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PARADISE PARROT *Psephotus pulcherrimus*:
NOTES ON AUSTRALIAN HOLDINGS, DISTRIBUTION AND
UNDER-WING PLUMAGE PATTERN

Donald P. Vernon

Rumours that Queensland Museum staff have collected specimens of Paradise Parrots in recent years are without foundation, although two good cabinet skins and a good mounted specimen were acquired. The holdings of this species in the Queensland Museum now are four male skins, two female skins and three mounted specimens. Of the latter, one male is on exhibition and one male and one female are stored with the reference collection.

A collection of 89 bird cabinet skins and a number of insects were donated on 1 May 1964 by Charles F. Illidge, a son of Rowland Illidge. Of the birds, 20 were destroyed because of insect infestation. Two of the 69 retained are adult male Paradise Parrots in good plumage. There were no labels on the specimens so I discussed their origin with Charles Illidge of Mount Gravatt, Brisbane. Following this, his daughter, Mrs Joan Hill of Surfer's Paradise, Queensland, lent me a note-book which contained a "List of birds Shot near Gympie" but no reference to the two birds in question. Pages were missing from the quarto-sized note-book, so other lists may have been destroyed.

Rowland Illidge, 1851-1929 was a keen field

naturalist especially interested in entomology and ornithology. For many years he contributed papers to the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland, the Journal of the Queensland Naturalist's Club and other publications. During 1918-19 he was engaged on a part-time basis to register the Sir William McGregor collection of New Guinea anthropology and ornithology in the Queensland Museum. A list of his publications was published by Tryon (1929) and a biographical note was published by Marks (1963).

In a paper "The Blue-faced Lorilet, also called Coxen's Fig Parrakeet", Illidge (1924, p.113) stated "On a previous occasion I had shown skins of the Paradise Parrot, under name of Beautiful Grass Parrakeet, and made remarks as to the approaching extinction of that superb species. Coxen's Lorilet was never a common species, but the Paradise Parrot was about 40 years ago or more back. The latter is, despite the find of a few specimens in a certain district of Queensland on the verge of complete extinction." This 'certain district' of Queensland probably meant the Burnett area, for the species was photographed at the nesting site in 1922 by C.H.H. Jerrard "about 150 miles north of the capital city (Brisbane) and not far from the point where Professor Richard Semon of Jena saw specimens in 1891", (Chisholm, 1922, p.9).

This assertion by Illidge that *P. pulcherrimus* was a common species differs from Forshaw's (1969 p.231) statement that "Probably it was never common and as a species was on the decline prior to the advent of European settlement". According to Chisholm (1922 p.16) Illidge stated that "I did not regard *Psephotus pulcherrimus* as a rare bird in the Brisbane district, though it was very local. Between Kelvin Grove and Bowen Bridge, on some open forest country, I frequently saw the birds, usually in

pairs, but sometimes in little parties of perhaps half dozen." This area cited by Illidge, is only two to three miles north of the centre of Brisbane city and one can surmise this as a possible locality for the two male specimens now in the Queensland Museum.

Regarding distribution, I am unable to agree with Forshaw's (1969, p.231) suggestion that "...Gilbert may have mis-identified the Golden-shouldered Parrot *P. chrysopterygius* which was described by Gould thirteen years later". Gilbert, who was second to Leichhardt on the Port Essington Expedition, wrote in his diary for 17 June 1844 "I was surprised today to meet with the new *Platycercus* of the Downs a species which has not been observed with us since leaving Deception Camp on Comet Creek". This entry was recorded while the party was in the Mitchell River area near the Gulf of Carpentaria. On 20 June he wrote that they were "common" and four days later "The new *Platycercus* I saw in great numbers." For further details see Chisholm (1945 p.185).

It seems to me that, Gilbert, one of the ablest men associated with Australian ornithological fieldwork, is unlikely to have mis-identified *P. pulcherrimus* for *P. chrysopterygius* because of the obvious scarlet as compared with yellow wing covert feathers. By way of corroboration of his keen perception he noted the much more subtle differences between the Brown Tree-creeper, *Climacteris picumnus* and the Black Tree-creeper, *C. melanota*, the latter of which he discovered on 11 June 1844. Two days prior to this, he collected a specimen of the Black-tailed Tree-creeper, *C. melanura* and again his keen perception is revealed by the note in his diary that this species had first been obtained by Bynoe, (who was the

Surgeon of the H.M. Beagle) in the far north of Australia, Chisholm (1945, p.193).

The right wing of specimen Qd Mus. 09876, one of the male birds from the Illidge collection, was opened out for study when loaned to an Australian University zoology department. Later, as sometimes happens with old skins, it separated. To make the most of this mishap, the wing was relaxed, pinned out and dried to show the under-wing colour pattern. A tracing of the wing outline (actual size) was drawn from it, see (Fig.1.).

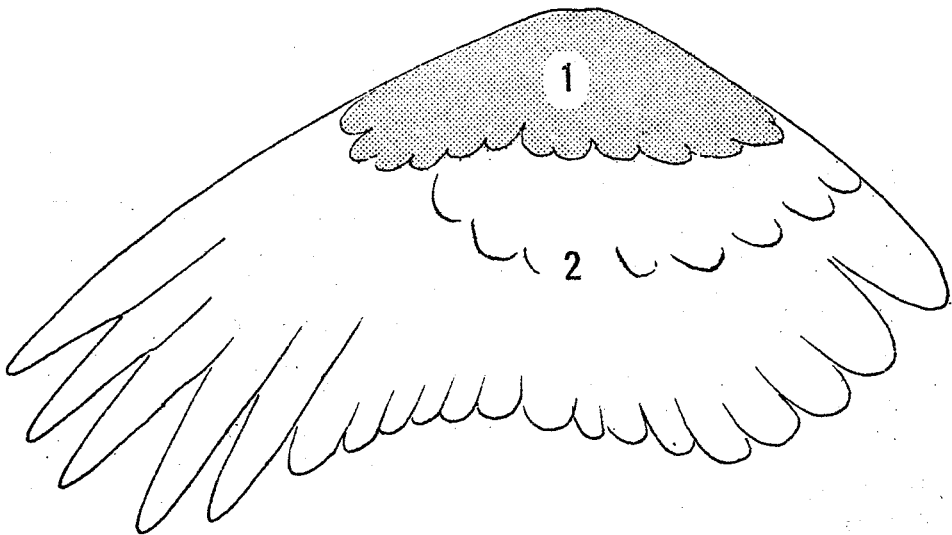


Figure 1. Ventral plumage of right wing of Qd Mus. 09876, with colour notes according to Ridgway Color Standards and Nomenclature (1912).

1. Lesser wing Covert feathers, Ceruleun Blue (Pl. VIII).

2. Primary, Secondary and Major Coverts of the Secondary feathers, Blackish Brown No. 3, (Pl. XLV).

The data from all specimens of *P. pulcherrimus* in the Queensland Museum is given in Table I.

TABLE I

Qld.Mus. No.	Date Registered	Sex	Donor	Locality and Other Data
02879	14.2.1923	Female	Dr H.Kenny	80 miles from Gympie, S.E.Q.
02880	14.2.1923	Male	Dr H.Kenny	80 miles from Gympie, S.E.Q.
011230	10.7.1969	Female		'p. 132'
011231	10.7.1969	Male		'p. 132'
09875	1.5.1964	Male	C.F.Illidge	Collection of R.Illidge.
09876	1.5.1964	Male	C.F.Illidge	Collection of R.Illidge.
011232	10.7.1969	Male		Mounted specimen on display.
011327		Female		Mounted specimen
011578	28.5.1971	Male	B.McGuire	Mounted specimen
01008 (Egg)	1921		Mrs T.P. Lucas	23.1 x 19.7 mm.

It should be noted that 011230 and 011232 have small labels attached which read 'p.132' and this may mean that they were a pair from an unknown early collection or relate to some page in a catalogue or book. Numbers 011231, 09875, 09876 and 011232 are listed as males and 011327 as a female although not sexed in the field by their collectors. However, there is little doubt of sex. No. 01008 may have originated from Coomooboolaroo, Queensland. Several egg clutches (of other Queensland species) from the T. P. Lucas collection in the Queensland Museum,

have as their locality, Coomooboolaroo. It may have been exchanged or purchased from one of the Barnard brothers.

SUMMARY

The lack of reliable data in respect to this now rare Australian parrot is obvious from a study of Table I and Appendix 1, however it seems that as far as Australian museums are concerned, the egg clutch collected by Dudley LeSoeuf on 10 December 1896 is the most-recently collected *P. pulcherrimus* material. Because John Gilbert's sight records seem admissible for the Mitchell River area, probably the 'Cairns district' locality should also be accepted. My conclusion is that the species was not uncommon in the 19th century but fairly widely distributed. Flocks, although in many cases possibly small, probably ranged an area 1000 miles from north to south. The two Illidge specimens and the mounted specimen from McGuire considerably increase the Queensland Museum holdings of this species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement for assistance in the compilation of the Appendix is made to H.J. de S. Disney, Curator of Birds, Australian Museum, Sydney; A.R. McEvey, Curator of Birds, National Museum of Victoria, Melbourne; H.T. Condon, Curator of Birds, South Australian Museum, Adelaide; Dr G.M. Storr, Curator of Birds, Western Australian Museum, Perth and Dr H.J. Frith, Director, Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra. My thanks are also extended to Mr J. S. Robertson of Wellington Point, Queensland, for reading the manuscript.

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- Mr DONALD P. VERNON, *Queensland Museum, Fortitude
Valley, Qld. 4006.*

APPENDIX
DATA FROM SKINS FROM OTHER AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS

Aust. Museum Number	Locality as given on label	Date Coll.	Date Reg.	Sex	Data
017834	Brisbane, Qld.		1912		Purchased from Oobroyde collection
017835	Dawson River, Qld.		1912	Male	Purchased from Oobroyde collection
021244	Darling Downs, Qld.		1912		Purchased from Dr George Hurst
023531	N.S.W. or Qld?		1915		Old collection
023532	N.S.W. or Qld?		1915		Old collection
023535	N.S.W. or Qld?		1915		Old collection
028621	Cairns dist., Qld.	1894	2 July 1926	Male	Donated by Grant Bird coll. committee
033403			July 1933		Donated Miss Bozon, mounted specimen
Al402	Queensland		March 1878	Female	Donated C. Moore
8348A	Moreton Bay, Qld.			Male	Mounted specimen re-moved from exhibition
037632			1944	Male	Purchased Mr Hill, mounted specimen
028412	Cairns dist., N.E. Qld.	1894	1 July 1926	Male	Donated by Grant Bird Committee, Skin missing
043861			3 July 1971	Male	Donated by John Hallstrom from his father, Sir Edward Hallstrom's estate, 3 June 1970, mounted specimen

<u>Nat. Mus. of Victoria No.</u>					
11449	N.E. Australia	Male			Donated J.A.Kershaw collection
B3196	Queensland	Male	20 Aug 1941		
R7262	Qld (?Brisbane)	Male			Purchased K. Broad-bent 1866
R7263	Qld (?Brisbane)	imm. Male or Female			Purchased K. Broad-bent 1866
37145	Moreton Bay, Qld	Female	11 April 1877 (date of receipt)		
<u>South Aust. Mus. No.</u>					
B24316	Moreton Bay, Qld	Male			Specimen exchanged with National Museum of Victoria on 2 May 1952, formerly Nat. Mus. Vic. No. 3025
<u>Seal Park Zoo & Museum Buderim Queensland (W.R. Horne)</u>					
No number		Male			This specimen mounted by Joseph Smiles, Newcastle, N.S.W. 1880-1883 purchased by W.R. Horne

DATA FROM EGGS

<u>Aust. Mus. No.</u>				
025107	Coomooboolaroo, Dawson R., Qld.			Coll. by George Barnard 0.91 x 0.75; 0.9 x 0.78, 0.87 x 0.72"
Clutch 3				
<u>Nat. Mus. of Victoria</u>				
Set No. 357	Duaringa, near Rockhampton Qld	10 Dec 1896		Specimen AO.79 x 0.68 B 0.85 x 0.67 C 0.83 x 0.69 D 0.86 x 0.70 E 0.82 x 0.69" Coll by D. Le Souef.
Clutch 5 (H.L. White coll)				
No. 429 Nat. Mus. coll. Clutch 2 (?)	Coomooboolaroo Stn., Duaringa Qld.	1883(?)		21.7 x 18mm, 21.5 x 18mm. Two eggs collected from ant hillock by Barnard Bros., from A.J. Campbell coll. All eggs in Nat. Mus. coll. are off-white with blotchiness.

BREEDING OF WATER BIRDS IN
AN INLAND QUEENSLAND SWAMP

C.M. Broadley, A.C. Cameron and K. Williams

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that, over much of inland Queensland birds have little regard for the calendar. Nesting in particular is governed by rainfall, which is erratic and unpredictable. Heavy rains will induce birds to breed in any month and when climatic conditions are adverse, several years may elapse between breeding attempts (Keast and Marshall, 1954; Immelmann, 1963). Heavy rains, through their affect on vegetation, will generate an increase in food and shelter - the two basic necessities for the successful rearing of young. The availability of food, nesting sites and nest building materials are 'ultimate factors' governing breeding. However, many birds start to breed before the effects of rain have caused any perceptible alteration to the surroundings and Immelmann (1963) has argued that rain itself has a stimulating effect on gonadal development. It is important that the breeding of birds is documented for this inland area and we present here a report on the avifauna of Goombi Swamp following the very wet summer of 1970/71. The authors visited the area during various periods of April 1971.

THE AREA

Very heavy rainfall was recorded on some parts of the western Darling Downs from November 1970 to early February 1971. Near Chinchilla, almost 32 inches fell in a period of 15 weeks, after a drought which had lasted for

ten years. Creeks, swamps and lagoons spilled over and the growth of ground cover was prolific. Birds which made an abortive attempt to nest in the spring of 1970 now bred prolifically. Goombi Swamp, on the property of Mr G. Scouller a few miles south-west of Chinchilla, became a giant nursery for many kinds of water birds. According to Mr Scouller, the last rains fell four years ago but no breeding took place and the swamp had been dry since that time. He stated that it was nine years since large numbers of birds had bred in the swamp.

During April 1971, the swamp was about one and a half miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide (c. 100 acres), with an average depth of two feet. Eucalypts (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) grew in and around the swamp, while paperbarks (*Melaleuca bracteata* or *M. pubescens*?) bordered the western side. Grasses and reeds were luxuriant in some places and a variety of aquatic plants grew in the water. *Ottelia ovifolia* was flowering over much of the water surface. The vegetation had been cleared at the southern end of the swamp. Here, a grader had formed two canals and the water in these was about three feet deep (see Fig. 1).

THE BIRDS

The paperbarks on the western side of the swamp grew on small outcrops of higher ground which were surrounded by water. In these trees was a breeding colony of approximately 50 pairs of White Ibis. The nests were mostly within four to six feet of the water surface. The earlier nests, placed in the centre of the low vegetation, had fairly large young or had already been vacated, while later nests around the perimeter of the colony still con-

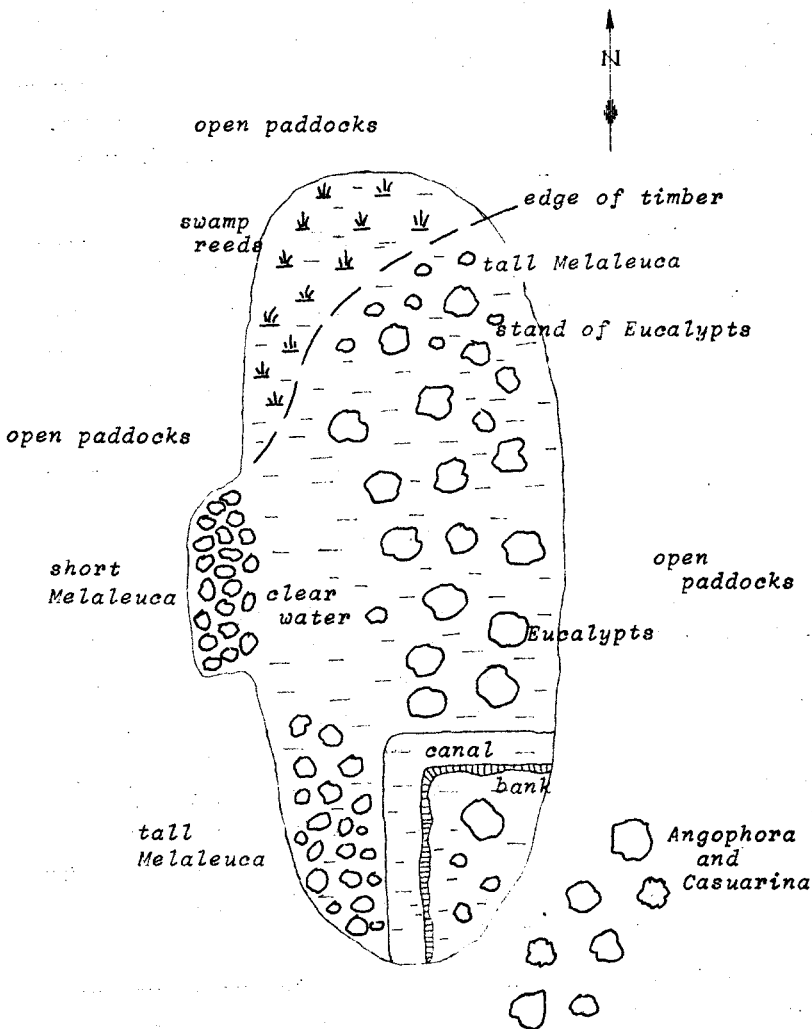


Figure 1. Plan of Goombi Swamp.

tained eggs towards the end of the month. It appeared that, in most instances, two chicks per nest were being raised. This species did not breed elsewhere in the swamp.

These paperbarks also contained several Nankeen Night Heron nests. These nests were more difficult to find. Towards the end of the month most nests were empty and many juvenile birds were seen feeding in the swamp. In general, these nests were at a higher level in the trees than those of the White Ibis.

Early in the month the paperbarks had been occupied by a camp of about 1000 Little Red Flying Foxes (*Pteropus scapulatus*). These appear to feed on the blossom of *Eucalyptus* and *Angophora*. Towards the end of the month, when only paperbarks were in flower, the camp had shifted out of the area.

A pair of Black Swan had bred in the long grass on the north-eastern edge of the swamp, and cygnets were now seen with the parent birds. Grey Teal and Pink-eared Ducks both had young on the water. The Grey Teal were very numerous while only about 30 Pink-eared Duck were seen. Ducklings of the latter were more shy than those of the Grey Teal and usually stayed close to the parent birds. Grey Teal ducklings would fearlessly swim and feed within six feet of an observer. One nest of a Pink-eared Duck was located in a tree fork about three feet above the water level. The nest contained eggs which were surrounded by down. Black Duck and Little Grebe were also seen with young. A small gaggle of Wood Duck was sighted but no young were in evidence.

Except in the cleared area, tall eucalypts grew throughout the swamp. One of these had been stripped of

its foliage by a lone koala, which had been there probably since the swamp filled several months before. White, Plumed and Little Egrets, White-necked and White-faced Herons, Darters, Black, Little Black, Pied and Little Pied Cormorants, and Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbills were all breeding in these trees. Individual trees supported nests of several species. The highest nests, about 50-60 feet above the water, were those of the Spoonbills or White Egrets. Generally the lower nests were those of the Little Black Cormorants and, less often, the Little Pied Cormorants. These two species were nesting mostly between 15 and 20 feet above the water. The stratification of the nesting species was quite marked and the following is an approximation of the levels, although there was much overlap.

1. 30-60 feet. White Egret, Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbill.
2. 15-40 feet. White-necked Heron (sometimes on top), Plumed Egret and Little Egret.
3. 20-40 feet. Black Cormorant and Pied Cormorant.
4. 15-30 feet. Little Pied Cormorant and Little Black Cormorant.

A Darter was found nesting on a horizontal branch about 55 feet above the water. There were no other nests in this particular tree.

The young of many species were found in large groups perching on fallen logs in the middle of the swamp. Groups of 30 Little Egrets or up to 50 Little Pied or Little Black Cormorants were a common sight. Adult birds were still bringing food to the young birds in these flocks. Although several species of small fish were observed in this swamp, it appeared that some of the cormorants were flying to nearby streams and dams to gather food.

In most of the eucalypts, Budgerigars were nesting or had nested. Nestlings were found struggling in the water below the nests and drowning must have contributed to the juvenile mortality of Budgerigars. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were plentiful and noisy, particularly in the morning and late afternoon. Cockatiels were present in small flocks (up to eight), usually in the top branches of dead trees in and around the cleared parts of the swamp. Small numbers of Galahs appeared throughout the day and frequently kept company with the Cockatiels.

Predatory birds were active in the area. A pair of Grey Goshawks, Brown Goshawks and Little Falcons were all seen taking Budgerigars as these small birds wheeled and circled in flocks amongst the trees. Wedgetailed and Whistling Eagles were frequently seen and a pair of the latter nested in a very tall solitary eucalypt at the southern end of the swamp. At the northern end of the swamp a solitary Swamp Harrier was seen. Nankeen Kestrels were particularly numerous in the surrounding countryside.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Such a congregation of breeding birds is found periodically in inland Queensland. Opportunistic breeding is one factor that has helped these species adapt to an erratic climate. Opportunistic breeding combined with mobility is a characteristic of birds of the more arid areas. Dispersal of birds from Goombi Swamp following this particularly good breeding 'season' will maintain the various species in good numbers over a considerable area until suitable conditions once again permit successful breeding.

Members of the Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club

have been keeping a close watch of this swamp. It is hoped that a further report will be made on this area after the breeding is completed and that breeding in Goombi Swamp will be fully documented in the future.

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APPENDIX

A list of birds recorded from Goombi Swamp or its immediate environs during April 1971. Those species known to be breeding in the area at the time are marked with an asterisk.

- | | |
|--|---|
| *Little Grebe, <i>Podiceps novaehollandiae</i> | *White Egret, <i>Egretta alba</i> |
| *Little Black Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i> | *Little Egret, <i>E. garzetta</i> |
| *Black Cormorant, <i>P. carbo</i> | *Plumed Egret, <i>E. intermedia</i> |
| *Pied Cormorant, <i>P. varius</i> | *Nankeen Night Heron, <i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i> |
| *Little Pied Cormorant, <i>P. melanoleucos</i> | *White Ibis, <i>Threskiornis molucca</i> |
| *Australian Darter, <i>Anhinga rufa</i> | Straw-necked Ibis, <i>T. spinicollis</i> |
| *White-necked Heron, <i>Ardea pacifica</i> | *Royal Spoonbill, <i>Platalea regia</i> |
| *White-faced Heron, <i>A. novaehollandiae</i> | *Yellow-billed Spoonbill, <i>P. flavipes</i> |

- *Black Swan, *Cygnus atratus*
 *Black Duck, *Anas superciliosa*
 *Grey Teal, *A. gibberifrons*
 *Pink-eared Duck, *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*
 Wood Duck, *Chenonetta jubata*
 *Whistling Eagle, *Haliastur sphenurus*
 Grey Goshawk, *Accipiter novae-hollandiae*
 Brown Goshawk, *A. fasciatus*
 Wedge-tailed Eagle, *Aquila audax*
 Spotted Harrier, *Circus assimilis*
 Swamp Harrier, *C. approximans*
 Little Falcon, *Falco longipennis*
 Nankeen Kestrel, *F. cenchroides*
 Brown Hawk, *F. berigora*
 Brolga, *Grus rubicunda*
 Dusky Moorhen, *Gallinula tenebrosa*
 *Coot, *Fulica atra*
 Spur-winged Plover, *Vanellus miles*
 Peaceful Dove, *Geopelia striata*
 *Crested Pigeon, *Ocyphaps lophotes*
 Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, *Cacatua galerita*
 Galah, *Eolophus roseicapillus*
 Cockatiel, *Nymphicus hollandicus*
 Pale-headed Rosella, *Platycercus adscitus*
 *Budgerigar, *Melopsittacus undulatus*
 Owllet-Nightjar, *Aegotheles cristatus*
 Laughing Kookaburra, *Dacela gigas*
 Grey-crowned Babbler, *Pomatostomus temporalis*
 Brown Flycatcher, *Microeca leucophaea*
 Willy Wagtail, *Rhipidura leucophrys*
 Restless Flycatcher, *Seisura inquieta*
 Mistletoe-bird, *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*
 White-plumed Honeyeater, *Meliphaga penicillata*
 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, *Acanthagenys rufogularis*
 Double-barred Finch, *Steganopleura bichenovii*
 Apostle-bird, *Struthidea cinerea*
 Peewee, *Grallina hypoleuca*
 White-breasted Woodswallow, *Artamus leucorhynchus*
 Pied Butcherbird, *Craicticus quoyi*
 Grey Butcherbird, *C. torquatus*
 Australian Crow, *Corvus cecillae*

S H O R T C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

LARGE CLUTCH SIZES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

On August 20th 1967, at Warri Gate on the Queensland-New South Wales border north of Tibooburra, I found and photographed a nest of the Brown Songlark (*Cinclorhamphus cruralis*) which contained five eggs. The normal clutch in south-east Queensland appears to be three, rarely four.

A friend of mine in South Australia told me he saw seven eggs in a nest of this species in the same area that year. In the same general area, a nest of Banded Whiteface (*Aphelocephala nigricincta*) was found containing four eggs. The usual number for this species is two or three.

As the breeding of birds in this area follows good rain, regardless of season, the birds frequently wait several years between adequate falls. It appears that some species have adapted to this by laying larger than usual clutches to maintain the population at times when no breeding is possible (McGillp, 1924; Keast, 1959). This seems a reasonable explanation for these abnormally large clutches in the Brown Songlark and Banded Whiteface.

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- Mr C.A.C. CAMERON, 'Callitris', c/- 'Rockwood', Chinchilla, Q.4413.

AN UNUSUAL NEST OF THE YELLOW-BREASTED SUNBIRD

On August 13th 1970 my wife and I located a large number of Yellow-breasted Sunbirds (*Nectarinia jugularis*) feeding in a suburban garden in Cairns. The owners of the house invited us to view the nest of a pair of sunbirds on

her verandah. The nest was suspended from a miniature clothes hoist about two and one-half metres from the verandah floor. The female bird was incubating two eggs. She left the nest when we approached, but returned shortly afterwards, while we were still there. The nest was unusual in that it was of open construction rather than domed with a side entrance. I have subsequently checked the R.A.O.U. nest records scheme data on the Yellow-breasted Sunbird. Unfortunately, the record cards do not state the architectural design of the nest, although the situation of the nest site is described. Mrs B. Gill of Innisfail, North Queensland, who has supplied the majority of the R.A.O.U. sunbird nest records has informed me by personal communication that she has never seen a sunbird nest of open construction. It is interesting to note that some of Mrs Gill's nests were in covered situations, verandahs and outside toilets being especially favoured.

Mr D. Thomas, who organises the R.A.O.U. nest record scheme, informs me that in his experience the architectural design of the nest of a particular species is normally invariant and for this reason this information is not required on the record cards.

Dr O.M.G. NEWMAN, 30 Stoke Street, New Town, Tasmania 7008.

A SIGHT RECORD OF THE LESSER CRESTED TERN
AT STRADBROKE ISLAND

At approximately 11.30 on May 11, 1971 a group of gulls, terns and waders were noted on a sand-spit about one mile south of Amity Point on North Stradbroke Island, Queensland.

Closer inspection from a range of approximately 75 m with a 25 x 60 telescope revealed that twelve of the terns were Lesser Crested Terns, *Sterna bengalensis*. They were resting intermingled with Crested Terns, *S. bergii*, and so afforded an excellent opportunity for comparison.

The following field characteristics were noted in comparison with *S. bergii*:-

1. Bright orange bill compared with the greenish-yellow of *S. bergii*;
2. noticeably smaller stature;
3. shorter tarsi;
4. smoother even grey appearance to mantle.

One bird of each species took off from the group and together flew past me when the smaller wingspan of the Lesser Crested Tern was clearly seen.

Moreton Bay is apparently close to the southern limit of this species and its status has hitherto been considered as rare in these waters. I suspect that it may be more common than previously thought for two reasons; firstly a general lack of sea bird observers in the area, and the relative inaccessibility of the barrier islands of Moreton Bay. In addition the species could be overlooked when with Crested Terns, or casually mistaken for that species.

It is suggested that local observers keep a look-out for *S. bengalensis*, so that its status here can be more accurately assessed.

Mr I. FIEN, 61 Highlands Street, Wavell Heights, Q. 4012.

UNUSUAL ALARM CALLS OF THE NOISY MINER

While riding in the bush in April 1970, my son and I heard some Noisy Miners (*Myzantha melanocephala*) giving unusual alarm calls. A Grey Butcherbird also was involved. They were obviously occasioned by an airborne predator, which seemed to be moving around in some thick timber about 200 yards away. Each time it flushed, the first few Miner notes sounded like 'Goshawk'. However, the overtones of panic soon gave way to something more like the angry, scolding notes which usually mean 'Owl'.

On investigation it turned out to be a Goshawk. It was carrying something, which it dropped after I had flushed it a couple of times, and which proved to be the partly eaten remains of an immature Apostle-bird (*Struthidea cinerea*).

The Miners had correctly identified the Goshawk with their opening notes. Then, seeing that it was feeding and not hunting, they signalled 'Unwelcome and hostile enemy, not dangerous at the moment'. No wonder we were puzzled!

Mr A.C. CAMERON, 'Rockwood', Chinchilla, Queensland 4413.

L I T E R A T U R E

INDEX TO CURRENT AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL RESEARCH compiled and edited by Douglas D. Dow for the Field Investigation Committee of the R.A.O.U., 1971. Melbourne: Royal Australian Ornithologists Union. Pp. 112, Price (including postage) \$1.75.

This book tells you the individuals and insti-

tutions working on Australian birds, and the questions they are asking about them. It results from an extensive distribution of questionnaires to individuals and institutions throughout the world and its editor is to be commended for his thoroughness.

The index is arranged by surnames of contributing ornithologists and each entry contains the person's address, their research interests, the species being studied (both scientific and common names) and descriptions of research projects in progress. These projects make stimulating reading.

The usefulness of the index is enhanced by the clarity of lay-out and by careful cross-indexing. As appendices there are - an index to orders and families under study; an alphabetical index to common names; an index to research interests and types of investigations; a regional index to contributors; additional sources of information; and publications containing the results of research.

Every serious student of Australian birdlife will want one.

Don Morris

N O T I C E

XVI INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS Preliminary Notice

The International Ornithological Committee agreed at the end of the XV International Ornithological Congress in The Hague, Netherlands, that the next Congress

would be held in Australia in 1974. Professor J. Dorst was appointed President. The Australian invitation had been proffered jointly by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union and the Australian Academy of Science.

The Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union appointed Dr H.J. Frith as Secretary-General and an Australian Advisory Committee has been formed. The congress will be held in the Australian National University in Canberra in the period 12 August to 17 August 1974. A programme of scientific sessions, major and minor excursions and ornithological exhibits will be organized.

Applications for membership will be accepted until March 1, 1974. Applications for the presentation of papers and for arranging Specialists' Meetings should reach the Secretary-General not later than February 1, 1974. It is probable that, apart from those presented by invitation in a Symposium, there will be some selection of the papers that are actually read. Accordingly it is essential that each offer of a paper should be accompanied by a summary of about 200 words.

Information regarding the XVI International Ornithological Congress can be had from -

The Secretary-General,
XVI International Ornithological Congress,
P.O. Box 84,
Lyneham, A.C.T.,
AUSTRALIA. 2602