. populnea* / *A. aneura* woodland.
- AS: Barcaldine 23° 33.6'S, 145° 21.5'E. *E. populnea* / *lamprophylla*
woodland.
- AU: Mundalee 27° 58.2'S, 148° 20.2'E. *E. populnea* / *A. aneura* woodland.
- AV: Eurimbula 24° 13.7'S, 151° 49.8'E. *Melaleuca* woodland.
- AZ: Koolburra 15° 19.4'S, 144° 0.9'E. Mixed eucalypt woodland.
- BA: Weemalah 29° 4.3'S, 149° 13.6'E. Open eucalypt woodland.

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- BB: Jericho 23° 35.6'S, 145° 58.8'E. *E. populnea* / *melanophloia*,
A. harpophylla woodland.
- BC: Dunkeld 26° 53.2'S, 148° 10.7'E. *A. aneura* / *E. populnea* /
melanophloia woodland.
- BF: Charleville 26° 26.6'S, 146° 13.0'E. *A. aneura* woodland.
- BJ: Bungil Creek 18° 47.4'S, 148° 57.4'E. *E. populnea* woodland.
- BU: Flinders River 20° 48.4'S, 144° 12.0'E. Mixed *Acacia* bush.
- BW: Scrubby Creek 20° 37.1'S, 141° 5.9'E. *A. cambagei* bush.
- CF: Winton 22° 27.2'S, 143° 3.8'E. *A. cambagei* bush.
- CH: Windorah 25° 23.0'S, 142° 37.9'E. Mixed *Acacia* bush.
- CM Cloncurry 20° 42.3'S, 140° 40.8'E. *E. brevifolia* / *Tridia* mallee.
- CN: Charleville S 26° 30.8'S, 146° 13.3'E. *E. melanophloia* / *Tridia*
savannah.
- CW Cunnamulla 28° 4.9'S, 145° 42.1'E. Low *Atriplex* with annuals
- DA: MacKurdia Creek 22° 30.4'S, 141° 20.8'E. Mixed grassland.
- DL: Cervantes Road 30° 22.9'S, 115° 22.2'E. Mixed *Banksia* heath.
- DR: Kalbarri 27° 53.6'S, 114° 34.2'E. Mixed *Acacia*/protead heath.
- DX: Hamelin Road 26° 25.0'S, 114° 19.2'E. Mixed *Acacia* bush.
- DZ: Carnarvon S 25° 17.4'S, 113° 55.4'E. *A. sclerosperma* bush.
- EA: Carnarvon N 24° 58.9'S, 113° 46.7'E. *Atriplex* / *Maireana* scrub.
- EB: Mooka 24° 48.4'S, 114° 17.3'E. Mixed *Acacia* bush.
- EC: Dongara 29° 16.8'S, 114° 56.6'E. *E. dongariensis* / *Acacia* bush.
- EI: Burracoppin 31° 23.8'S, 118° 29.5'E. *E. gracilis* / *Acacia* mallee.
- EL: Riverina 29° 43.8'S, 120° 45.0'E. *E. lesouffei* woodland.
- EU: Moorine 31° 17.9'S, 119° 8.0'E. Mixed *Acacia* bush.
-

EV: Congeltn	32° 49.1'S, 116° 53.4'E.	<i>E. wandoo</i> woodland.
EW: Tuttanning	32° 31.6'S, 117° 17.9'E.	<i>E. accedens</i> woodland.
EX: Bendering	32° 21.2'S, 118° 22.8'E.	<i>E. loxophloeoba</i> low woodland.
FA: Madura	31° 59.2'S, 126° 35.7'E.	<i>E. loxophloeoba/oleosa</i> mallee.
FK: Ravensthorpe	33° 44.1'S, 120° 21.7'E.	Protead/ <i>E. tetragona/preissiana</i> heath.
FL: Munglinup	33° 45.5'S, 121° 5.5'E.	Protead/ <i>E. tetragona</i> heath.

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NOTES ON NESTING COLONIES OF THE WHITE-RUMPED SWIFTLET AT DUNK ISLAND

MARTIN SCHULZ

The White-rumped Swiftlet *Collocalia spodiopygia* is a common species in north-eastern Queensland, frequently seen foraging over forests and cleared land for insects. Yet surprisingly few breeding colonies are known. Up until 1984 only six colonies had been located (Blakers *et al.* 1984). Although the species' range does not appear to have declined, the number of nests at some breeding sites has diminished, for example Finch Hatton Gorge (Smyth 1976, Crouther 1983), Chillagoe Caves (Smyth *et al.* 1980) and Dunk Island (Griffin 1969).

The first recorded breeding colony of the White-rumped Swiftlet in Australia was from Dunk Island (17°57'S, 146°09'E) (Banfield 1912). Only one colony was recorded on the island by Smyth *et al.* (1980), although they stated 'there would appear to be a number of suitable sites for establishing Swiftlet colonies'. On 8-9 September 1989 I walked around Dunk Island and recorded six breeding sites of the Swiftlet. Five sites were located along the rocky coastline on the north and east sides of the island and one in a rocky outcrop above Palm Valley, some distance from the sea. A summary of these breeding colonies is given in Table 1.

All breeding sites on the coast were located in large crevices or caves formed in the granite. In all cases the entrances faced ENE to N, a protection from the persistent onshore south-easterly winds that occur during some seasons of the year. The largest colony (Site A) was situated some 20 m above the high tideline. This cave would be unlikely to flood even during cyclonic events. Other sites (B, C and EO) were situated less than 10 m above the high tideline and may be in danger of sea flooding at times.

Site C contained eight disused nests that had fallen from the ceiling on to the floor. No recent signs of Swiftlet occupation were evident. This may have been due to several bushes growing out and partially covering the cave entrance, thereby making entry difficult. The 'inland' site (Site E) above Palm Valley was situated in rainforest on the west side of a large rock face. The entrance opening had a WSW aspect, in contrast to the coastal sites. This cave appeared to be no longer in use, the only evidence of Swiftlet occupation being twenty disused nests on the floor.

Amongst the nests at Sites A, B and D were several roosting North-eastern Shearwater-bats *Tapozous australis*. This species is frequently found roost-

ing in rock fissures, piled boulders or small caves along rocky coastlines (Hall 1983). The bats took flight quickly at the first sign of human intrusion and could easily be overlooked amongst flying Swiftlets. The largest number seen was four at Site D. Several small bats (probably *Eptesicus* spp.) were also disturbed at Site D. Seton (1965) also noted the presence of unidentified bats sharing the same recesses as Swiftlets at Finch Hatton Gorge.

At no site was there any evidence of human disturbance. Access along the coastline on the north and east sides of Dunk Island is difficult, and the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service actively discourages visitors from walking around these coasts (e.g. information in visitor brochures). All of the Swiftlet sites required some climbing to reach the entrances, and in some cases (Sites A and D) access was difficult. At these sites breeding success is probably influenced by flooding and immersion in sea spray during storms, rather than by human disturbance.

The small number of known breeding sites compared with the frequency of sightings of the White-rumped Swiftlet in areas away from known colonies suggests that additional colonies remain to be discovered (Beruldsen 1980, Blakers *et al.* 1984). This is understandable when given, for example, the terrain the colonies on the coastline of Dunk Island occurred in, where an observer is frequently more concerned about safe progress than with what is going on around him or her.

	SITE						TOTAL
	COASTAL					INLAND	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
USED NESTS *	91	22	0	24	36	0	173
NESTS NOT IN USE	76	12	0	8	16	0	112
NESTS ON FLOOR	30	5	8	10	12	20	85
ENTRANCE ASPECT	ENE	N	N	NE	NE	WSW	

TABLE 1.

Details of the six White-rumped Swiftlet breeding sites located on Dunk Island, September 1989. Used nests (*) were those containing a single egg. This is likely to be an underestimate since the visits were made early in the nesting season (Beruldsen 1980)

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COMMENTS ON RANGE, SEASONALITY AND BEHAVIOUR OF SOME NORTH QUEENSLAND BIRDS

CHRIS R. PAVEY

This paper outlines new observations on the geographic distribution, seasonality and behaviour of seven species of northeast Queensland birds. All personal observations were noted during field trips to the region from 24 June to 1 July 1984, 8 to 17 July 1985 and 4 to 14 July 1986. Sightings of other observers, both during this period and up to January 1988, have been included provided they were considered reliable. Observations were made within an area of northeast Queensland encompassed by Portland Roads in the north, Georgetown in the west and Townsville to the south.

Ducula spilorrhhoa Torresian Imperial - Pigeon

An individual observed by J. Beste flying over mangroves at Portland Roads on 8 July 1986 could either have been returning from New Guinea or have overwintered in Australia. The species is reported to spread south through Torres Strait from southern and western New Guinea in July (Macleay 1876, Storr 1984), usually reaching the Cape York Peninsula in late July (Frith 1982). Jardine (1904) noted that some birds reached Somerset, at the northern tip of Cape York (220 km NNW of Portland Roads) by mid-July, with most arriving in early August. The majority of migrants then move down the eastern Australian coast reaching Port Douglas in August (Crome 1975) and Innisfail and Townsville districts in September (Gill 1970, Wieneke 1988). If the Portland Roads bird was returning from New Guinea, it clearly represents a very early seasonal record, since migrants would not be expected there before late July or early August.

The status of the Torresian Imperial - Pigeon in winter in eastern Australia is currently indeterminate. Crome (1975) recorded a pair at Gordonvale in June 1972, while it was present during all months except July and August at the Edward River settlement, on the west coast of the Cape York Peninsula (Garnett & Bredl 1985). Frith (1982) noted that some birds remain in Australia all year, but it is not clear whether this statement refers to eastern Australia, the Northern Territory or both areas. The locality is significant, since the population in the northwest of the Kimberley region of Western Australia is resident all year (Johnstone 1981). The sighting of only one individual at Portland Roads indicates that it may have been overwintering, since returning pigeons are consistently observed in groups (Draffan *et al.* 1983, Jardine 1904, Johnson & Hooper 1973, Thorsborne *et al.* 1988).

Cacomantis castaneiventris **Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo**

One bird was sighted on the "Ptiloris" property at the base of Mt. Lewis by D. Hobcroft and H. Beste on 12 July 1986. Subsequent to this record, other sightings were made of the species in the Mt. Lewis area during 1987 and 1988. These include: single birds on the "Ptiloris" property on 9 January 1987 (D. Hobcroft), 31 May 1987 (P. Aston, A. Silcocks), 23 June 1987 (D. Hobcroft, H. Beste), and 18 January 1988 (D. Hobcroft, K. Beste); a pair on "Ptiloris" on 24 January 1988 (D. Hobcroft, H. and J. Beste, K. Shurcliffe, J. McKean); and single birds along the Mt. Lewis road, near the old forestry camp, on 30 May 1987 (P. Aston, A. Silcocks) and 18 November 1987 (D. Hobcroft, H. Beste, D. Fisher). Most of the observers were familiar with the species, having observed it previously at Iron Range and in New Guinea. These records represent a significant southern extension of the range of this species based on the previously published southern limits of Bloomfield River (Storr 1984) and Shipton's Flat (Blakers *et al.* 1984). These two localities are both between 70 and 90 km north of Mt. Lewis. Reconsideration of previous sightings on the Atherton Tablelands (Bravery 1970, F.H.J. Crome pers. comm.) and further south (Austin 1969, Seton 1972) may lead to further modification of the southern limit of its range. The Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo appears to be resident at Mt. Lewis, having been recorded during all seasons.

Petroica goodenovii **Red-capped Robin**

A female observed 6 km west of Georgetown on 13 July 1985 represents an eastward extension of range of approximately 85 km from that given in Storr (1984).

Acanthagenys rufogularis **Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater**

An individual observed in Melaleuca woodland at Townsville Town Common on 26 June 1984 constitutes a 175 km extension north of the coastal range from Bowen (Storr 1984). A pair on the Etheridge River at Georgetown on 14 July 1985 defines the northeast limits of its range in north Queensland (Storr 1984). Both of these records refer to distribution on mainland Australia, thereby avoiding consideration of the controversial *A. r. parkeri* represented only by the type specimen reputedly collected from Friday Island, Torres Strait (Parkes 1980). It is pertinent to mention that Storr (1984) held the view that the type of *A. r. parkeri* was possibly collected by Broadbent at Karumba, western Cape York Peninsula, rather than Friday Island.

Glycichaera fallax Green-backed Honeyeater

Holland (1972) states that this species is "undoubtedly monogamous" based on sightings of five single birds, twelve pairs and two parties of three during field observations at Iron Range between 30 July and 6 September 1970. A record of at least six birds during the same period was classified as "extremely doubtful" by Holland. Blakers *et al.* (1984) also indicate that *G. fallax* is usually found as pairs. Observations at Iron Range in the vicinity of the Claudie River during July 1986, produced three sightings of Green-backed Honeyeater: a single bird on 8 July, a group of at least ten on 9 July, and five at the latter site on 11 July. The birds seen on 9 and 11 July were actively foraging amongst the outer foliage of vineforest vegetation at the edge of a clearing near Lamond Hill. Foraging took place from the upper foliage of the taller trees down to a height of 2-3 metres above ground level. It was an active process with individuals moving frequently from tree to tree, and often fluttering or hovering round the outer foliage, probably in an attempt to obtain insects. Birds regularly pursued conspecifics for short distances during swift, sometimes twisting flights through and under the canopy.

These observations indicate that, at least in winter, the Green-backed Honeyeater does aggregate at feeding sites. These aggregations may be semi-permanent, since a group was present at the Lamond Hill site two days apart. Small parties of this species have been reported by other observers in winter (Johnson & Hooper 1973, Geeves & Horton 1990), and may be parent-offspring associations based on a sighting of dependent juveniles in June 1981 (Blakers *et al.* 1984).

Ramsayornis modestus Brown-backed Honeyeater

Small numbers were regularly sighted in *Eucalyptus-Melaleuca* woodland along the Forest Track at Townsville Town Common between 24 and 30 June 1984, with a maximum count of ten or twelve birds during 2 hours of observation. Several birds were seen in *Eucalyptus-Melaleuca* woodland between Portland Roads and Packers Creek on 8 July 1986. It has been suggested in the literature that this honeyeater is migratory (Storr 1973, Blakers *et al.* 1984), and it is regarded as a definite migrant at Innisfail (Gill 1970) and Townsville (Maher 1988), arriving in August and departing in April-May. Numbers involved in these observations suggest that the Townsville population is not seasonally migratory, since one would expect only a few individuals to overwinter. This view is supported by a record from the Innisfail area in June (Bristowe *et al.* 1972). It is possible that nomadic behaviour by this honeyeater has been misinterpreted as migration by some authors.

Aplonis metallica Metallic Starling

Small numbers were observed in vineforest at Iron Range between 8 and 11 July 1986 and about ten individuals were present in trees along The Esplanade at Cairns on 14 July 1986. Overwintering by a proportion of the population is typical of this species at Cairns and Innisfail (Blakers *et al.* 1984, Gill 1970, A. Magarry pers. comm.). The status of the Iron Range birds is uncertain, since it is not known whether the species is migratory on the Cape York Peninsula (Blakers *et al.* 1984). The individuals observed may already have returned from New Guinea, since active breeding colonies have been found as early as the first two weeks of August at Iron Range (Johnson & Hooper 1973), and returning birds have reached Innisfail by 13 July (Gill 1970).

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GAZETTEER

Edward River settlement 14°52'S, 141°37'E; Friday Island 10°36'S, 142°10'E; Georgetown 18°17'S, 143°33'E; Gordonvale 17°05'S, 145°47'E; Iron Range 12°44'S, 143°17'E; Karumba 17°29'S, 140°51'E; Mt. Lewis 16°34'S, 145°16'E; Packers Creek 12°22'S, 143°22'E; Portland Roads 12°36'S, 143°24'E; Shipton's Flat 15°48'S, 145°14'E; Somerset 10°45'S, 142°35'E.

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BIRDS OF SCIENTIFIC AREA S.A.16, MARBLETOP, NANANGO, QUEENSLAND

M.T. TEMPLETON

Scientific Area S.A.16 is important to the survival of wildlife because it is a small remnant of sub-tropical rainforest, that once dominated the Nanango area before 1925, when clearing was commenced for the development of Hoop Pine *Araucaria cunninghamii* plantations. Clearing was intensified in 1948, when migrant workers were employed in felling and burning. This devastation, and its influence on wildlife, was dramatic. The burnoff method used was to light the entire boundary of the fallen, dried out scrub, allow burning to the centre, and thus create intense heat, destroying everything within the fallen area. Intense shooting and destruction of habitat virtually wiped out some animal species. The small areas of natural vegetation remaining enable the limited survival of many species typical of forested or wooded habitats.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Scientific Area S.A.16, Marbletop, (26° 41' S, 152° 11' E) is an area designated by the Queensland Forestry Department, and set aside for Scientific Purposes. Situated 11 km east of Nanango, it has an area of about 32 ha of remnant sub - tropical rainforest, from which all millable timber has been removed. The area comprises steep forested hillsides with a fairly clear understorey, a good layer of leaf litter, and a canopy up to about 15 metres. A gravel road bisects the area giving access to a Fire Lookout Tower, built in 1987. This tower is at the highest point, 556 m above sea level, with clear views east to the Brisbane Valley and west to the Bunya Mountains. An area with a diameter of about 100 m was cleared in the early war years (about 1940) to accommodate a signal point. A hut for forestry workers was maintained there for some years. A Lantana *Lantana camara* thicket, up to 10 m across, has grown at the edges of the cleared area, with low regrowth gradually covering it. On three sides of the scrub there are Hoop Pine plantations varying in age from 20 years to 40 years, separated in places by an 8 m fire break of natural vegetation. The northern boundary is open *Eucalypt* forest. Sandwiched between the Bunya Mountains to the west and the Blackall - Conondale Ranges to the east, the Nanango area is rather neglected in terms of published statements about bird habitats and status. A complete list is being compiled (Templeton in MS), while there are more general statements in Roberts (1979).

METHODS

In September 1988, permission was granted by the Queensland Forestry Department to conduct a Survey and Banding Project within the Scientific Area. Once a month visits of four to six hours have been maintained from September 1988 to April 1990, for the purpose of netting, banding and observing. In August 1989, I was accompanied by S.G. & L.F. Lane. Breeding was confirmed by nest location and examination of netted birds.

RESULTS

Birds recorded are described in the annotated list (Appendix 1). Sixty - three species were sighted within the designated area, three of them not previously recorded in the Nanango area (Templeton in MS, details in Appendix 1). The Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela* had only been sighted once before, and the netting of a White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma* confirmed a possible sighting by R. Whelan, a forestry employee, made some two years ago. Absent from sightings were Green Catbird *Ailuroedus crassirostris*, Noisy Pitta *Pitta versicolor* and Rose - crowned Fruit - Dove *Ptilinopus regina*, regularly sighted in the larger areas of natural vegetation remaining in the late 1940's. There were no large mixed flocks, that typically fed on fruiting trees in the past, and numbers of many species are greatly reduced. There appears to be a marked increase in the numbers of Lewin's Honeyeater *Meliphaga lewinii*, Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis* and Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank S.G. Lane for his helpful comments on a draft of this paper and his advice when he visited the area.

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APPENDIX 1

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST FOR MARBLETOP

Grey Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*. A single bird sighted flying through the Tower clearing on 31 January 1990.

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*. A pair regularly sighted soaring over the canopy.

Australian Brush-turkey *Alectura lathami*. Common, with seven active nest mounds. There is extensive predation of mounds by Monitors.

Black-breasted Button-quail *Turnix melanogaster*. Sightings of a pair on 26 March 1989 and single birds on 14 August 1989 and 22 March 1990.

Bush Thick-knee *Burhinus magnirostris*. A single bird on the roadway 200 m below the Tower at 0430 h on 19 February 1989.

Wompoo Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus magnificus*. Uncommon. Occasional sightings of three to eight birds flying over the canopy.

Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus*. Two sightings: groups of six and ten over the canopy in October and December 1989.

Brown Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia amboinensis*. Five sightings of one or two birds. In the 1940's flocks of 50 or more were a common sight feeding along wooded edges in autumn and winter.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*. One sighting of two birds in the cleared area at the Tower in October 1989.

Bar-shouldered Dove *Geopelia humeralis*. One group of eight in a clearing at the Tower in September 1988; later sightings of single birds. Numbers greatly reduced since the early 1950's.

Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*. Four sightings, three being of birds netted in October 1988 and December 1989. Numbers have declined since the 1950's.

Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*. Two to six sighted on each visit. Numbers were greatly reduced in the late 1940's by shooting and clearing. There is now a marked build up in numbers sighted along tracks through pine plantations and remnant forest.

Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*. Sighted twice: three and six birds in swift passage along the roadway.

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*. Occasional sightings of two to six feeding on ripening fruit and berries in the upper canopy.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cuculus pyrrhophanus*. A single record of an immature bird netted on 28 December 1989.

Shining Bronze - Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus*. A single bird sighted in May 1989. A bird of the race *lucidus* netted on 30 August 1989.

Common Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea*. Heard calling regularly from September to February. A female on 29 August 1989 was the only sighting.

Southern Boobook *Ninox novaeseelandiae*. Heard calling before daybreak in March and from September to December. One flushed on 22 March 1990.

Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*. One netted before daybreak on 22 March 1990.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*. Small numbers hawking over the canopy from October to January increasing to hundreds on overcast days in February and March. At 0700 h on 17 March 1989 pairs were flying together: not hawking, but slowing down then accelerating, rolling and spiralling in pairs, changing positions when about 0.5 m apart, then crossing close to each other.

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*. On two occasions two birds landed on the Tower.

Tree Martin *Cecropis nigricans*. Two birds sighted twice in December 1989 hawking over the canopy.

Fairy Martin *Cecropis ariel*. At least 50 hawking over the canopy in March 1989. Sightings of small numbers from October to February.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*. One netted on 24 August 1988. Occasional pairs noted in the cleared area.

Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris*. A pair sighted on 19 November 1988, and two juveniles banded on 21 January 1989. One of the banded birds was retrapped on 24 November 1989 showing a brood patch, indicating that there is a small breeding population in the summer.

Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*. The first sighting involved a single male on 22 October 1988. Subsequently it has been netted in the months of January, March, October and November. The only known previous sighting of this species in the district was made by S.G. Lane, 8 km to the west, on 15 September 1986.

White's Thrush *Zoothera dauma*. A single bird netted on 28 December 1989. This is the first known sighting in the area.

- Rose Robin** *Petroica rosea*. A female netted on 26 April 1990.
- Eastern Yellow Robin** *Eopsaltria australis*. Common. Breeding pairs appear to be resident from May to October, breeding from June to September. The majority of birds netted from November to March were immatures in varying stages of moult into adult plumage.
- Crested Shrike-tit** *Falcunculus frontatus*. A single sighting of a bird netted on 21 October 1988.
- Golden Whistler** *Pachycephala pectoralis*. Common. Regularly sighted and netted in all months. Juvenile plumaged birds noted from October to March.
- Rufous Whistler** *Pachycephala rufiventris*. A single record of a brown bird netted on 22 October 1988.
- Little Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla megarhyncha*. Sighted from August to December. Breeding from October to December.
- Grey Shrike-thrush** *Colluricincla harmonica*. Heard or sighted each visit. Breeding in August and September.
- Black-faced Monarch** *Monarcha melanopsis*. A summer visitor arriving in October and departing about March. Breeding in November and December.
- Spectacled Monarch** *Monarcha trivirgatus*. A summer visitor arriving about October and present to February. A juvenile netted on 31 January 1990.
- White-eared Monarch** *Monarcha leucotis*. The first known sighting in the district was of a single bird netted on 24 December 1988. A second bird, showing a brood patch, was netted on 26 April 1990.
- Rufous Fantail** *Rhipidura rufifrons*. Single birds or pairs have been sighted in all months except January and February.
- Grey Fantail** *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. Sighted singly or in pairs in all months. Loose groups of up to six birds in March and April. Immature birds sighted in November.
- Eastern Whipbird** *Psophodes olivaceus*. There are two to four resident pairs in the area. Juveniles noted in July and August.
- Variiegated Fairy - wren** *Malurus lambertii*. A family group regularly sighted in undergrowth at the fringes of wooded country.
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- Large-billed Scrubwren** *Sericornis magnirostris*. Common. Present throughout the year, breeding in September and October.
- White-browed Scrubwren** *Sericornis frontalis*. Banded adults appear to be in residence from May to October, breeding in July and August. Birds banded between November and January appear to be first year birds on the move.
- Brown Gerygone** *Gerygone mouki*. Single birds netted on 10 September 1988 and 22 February 1990. Also sighted in spring and summer, breeding in October and November.
- Brown Thornbill** *Acanthiza pusilla*. Small numbers noted in all months. Breeding in August and September.
- Noisy Friarbird** *Philemon corniculatus*. Occasional pairs in summer feeding at the Tower clearing.
- Lewin's Honeyeater** *Meliphaga lewinii*. Common throughout the year. Greatest numbers were present from August to November and in March and April. Breeding in October and November.
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater** *Lichenostomus chrysops*. A single bird netted on 17 February 1989.
- Brown Honeyeater** *Lichmera indistincta*. Two sightings of single birds on 21 January 1989 and 23 February 1990.
- Eastern Spinebill** *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*. Regular sightings of single birds and pairs throughout the year. Breeding in November and December.
- Scarlet Honeyeater** *Myzomela sanguinolenta*. Occasional sightings of single birds and pairs. Breeding in December 1989.
- Mistletoebird** *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*. Regularly sighted and heard. Birds netted from October to December were in breeding condition.
- Spotted Pardalote** *Pardalotus punctatus*. A resident pair near the Tower from July to September. Observed taking nesting material into holes in sloping ground in July 1988 and July 1989.
- Striated Pardalote** *Pardalotus striatus*. Birds of the black-headed form were sighted on two occasions at the Tower clearing in October and November 1989.
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Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*. Regularly sighted in small numbers in Lantana at the Tower clearing. A breeding population of 20 to 40 netted in November and December each year were regularly foraging through the clearing.

Red-browed Firetail *Emblema temporalis*. Regular sightings of one or two at the Tower clearing. Breeding in December 1989.

Figbird *Sphecotheres viridis*. A flock of at least 40 passed through the Tower clearing on 23 March 1990.

Regent Bowerbird *Sericulus chrysocephalus*. Regular sightings of two to ten birds. Numbers have declined greatly since the 1940's. Data from the netted birds indicate that breeding takes place in November and December.

Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus*. A female netted on 10 September 1988. This is the only sighting I have made in this locality since 1952.

Pied Butcherbird *Cracticus nigrogularis*. Birds regularly use the Lookout Tower as a song perch and resting place when present in the area.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*. Birds regularly use the Lookout Tower as a song perch and resting place.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*. Occasional sightings of one or two passing through the canopy. A breeding pair resident in the summer of 1988/89.

Torresian Crow *Corvus orru*. One or two visit the cleared area at the Tower, foraging around the wooded edges nearby.

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OBITUARY**GLEN M. STORR (1921-1990)**

There have been many important biologists in Australia but few that have been outstanding. Glen Storr was of eminence. By dint of effort, he changed our knowledge of Australian birds and reptiles. Storr was a prolific worker. In a professional career that did not begin in earnest until he was 40, he published over 200 papers and books. Sadly Glen Storr passed away at his home in Perth on 26 June 1990.

Glen was born in Adelaide on 22 December 1921. In 1939, he joined the South Australian Lands Department as a cadet surveyor. During the Second World War, he enlisted in the A.I.F. and served in New Guinea and Queensland. In 1947 he became a licensed Land Surveyor. His interest in Queensland birds was kindled during a two week holiday to north Queensland in 1948. He ended up staying for a year working around Laura and Cooktown. In 1952, he met Dom Serventy and worked with him on Short-tailed Shearwaters in the Bass Strait. Serventy encouraged him to pursue a career in biology and to give up surveying. Storr commenced a degree in biological science at the University of Western Australia in 1953 and was awarded First Class Honours in 1957 for his research on the nutrition of Quokkas on Rottnest Island. In 1962, he was appointed Assistant Curator of Vertebrates, Western Australian Museum. When the Curator, the well-known ornithologist Gerlof Mees, returned to Holland in 1963, Storr assumed the position. In 1965, he became Curator of Ornithology and Herpetology, a position he fulfilled until his retirement in 1986.

Storr's contribution to ornithology was immense. He published over 70 papers on birds. Of particular note were his regional works on the species and their distributions in Western Australia. But more influential were his state-wide reviews of the Northern Territory and Queensland. His 'List of Queensland birds' in 1973 met with acclaim. This meticulous work cut through many taxonomic, nomenclatural and distributional problems that faced workers on Australian birds. Not only did the list solve problems, it focused attention on areas for fruitful investigation. For Queensland birdwatchers, it was a godsend. The detail on distributions of residents and records of vagrants was encyclopedic. Undoubtedly, the work led to a renaissance in knowledge of Queensland birds and their whereabouts. Articles in *Sunbird* in the 1970s are testament to the renewed interest.

By night and at home, Storr worked on birds, but by day he studied reptiles. Storr's contribution to herpetology is staggering. From 1960, he discovered

and described over 180 species of reptiles! He made Australian herpetology: so much of what we know about our lizards and snakes is due to his work. I knew him more in this field. His capacity for work and his pace of research, in spite of ill health since 1970, had to be witnessed to be believed. With my own research on skins, he was generous, helpful and ever encouraging. I found him a learned and cultured man with a penetrating intellect and with a very human passion for cricket and football.

Storr was a great biologist. But where were the accolades from the scientific community? It is a sad fact of biology that few taxonomists, those people who discover and tell us what species we have, ever receive acclaim. In fact, they are looked down upon. In biological departments in universities throughout Australia, the techniques of taxonomy are very rarely taught nowadays. But times are changing. In the present climate of public concern for the future of the wildlife of our planet, it is only a matter of time before Glen Storr's effort is seen as a grand endeavour. In the coming years, we may not win the fight against extinction of our vertebrate fauna, but, because of Storr's work, we will know what will be lost if we do not try.

The following is a list of Glen Storr's bird publications compiled from a list of papers prepared by his friend and colleague, Ron Johnstone of the Western Australian Museum:

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Storr, G.M. Southern Eyre Peninsula Birds. *S. Aust. Orn.* 18: 54.

1948

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1951

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