

# Canberra bird notes

No. 11 April 1971  
Price 25c.

## EDITORIAL

As in most organisations like ours, the onus of work in the Canberra Ornithologists Group - planning lectures and other activities, keeping records and so forth - falls upon the elected Committee. This is as it should be, and I might add that your Committee has acquitted itself well.

But this set-up should not inhibit members from taking a more active part in C.O.G. affairs. As well as attending meetings, they can do this by making suggestions as to any improvements they might wish to see, by proposing new activities and even by coming forward themselves to give talks or show slides at monthly meetings. Lastly - and this is important me as Editor - they should not feel diffident bursting into print, right here on these pages,

The Annual General Meeting and Members' Night June should give the opportunity for more self-expression by members.

Registered at the GPO, Sydney, for transmission by post a periodical, Category (B).

N.S.W. PARKS AND RESERVES - A BIRDLIST

Michael T. Rowe

The list concludes in this issue with the section on passerine species. The first part, dealing with non-passerines, appeared in C.B.N. 10, in January 1971.

The whole bird list is by no means final. As can be seen, the record seems very meagre for some reserves. It is hoped that members visiting these areas will help in filling the gaps by sending in their observations.

Reference Key:-

1. Burrinjuck Waters Park
2. Barren Grounds Nature Reserve
3. The Rock Nature Reserve
4. Kinchega National Park
5. Mount Kaputar National Park
6. Round Hill Nature Reserve
7. Cocopara National Park/Nature Reserve
8. The Warrumbungles National Park
9. The Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve

The number preceding each species name is the official RAOU Checklist number.

|                         | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9 |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| 350 Superb Lyrebird     | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 2 |
| 357 Welcome Swallow     | x  | x  |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  | 2 |
| 358 Whitebacked Swallow |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |   |
| 359 Tree Martin         |    | x  |    | x  |    |    |    | x  |   |
| 360 Fairy Martin        | x  | x  |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  | 2 |
| 361 Grey Fantail        | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 362 Rufous Fantail      | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| 364 Willie Wagtail      | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 365 Leaden Flycatcher   | x  | x  |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | 2 |
| 366 Satin Flycatcher    | x  | x  |    |    | x  |    |    |    |   |
| 369 Restless Flycatcher | x  | x  |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 373 Blackfaced "        |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 2 |
| 377 Jacky Winter        |    | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |   |
| 380 Scarlet Robin       | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  | 2 |
| 381 Redcapped Robin     |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 382 Flame Robin         | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| 384 Rose Robin          | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| 385 Hooded Robin        | x  |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 392 Yellow Robin        | x  | x  | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  | 2 |
| 398 Golden Whistler     | x  | x  |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | 2 |
| 401 Rufous Whistler     | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 402 Red-lore Whistler   |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |   |
| 403 Gilbert Whistler    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |   |
| 405 Olive Whistler      | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| 408 Grey Shrikethrush   | x  |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 415 Magpie Lark         | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | 2 |
| 416 Eastern Shriketit   | x  |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  | 2 |
| 419 Crested Bellbird    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |   |
| 420 Wedgebill           |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |    |   |
| 421 Eastern Whipbird    |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
| 423 Ground Cuckooshrike |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |    |   |
| 424 B/F Cuckooshrike    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | 2 |
| 427 Little Cuckooshrike |    |    |    | x  | x  |    |    | x  | 2 |
| 429 Cicada Bird         |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  | 2 |
| 430 Whitewinged Triller | x  |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | 2 |



|                           | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|---------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 526 Southern Emu-Wren     |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |
| 529 Superb Blue Wren      | x  |    |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |
| 530 Black-backed Wren     |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 534 Blue-&-white Wren     |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    | x  |    |
| 535 Whitebacked Wren      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |
| 537 Purplebacked Wren     |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |    | x  |    |
| 543 Wh/breasted W/swallow |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 544 Masked W/swallow      |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  |    |    |
| 545 Wh/browed W/swall. x  |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 546 Bl/faced W/swallow    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 547 Dusky Woodswallow x   |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 549 Or/winged Sittella x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 555 Brown Treecreeper x   |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 558 W/T Treecreeper x     |    | x  | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |
| 560 Redbrowed Tree/cr.    |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |
| 564 Mistletoe Bird x      |    | x  |    | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 565 Spotted Pardalote x   |    | x  |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |
| 566 Ye/tailed Pardalote   |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 567 Striated Pardalote x  |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  |    | x  |
| 570 Re/browed Pardalote   |    | x  |    | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |
| 573 G/backed Silvereye x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 574 G/breasted S.         |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |    |    |    |
| 578 W/naped Honeyeater x  |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 580 Black-chinned H.      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 583 Brown-headed H.       |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 585 Striped Honeyeater    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 589 Black Honeyeater      |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 591 Eastern Spinebill x   |    | x  |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |
| 593 Tawny-crowned H.      |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 594 Whitefronted H.       |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 598 Painted Honeyeater    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    | x  |
| 603 Regent Honeyeater     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 605 Lewin Honeyeater      |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 608 Singing Honeyeater    |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 613 Fuscous Honeyeater    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 614 Yellowfaced H.        | x  | x  |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |

|                          | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 617 Whiteared H.         | x  | x  |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 619 Yellow-tufted H.     | x  |    |    |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |
| 622 Yellow-plumed H.     |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 623 Yellow-fronted H.    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 625 Whiteplumed H.       | x  |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 630 Crescent H.          | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 631 Yellow-winged H.     | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |
| 632 Whitecheeked H.      |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 634 Noisy Miner          | x  |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 635 Yellow-throated M.   |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |
| 636 Dusky Miner          |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |
| 638 Red Wattlebird       | x  | x  |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |
| 640 Spiny-cheeked H.     |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 641 Bluefaced Honeyeater |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 645 Noisy Friarbird      | x  |    |    | x  |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 646 Little Friarbird     | x  |    |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 647 Pipit                | x  |    |    | x  |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 648 Horsfield Bushlark   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 650 Beautiful Firetail   |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 652 Diamond Firetail     | x  |    |    | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 653 Zebra Finch          |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  |    | x  |    |
| 655 Banded Finch         |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  | x  |
| 661 Plum-headed Finch    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 662 Red-browed Finch     | x  | x  | x  |    | x  |    |    | x  | x  |
| 671 Olivebacked Oriole   |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  | x  |
| 675 Apostle Bird         |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 679 Satin Bowerbird      | x  | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |
| 680 Spotted Bowerbird    |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    | x  |
| 690 Raven/Little Raven   | x  |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 691 Little Crow          |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |    |    |    |
| 693 Whitewinged Chough   | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |

|                      | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 700 Pied Butcherbird |    |    | x  | x  |    | x  | x  | x  |    |
| 702 Grey Butcherbird | x  | x  |    | x  |    | x  | x  | x  | x  |
| 705 B/backed Magpie  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  | x  |    | x  | x  |
| 991 Blackbird        | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 993 Skylark          |    | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 995 House Sparrow    | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    |    |
| 996 Goldfinch        | x  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 999 Starling         | x  |    |    |    |    |    | x  |    | x  |

Addenda (for use by members):-

| <u>Species</u> | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

Burrinjuck Waters Park, Burrinjuck, N.S.W.

PARENTAL FEEDING OF EASTERN SPINBILLEllen M. McCulloch

Observations were made on the feeding rates of Eastern Spinebills Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris at two different nests. Both nest sites were in areas of bushy gardens, with plenty of cover and (one would think) ample supplies of insects.

I did not see any nectar being fed to the young birds in the nest, apart from one possible exception, but I have been told by other observers that this sometimes happens.

Thanks are due to Mr and Mrs S. Nicholson of Ferny Creek and Mr and Mrs G. Tregaskis of Vermont for advising me of the nests and giving me their wholehearted cooperation.

Nest A

October 5, 1969. Two young in nest, eyes closed, grey feathers on back, quills showing on wings. Weather fine, slight cool breeze, 1/8 cloud.

Between 1030 and 1220 hrs the young were fed 31 times. Intervals between feedings ranged from one to ten minutes, averaging 3.93 minute.

Some food could be identified. It comprised eight blowflies Calliphora sp., five other Diptera, one brown caterpillar, one ?slater (Isopoda), one lacewing fly (Neuroptera) and two small Colaeoptera. At one point one of the parents appeared to be regurgitating nectar to the young.

Faecal sacs were collected twice. One was swallowed the other was dropped about 35 feet from the nest. At times, the young were brooded by one or other of the parents. The brooding periods, in minutes, were: 8, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 1, 1

Mean brooding time - 4.6 minutes.

October 11, 1969. The two young, having left the nest the previous day were huddled on a branch. The weather was cold and damp with heavy mist. Between 1435 and 1510 hrs one bird was fed 20 times, the other was fed 13 times. The interval between feeds ranged from one to seven minutes. Mean interval - 3.09 minutes.

On the morning of October 23 both young were in the garden being fed occasionally by the parents. They also drank by themselves from a nectar-feeder. The adults were building a new nest, and courtship feeding was observed.

On November 6 it was reported to me that the two juveniles were still in the area.

#### Nest B

December 22, 1969. Nest contained two young, 2-3 days old covered in grey down with a orange bill and gape. The weather was cold with showers. Between 1541 and 1558 the young were fed twice and brooded for 12 minutes.

December 27, 1969. Fine and warm. Between 0922 and 0950 hrs the young were fed six times and brooded for consecutive periods of one, two and 17 minutes. A lacewing and what looked like a scale insect were the only food items identified.

cont/-

December 28, 1969 Cooler in the evening after a maximum temperature of 101 deg.

Between 1900 and 1945 hrs the young were fed 19 times. The interval between feeds ranged from one to seven minutes, with a mean of 2.56 minutes.

Faecal sacs were removed at 1900 and 1929 hrs. Brooding took place once for seven minutes.

These two young left the nest on December 31. They were seen in the garden on January 10 and February 12, 1970.

6, Bullen Avenue, Mitcham, VIC.

#### COLONIAL NESTING OF WHITE-NECKED HERONS

Alan K. Morris

The following notes are submitted in view of the few breeding records of White-necked Herons Ardea pacifica in the Canberra region.

In February 1964 I moved to Tumut, N.S.W., to take up a position related to quality control at the Tumut Dairy Factory. Opposite the factory site lies the Tumut Town Commons an area of billabongs which fill from the Tumut River, and some swamps which receive water from the adjoining sewage-treatment works. The 202-acre Common has been proclaimed the Riverglade Wildlife Refuge (no. 64) because of its waterfowl values.

On February 23 I observed a White-necked Heron land at a nest in a large Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldensis* located in the centre of the Common. At the time, the tree was standing in water.

The bird raised the feathers on its head and neck and called, and then commenced to feed three large young. A quick inspection revealed that there were four White-necked Herons nests in the tree, while a fifth nest, of larger size and constructed entirely of sticks was occupied by a Brown Hawk Falco berigora.

The heron nests were built of twigs and grass. Each contained three large young, almost fully fledged. Not knowing at the time it was unusual for White-necked Herons to breed in colonies I kept no records as to the siting of the nests. From memory I would say that the tree was approximately 120 feet in height; that all the nests were at least 60 feet above water level and placed towards the extremities of the tree; and they were at least 20 feet apart.

It was rare to see more than one adult feeding young at the colony whenever it was under observation. For instance, on February 27 only one adult was seen to visit the colony during 1½ hours. However, all the young birds appeared to have been successfully reared, and they soon dispersed from the region.

By March 17, only six White-necked Herons were present in the swamp and by April 10 this number had dwindled to a solitary bird.

20 Harrison Street, Old Toongabbie, N.S.W.

Note: The White-necked Heron has nested once near Canberra - in a tree near the Federal Highway in 1968 - but the attempt failed. It is listed as a potential breeding species here (C.B.N. 9, P.18).

Editor

A KEY TO THE FIVE FEMALE 'BROWN' ROBINS  
Tony Stokes

C.B.N. 11

-12-

April 1971

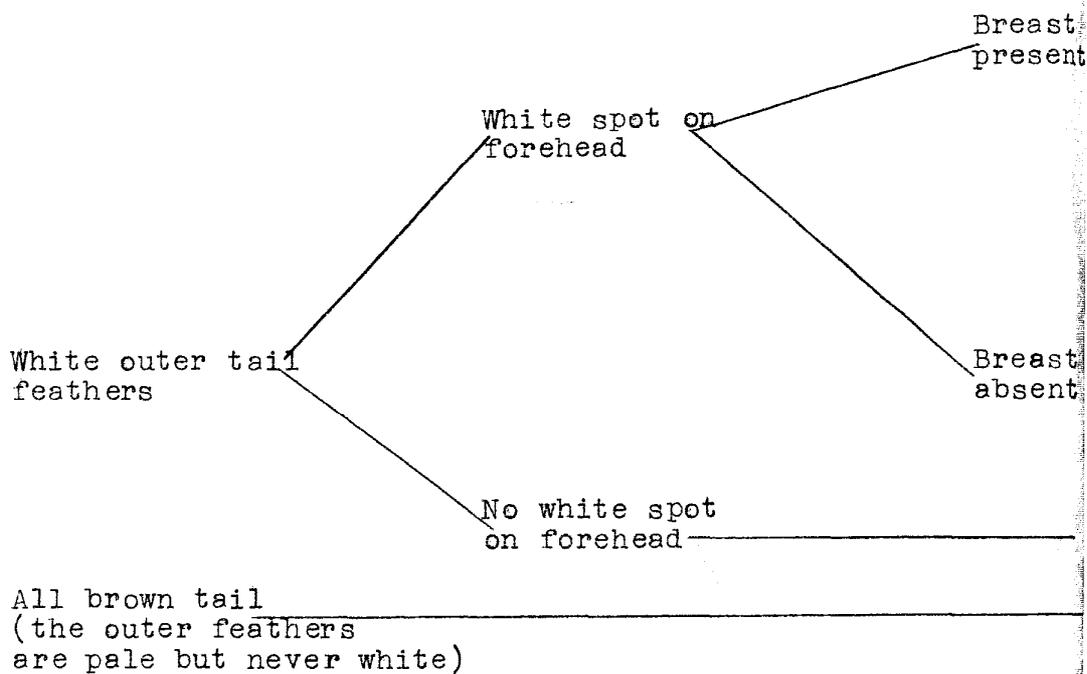
A KEY TO THE FIVE

Tony

First Choice

Second Choice

Third C



A KEY TO THE FIVE FEMALE 'BROWN' ROBINS

Tony Stokes

C.B.N. 11

-13-

April 1971

FIVE FEMALE 'BROWN' ROBINS

Tony Stokes

| <u>Third Choice</u>      | <u>Fourth Choice</u>   | <u>Species</u> |
|--------------------------|--|----------------|
| Most colouration present | Prominent red breast and large white cap   | SCARLET        |
|                          | Pink wash on breast and small white cap  | ROSE           |
|                          | Orange wash on breast and small white cap. Larger bird than all others in this key | FLAME          |
| Most colouration absent  | Small greyish-brown bird   | ROSE           |
|                          | Brownish bird  | FLAME          |
|                          |  | REDCAP         |
|                          |  | PINK           |

See overleaf for notes on this key

Notes on the key to the 'brown' robins

In drawing up this key I have tried to make it as simple as possible. I must stress, however, that it is certainly not as easy to identify these birds in the field as it is to identify the males. (The key to the males appeared in C.B.N. 9). The plumage is not as clear-cut from species to species and indeed varies considerably within species.

All brown robins of the genus *Petroica* are either females or males in immature plumage. These males are similar in all external respects to the females, and it is uncertain how long they take to attain adult plumage. There are many recorded instances of brown robins breeding as a pair.

The key does not include the female Hooded Robin *Petroica cucullata* as it is fairly easily told from the other members of the genus by its larger size.

Usually these robins are in pairs and if you are in doubt as to the identity of a bird it is advisable to look for the male and then check for the features of the female of that species on your problem bird. Also the probability of a species appearing in the type of habitat in which you are should be taken into account.

How to use the key;-

1. Work methodically from left to right. Sometimes you will have to get fairly close to a bird to pick the characteristics.
2. Where the colour varies in a species for a key identification mark, I have repeated. Thus there are two results each for the Flame and Rose Robins.

3. Breast colouration in the Flame Robin is present only in old females. Normally there is none.
4. The pink wash on the breast of the Rose Robin develops slowly and is not present in young birds.
5. Remember that juveniles of all species have dull buffish, streaked plumage. This persists longest on the crown.

16 Badgery Street, Macquarie, A.C.T

HAWK NOTE FROM THE KIMBERLEYS

T.O. Wolfe and W. Martin

Fitzroy Crossing, June 8, 1970

While driving on Cherrabun Station we noticed a Black Kite Milvus migrans chasing finches low over the ground towards two low bushes. A Sparrowhawk Accipiter cirrocephelus flew out of one shrub end dived into the other where about 50 finches had sought shelter. They flew out, only to be attacked by the kite which had been hovering nearby.

This pattern was repeated, the finches being harried by the kite in the open while the sparrowhawk skulked in the bushes. The kite hit two, but was not seen to catch any. The sparrowhawk was not visible in the bushes, so its hunting success could not be determined. The finches were chiefly Banded Finches Poephila bichenovii with a dozen or so Zebra Finches Poephila guttata.

P.O. Box 3121, Darwin, N.T.

WHITE-BACKED SWALLOWS IN THE A.C.T.

Neil Hermes &amp; Michael Fleming

On January 13, 1971 we found a nesting pair of White-backed Swallows Cheramoeca leucosternum, at the Murrumbidgee River, near Tharwa. This is the first recorded occasion White-backed Swallows have been seen, in the A.C.T.

The birds were nesting in a tunnel dug into the riverbank 50 yards from the water. The tunnel was approximately two feet long with an enlarged nest 3¾" by 2½" at the entrance, but this quickly narrowed down to a small round hole.

When we first discovered the nest, we observed the bird in the nest chamber with the aid of a torch. It was 1500 hrs and the bird did not leave the nest, leading us to assume that it was sitting on eggs.

We revisited the nest at 1000 hrs on January 16 and flushed the sitting bird. After a long period it returned, but circled at a distance. Observation was difficult and no field marks were discernible.

At 1800 hrs on January 19, we visited the nest once more but no birds were present. We waited and soon saw the pair of White-backed Swallows soaring above river with a flock of Fairy Martins Petrochelidon ariel.

From the ground the swallows looked a distinctly black and white bird whereas the martins were white to grey. When the swallows banked in flight or flew very low, the white back and head were diagnostic.

Frith (1969) states of this species: "It is common west of Wagga, New South Wales, and small numbers

regularly reach the slopes and the edge of the Australian Capital Territory" But this is the first time a confirmed sighting has been recorded in the A.C.T.

Frith. H.J. (Ed), 1969 Birds in the Australian High Country. Sydney - A.H. & A.W. Reed.

66 Birdwood Street, Hughes, A.C.T.  
84 Pennefather Street, Higgins, A.C.T

#### Editor's Note

A further sighting of White-backed Swallows has been reported by Terry Gourlay, who saw at least 30 on February 2, 1971 at 1730 hrs.

The birds were seen in flight on the edge of Stromlo Forest, at the Coppin's Crossing/Uriarra Road intersections They were heading in a northerly direction.

A GENERATION OF LORIKEETS

David E. Peters

Some time ago, the C.O.G. Committee expressed concern at the release of six Rainbow Lorikeets Trichoglossus haematodus at the Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve. The birds were believed to be those shown to President Johnson during his visit to Canberra. Rainbow Lorikeets are not unknown in the Canberra region but are considered to be uncommon summer visitors(1).

Shortly after the six birds were released, at Tidbinbilla, two Rainbows appeared in the Hackett, A.C.T. area, on Mt Majura. They were first observed on April 1, 1970. For some time now only three or four birds have been seen at Tidbinbilla.

The two birds at Hackett were observed, copulating on three occasions - once on an extremely cold morning in midwinter, but it was not thought that they had actually nested as they were generally seen together.

Only the two adult birds were observed on September 8 and 9, but on the 10th they were accompanied by an obviously newly fledged bird. The juvenile had the same colouration as the adults, except for a dark bill (almost black with a red tip), dark eye, and a slightly shorter tail. It was very unstable on its feet, and although it could fly quite well it had the usual slow approach to perching as is common in many young birds. It was begging from the parents in a very high-pitched, mildly rasping note, and was fed by both.

On December 10, 1970s the adult pair was seen again, this time with two more juveniles which they were feeding.

On March 31 1971, seven Rainbow Lorikeets were seen together. They included a newly arrived pair which was distinguishable by the lighter shade of red on the bill. The juveniles were now practically in adult dress, and in fact the whole group seemed to be composed of three pairs and one unpaired birds

These three pairs comprise the original couple, the light-billed pair, and a newly formed, pairing of the first juvenile with one of the second broods. The other bird in this brood is 'odd -man-out'.

The normal nesting season for this species is given as August to January, although they do breed during mild winters (2). It will be interesting to see whether these birds will migrate out of the area during the autumn, as Rainbow Lorikeets normally appear to do.

#### References:-

- (1) Canberra Ornithologists Group, 1971. A Field-List of the Birds of Canberra and District . 2nd Ed. (in preparation).
- (2) Forshaw J.M., 1969. Australian Parrots. Melbourne - Lansdowne Press.

16, Selwyn Street, Hackett, A.C.T.

LETTER TO THE EDITORAnother Chough/Mudlark link?

Sir,

Ellen McCulloch's interesting note on the feeding behaviour of a Mudlark *Grallina cyanoleuca* in C.B.N. 9 prompts me to write this letter.

I have noted similar behaviour in the Whitewinged Chough *Corcorax melanerhamphus* on Mount Pleasant, A.C.T. Though its occurrence was also rare and the feeding was not artificial as in the Mudlark's case, it does at least link these two birds in another way, however tenuous it may be,

Condon, in "A Hand list of the Birds of South Australia" lumps these two species together with the Apostle Bird *Struthidea cinerea* in the family *Grallinidae* which was established by Amadon in 1950. He notes, however, that evidence for such a classification is nowhere near overwhelming .

Since taxonomists are looking more and more towards behavioural traits to aid them in classification, it would be interesting to know if anyone has observed similar feeding behaviour in the Apostle Bird. This may establish another link in a very shaky area of bird systematics.

Macquarie, A.C.T.

Yours,

Tony Stokes

C.O.G. ACTIVITIESFebruary 10

The term "Birds of Paradise" originated in the belief these colourful birds lived, mated and died in the highest skies without ever coming down to earth. Admiring but gullible Europeans who first saw trade skins of the various species (with the legs cut off, as was customary) initiated the name and the legend.

This and other absorbing facts came to light during Dr R. Schodde's talk about birds of paradise and the closely related bowerbirds.

That the group evolved fairly recently is evinced by the frequent incidence of hybridism and the fact that it is practically confined to New Guinea. The diversity of plumage - without parallel in the bird world - developed through the arena displays which are characteristic of these birds.

The lecture was well complemented by colour slides and a trayful of skins.

February 14

The nine members who attended the outing to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve were treated to a most memorable day. After some fine views of a Wedgetailed Eagle and some Rufous Fantails, the party proceeded along the Sea Hill Nature Trail. Here, Miss Rosemary Metcalf pointed out a large bird in a tree beside the path. The entire party was stupefied by the sight of a magnificent Powerful Owl. (More will be published about this bird in the next issue). It was very confiding, and was watched, photographed and sketched for about 20 minutes before the party moved on.

Other interesting species seen were Redbrowed Treecreepers, a Grey Butcherbird and several Satin Bowerbirds.

March 10

Film night. A capacity audience watched a selection of films that was truly international. "Nature in the West" dealt with two widely separated topics in Western Australia - the interaction between budgerygahs, hawks and the water cycle in the desert, and the rediscovery and study of the Noisy Scrub-bird.

"Le Guepier" a French film with English commentary looked at a colony of the European Bee-Eater Merops apiaster in the Camargue, on the Mediterranean coast of France. Also in colour was the film "Secret Bowers", which included plenty of footage taken by the noted cameraman Heinz Sielmann. The audience was spellbound by the strange displays of Gardener Birds and others in New Guinea - some of which had been filmed for the first time.

"A walk in the Country" was the story behind a nature ramble in England, and "Canadian Birds" dealt with some of the better known birds of Canada.

March 14

A very pleasant morning was spent by 13 members at Uriarra Crossing on the Murrumbidgee River. Birds were abundant, with the most notable being Yellow-winged (New Holland) Honeyeaters, Mistletoebirds - with some excellent views of a fine male, and a very obliging Dollarbird. Other birds seen included Restless Flycatchers and Hooded Robins.

April 14

Mr Michael Carins will speak on "Birds and Islands".

May 12

Mr Alan Morris will give a talk on "Island Reserves"

June 9 Annual General Meeting and Members' Night.

SHORT OBSERVATIONS

SPARROWHAWK Accipiter cirrocephalus A male flew into a ward at the Canberra Hospital during the last week of February (R. McCarron). A female hunting Goldfinches at the Molonglo River Flats on March 8 (A. D'Ardria).

PEREGRINE Falco peregrinus A pair at Yowani on Febr. 2 and 3 (D. Rushton).

COMMON SANDPIPER Tringa hypoleucos One foraging along the beach at East Basin on March 22 (AD).

MARSH TERN Chlidonias hybrida Sixteen in breeding plumage at Lake Bathurst on December 5, 1970 (V. Kewalski).

SPINETAILED SWIFT Hirundapus caudacutus About 1000 over O'Connor on Jan. 18 (H. Nix).

CICADABIRD Edoliisoma tenuirostre Heard calling at Tidbinbilla on Jan. 23 (M. Clayton).

PAINTED HONEYEATER Conopophila picta A pair at Casuarina Sands on Jan. 14 (MC et al).

GREENFINCH Chloris chloris Up to nine regularly at Barton since November 1970 (B. Baker). Two adults and two fledglings on Nov. 20. and four adults with two juveniles on November 23 (MC).

INDIAN MYNA Acridotheres tristis Single birds at Barton and Manuka in November and December, 1970. A flock of 12, including three immatures, at Manuka on March 21 (G. Clark).

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