

Canberra bird notes

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EDITORIAL

Thanks to the help of many, including several members of COG, one of the finest collections of Australian bird bones is being established at the C.S.I.R.O., Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra.

This collection and those at state museums are being used to identify bird remains in fossil deposits, aboriginal middens, and in the nests and stomachs of predators. The ease and specificity of the identifications depends largely on the size and diversity of the reference collections.

Readers of CBN can help by forwarding the remains of birds that are found dead (e.g. along roads and beaches; to the nearest State Museum or to me at the C.S.I.R.O., Division of Wildlife Research. The bird remains should be wrapped in newspaper or paper towelling, and in at least two sealed plastic bags. They should be labelled with the date and place where found and with the name(s) of the collector (s).

NEST BOXES FOR NATIVE BIRDS

We often hear about nest boxes being put up for wild birds in Europe and America but as far as our native birds are concerned the general belief seems to be that they don't take to nest boxes. There is no reason why birds that normally nest in hollow trees shouldn't. The C.S.I.R.O. has been putting out nest boxes for ducks for a few years now with a lot of success.

In 1969-70 a pair of Eastern Rosellas nested next door to my place in a large Red Spotted Gum *Eucalyptus maculosa mannifera*. The following summer they were displaced by a pair of starlings. The starlings seem to have an advantage in feeding in the vicinity while the rosellas are away. I had been watching trees in my yard for signs of birds nesting but could not see any. I inspected the trees for possible nesting hollows but found none. I put up two hollow logs in August 1m long 170mm outside diameter. Nest chamber was enlarged with chisel before fixing bottom. See attached list for sizes. A couple of inches of termite bed found in logs was poured in to resemble a natural hollow. They were then put up 7m in two trees 15m apart. Within a fortnight both had Eastern Rosellas going in. Both lots reared chicks that fledged at Christmas.

The same summer 1970-71 a Pardalote was observed carrying bark from a Stringy Bark *E. macrorrhyncha*. Others were observed hovering up and down the limbs and trunks of the Red Spotted Gum and Scribbly Gum *E. rossii*.

Three Kookaburras came and have been accepting food since 1969. In 70-71 they became interested in a natural hollow in the large Red Spotted Gum 3m above my roof. The hole was 115mm in diameter and the tree 330mm in diameter at this point. I put up a board box 210mm wide and 145mm high x 255mm deep inside 15m away with entrance 115mm diameter but they weren't interested I don't know if they nested anywhere.

Cont'd.

(1971-72) The next season one of the pairs of parrots displaced by starlings. The others raised a clutch which fledged at Christmas. The Kookaburras renewed their interest with more vigour. They worked on it every day for a fortnight but their enthusiasm seemed to be waning so I put up a log 455mm high x 305mm wide with a 250mm diameter hollow inside. Entrance was 140mm diameter in a branch 230mm long. They went in a couple of times but nested elsewhere as they showed up with 2 chicks in Feb. '72.

A possum also appeared that year and could have put the Kookaburra off. It was probably the one that was seen by neighbours before I bought the block. Its second visit was nearly a month after the first, then becoming more regular, eventually settling down to about a weekly routine with 2 or 3 nights here and 4 or 5 away. It appeared before it was completely dark and was seen coming out of the hollow that the Kookaburras had been interested in. It has had two little ones since and was herself ousted by her second off spring after a fortnight of sporadic squabbling in April '73.

Pardalotes were active again so I put up two boxes of 20mm sawn pine inside measurements 100 x 100 x 305mm with 30mm entrance. One was fixed horizontally with entrance on side near end. The other put upright with entrance 75mm from bottom. They were 5m and 6m from ground on opposite sides of same tree.

Although they were inspected by 3 to 5 Pardalotes regularly none nested.

1972-73 It looked like the second pair of parrots was going to be displaced by Starlings so the original two boxes were cut in two. Two of which were put up on new sites. They were 455mm long. One pair of parrots nested. The chicks fledged at end of January.

A log for Pardalotes was fixed into a three-way fork in a Scribbly Gum, E rossii, 6 m up early Oct '72. Pardalotes moved in by the end of the month. They were harassed by a sparrow in January '73 for a couple of days which lost

interest. The chicks fledged in February.

Cont'd.

Suggest entrance for Pardalotes be made 25mm.

25.10.72 5.30am 2 King Parrots inspected trees for nest hollows first ones I have seen within three km of here.

Crimson Rosellas and Galahs are around every day. One pair of Galahs nests next door but there are no suitable hollows for Crimson Rosellas and none have been put up.

The policy of the Parks and Gardens to remove decaying and hollow limbs and trees along roads and anywhere in built-up areas greatly reduces the hollows available to birds and possums. Competition by bees is another factor facing the larger birds and possums. There was a dead possum under a hollow tree the day after a swarm of bees had moved into the Woden Cemetery summer 72-73.

Any move to reduce the shortage of nesting hollows by putting up nest boxes should be encouraged and the success of their acceptance by the wildlife is rewarding.

As little is known about what a certain species will accept it may be worthwhile to put up 3 or more while one is at it as they may not like the sun shining into it etc. Once a pair of birds has moved into one they will sometimes chase others out of the vicinity and could prevent other boxes being occupied.

For nesting material use only termite bed to make inside appear natural 50mm deep for small birds and about 75mm for larger ones. For logs fixed horizontally 15mm (to 25mm should be enough).

Hollow hardwood logs have been the only successful ones for me although only 3 of sawn timber were tried. Not enough to say they are not acceptable.

Cont'd.

For fixing to tree I use a 50mm x 40mm x 150mm piece of softwood cleat nailed to tree with 2/75mm galvanised nails. The box is set on top and tied around the middle with a thin rope and fencing wire or casing strap. Both are left on in case one gives. It is a good idea to remove them after the season and put them up again for next one or just move them up or down 300mm to allow the bark to peel.

If there are no trees in the yard a pole can be put up dug in or bolted to a fence or other suitable object. A couple of sticks fixed to box or pole for perches should be provided 5m is high enough.

I would be very interested to hear of any successes. For further information ring Canberra 512428 or write Peter Ormay 26 Wangara Street, Aranda 2614 A.C.T.

APPENDIX

Suggested sizes for nest boxes appear over leaf. Minimum length in all cases should be about 400mm. Logs for Pardalotes and Kingfisher should be placed horizontally. For others it doesn't matter. Nesting Chamber sizes are minimum.

Continued on next page

Species	Breeding Season	Entrance Diameter	Inside Diameter	Depth below entrance	Outside diameter	Height above Ground	Proven Success
Eastern Rosella	Mid Sept Mid Dec	75-100mm	137mm	350mm	175mm	6m	Yes
Crimson Rosella	Sep to Dec inc	80-100	150	350	185	6	Yes
Red rumped Parrot	Oct-Dec inc	50-75	100	250	130	6	-
Sacred Kingfisher	Nov-Jan inc	50-75	125	250	155	7	-
Kookaburra	Oct-Jan inc	115	200	None	250	6	-
Pardalote	Jul-Apr inc	25-45	120	300	160	5	Yes
Galah	Oct-Dec inc	115	200	350	250	6	-

Note: Entrance on successful Pardalotes nestbox is 45mm however sparrows can get in even through 30mm. Kookaburras floor of termite bed should be level with entrance.

RARE BIRD RECORDSINTRODUCTION

It has recently been suggested that a guide to the recording of unusual birds be prepared. In the past there has been a lack of rules governing the submission of records, and the time is now ripe to formalise a code for the submission of records. The following proposal is not my own, but relies very strongly on an item published in "British Birds" some years ago and a more recent paper in the "Colorado Field Ornithologist".

THE CODE

1. Record only what you see, not what you think you see.
2. Make as many notes as possible at the time, significant details may be forgotten later.
3. Description Describe the bird in as much detail as possible - the form of description used in "The Handbook of British Birds" is an ideal. Where possible use sketches to illustrate colouration and boundary zones of colouration. Include details of the colouration of the soft parts carefully. Use other birds with which you are familiar for comparisons of size - remember that the foreshortening effects of telescopes, binoculars and unusual angles can be misleading.
4. Posture If possible describe the posture or "sit" of the bird and its flight characteristics. These may provide identification clues.
5. Calls Record calls carefully, but remember that mimicry is possible. There is a recorded case where a famous American ornithologist mimicked the call of a rare bird and over half the party "ticked" it. Starlings and lyrebirds are mimics and this possibility must be considered.
6. Behaviour - describe

Cont'd.

7. Habitat - describe
8. What species are similar? Give your reasons why you consider it is not one of these.
9. In your description include location, date, time, weather (particularly temperature, wind and cloud cover). Describe the circumstances under which the bird was seen.
10. Photographs. Were any taken, if so include copies with the record.
11. Other observers. Were any other observers present who saw the bird? In Britain any record normally requires that the bird must have been seen by at least three people, one of whom must be a competent ornithologist and one known to a member of the Hare Birds Committee. The exceptions are usually in remote areas, where good photographs have been taken, or where a band has been recovered.
12. What makes you believe that the bird was rare?
13. What books and illustrations were consulted and how did these influence your decision.

DISCUSSION

As will have been gathered the conditions for the acceptance of records in the U.K. are strict. As a rule-well under half properly documented records are accepted because the full requirements were not met. In the March 1973 "Colorado Field Ornithologist" records of eight species were examined. Of these five were rejected, three were accepted, and one was held over for further information. It should be noted that these were records of species not sightings, and in one instance a record accompanied by photographs and descriptions from "several" ornithologists was rejected owing to considerable

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identification problems with, a similar species. In another instance a record of an American Wigeon was accepted in Shetland purely on the basis of a band - by the time I found out the bird had been eaten!

The necessity for full descriptions may seem excessive, but has proved its value in Britain where a wader caught, examined and banded on Fair Isle was submitted as a Semipalmated Sandpiper. The record was submitted in 1956, and after considerable examination of the description on both sides of the Atlantic was finally admitted to the British List as a Western Sandpiper in 1963. Those who doubt the value of complete documentation may find the history of the "Hastings Rarities" of interest.

Michael Carins,
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NOTES ON BREEDING OF SPOTTED PARDALOTES

During the 1969/70 breeding season, I located nine nests of the Spotted Pardalote at the Botanic Gardens on the eastern side of Black Mountain. Nest cards for these nests were forwarded to the R.A.O.U. nest record scheme. The following notes are abstracted from these cards.

Success Rate

Seven of the nests appeared to have been successful, the two that failed both did so because of human intervention, one was destroyed by a front end loader and the other by somebody stepping on the bank above the nest.

Nest Site

Eight nest entrances were in the side of a bank (on average 20cm below the top) whereas one was at ground level in the base of a small heap of rubbish which had sloping sides (at approx. 20°). The length of two burrows was checked. The burrow in one nest was at least one metre long (this nest was successful) whereas the other burrow was very odd in shape (see figure 1). This nest was situated in a steep bank at the side of the road and was destroyed by somebody stepping on it, at which stage it contained two eggs.

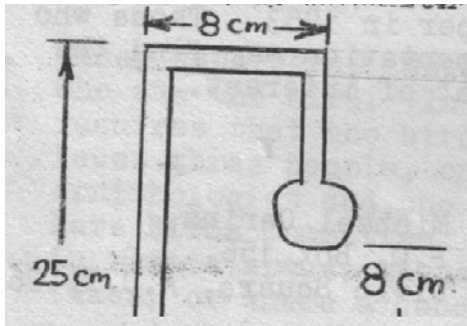


Figure 1

-Plan View of Nest

Digging

Both male and female were observed digging at the three nest sites at which digging was noted.

At the site depicted in figure 1, the length of the tunnel progressed from 15cm to completion in 8 days (24 Feb to 3 Mar 1970), a rate of 3.5cms per day.

At another site digging progressed from 8cm to 70cm in 21 days (3 June to 25 June 1969), again approx. 3.5cms per day.

Fledging

Dates of fledging were hard to determine as lack of activity at the nest site for at least two days was the criterion used.

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Fledging fell neatly into two groups. The first was in late winter/early spring (30 July, 24 Aug. 25 Aug, 30 Aug. (2), 2 Sept. with a nest destroyed on 5 Sept.) and the second was in autumn (5 May with a nest destroyed (two eggs) on 17 March)

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WINTERING CUCKOOS IN A CANBERRA PINE FOREST

Over the past six months, it has been my practise to visit the Mt. Stromlo Pine Plantation close to Canberra at least twice weekly.

In past years I have heard and seen Fan-tailed Cuckoo in the area. This cuckoo is quite common in summer months and there have always been a few birds seen in winter months.

During four years consistent observing in one area however, this is the first winter in which I have heard or seen Horsfield Bronze Cuckoos. In past years the bird has been quite common as a summer migrant, arriving in Early September and leaving in late February. This winter has been remarkable for an apparently undiminished number of wintering birds. Unfortunately no numerical record of the bird's presence was recorded this year until May. However, the month with the greatest number of sightings in a previous numerical survey of a year's duration, was October 1970 when an average of 3.5 sightings were made per visit. During the months May, June, July, August this year, an average of 3.8 sightings were recorded per visit. Out of a total of 33 visits in these months, on only one occasion were no birds recorded, on one red letter day in July five separate groups were heard calling, one group of which numbered no less than eight birds most of whom appeared to be chasing prospective partners from branch to branch, the while uttering what were to me unfamiliar chattering calls. I saw similar behaviour in this bird on two occasions in October 1970.

...over

I have never previously observed the bird to be gregarious and assume that this gathering of birds has some significance in courtship behaviour.

The uncharacteristic behaviour of the bird which is generally very quiet and unobtrusive leads me to doubt an alternative theory, that these birds are migrating groups.

In closing I would remark upon the extremely mild winter we have experienced which together with favourable rainfall, may well have induced the bird to stay. However, it is not impossible that - the bird has been overlooked on previous winters, even when apparently common, the bird's call is generally the only clue to its presence. In this regard it may be worth noting that to the best of my recollection although I occasionally saw the fan tail cuckoo in previous winters, I never heard its call, this winter I have heard the birds calling consistently.

T. Gourlay.

CHESTNUT TAILED HEATH WREN
A.C.T. SIGHTING

On the 7th October I observed a Heath Wren on the lower slopes of Black Mountain near the beginning of Lady Denman Drive (i.e. opposite the mouth of Sullivan's Creek). The area consisted of dry woodland interspersed with clumps of wattle. Several deep gullies under dense vegetation were nearby.

Description - The bird had a grey-brown back and wings (which were unmarked). There was a faint chestnut wash on the top of the head. Brow marking was not very distinct being a very pale grey. The facial patch was a merging of the brown back colour into the white of the breast. The beak was

a dark brown. The breast was striated white and dark grey, merging into small grey patches on the flanks. The rump was chestnut which contrasted strongly with the grey-brown of back and tail.

The chestnut rump and elevation of the tail were distinctive features; the lack of white wing marking distinguishing the bird from the other member of the genus, the Mallee Heath-Wren.

I observed the bird from a distance of ten feet, the bird feeding about five feet from the ground on a flowering Acacia baileyana. The bird was probably feeding on some insect in the flowers as it had bright yellow patches of pollen at the base of the beak.

The bird was unobtrusive in its movements, moving slowly around the bush silently, not calling once whilst I watched it. As I approached it the bird flew into nearby low bushes and undergrowth. As it was nearly 6 p.m. and light was falling, I could not find the bird, which had very effectively hidden itself.

Michael Chuk

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE

Since receiving the above sighting an additional sighting has been received.

Harry Bell and Dr. Henry Nix report, that on the 11th November on the western side of Tinderry Range, close to Jerangle-Michelago road they sighted a pair Heath Wrens in mixed Heath comprising in the main Leptospermum Juniperinum and Kunzea Parvifolia. The birds were flushed several times and observed at close range with binoculars.

Both observers are familiar with the bird and are positive on their identification.

The bird has been seen in the Nerriga area and has been recorded on several occasions by Terry Gourlay and Simon Bennett in the Upper Shoalhaven River area. The only other sighting was of a single bird in the Sutton area by G. & N Clarke in January 1971. Further sightings in this or the surrounding area would be appreciated.

A DIAMOND DOVE IN THE A.C.T.

In mid-October 1973, I was over the vicinity of the farm buildings at our property between Yass & Canberra when I noticed a small bird of a type I had not seen in the district before. It reminded me at first of a very small crested pigeon, minus the crest, and I noticed that it had numbers of small white spots on its wings and prominent red eyes.

It was only about 20' away from me when I first saw it, and when I approached for a closer look, I got within about 6' before it flew off at a low angle for a short distance. I repeated this process several times and it seems reluctant to fly more than about 6' off the ground and about 15' distance at a time.

One of the farm cats spotted the bird and made a rush at it, getting within grabbing distance and causing the bird to skim up and over a building about 15' high landing at a short distance on the other side. When I located it again, it cleared the fence into the house garden and landed on the lawn, where it remained for about half an hour, feeding on the short grass and giving me time to consult appropriate reference books, while continuing to observe it

Cont'd.

through binoculars, from a distance of about 20'. I studied its appearance closely comparing it with both colour plates and verbal descriptions and my opinion of its identity as a Diamond Dove was shared by my husband when he arrived home a short time later.

Having observed the bird a short time longer, and with the cats in mind, we then both approached the bird, causing it to fly up into a nearby tree. It was then late evening. We did not see it again.

J. Porter
P.O. Box 117, Dickson.

SOME BEHAVIOUR NOTES ON BREEDING BLACK-PACED CUCKOO-SHRIKES AND A RECORD OF ITS BREEDING IN IMMATURE PLUMAGE.

Tony Stokes

At 11 a.m. on the 23rd November, 1973 at Gumble, near Molong on the central west slopes of N.S.W., I stood under a grove of eucalypts and watched an immature Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Coracina novaehollandiae periodically swoop back and forth over the same branches of the trees. The bird had a strip of black feathers from the lores to the ear-coverts and a very faint barring on the breast. It was watched through 7 x 35 binoculars at a distance no greater than 15 metres. The behaviour itself suggested a nest in the close vicinity and though it resembled that described by McCulloch (1969), I could not say the bird was 'diving' at me.

After 10 minutes a second bird, an adult, landed on a branch some 10 metres from the nest (yet to be located). The reaction of its immature mate was to fly to a parallel branch on the same plane and a metre from where the adult

Cont'd.

was perched. Here it faced the adult and bowing slightly, fanned the tail and in quick succession alternately opened and closed its wings for the 30 second display duration. The mouth was open throughout but no audible sound was emitted and no visible response by the adult made. It probably functioned as a warning not to approach the nest, or a danger signal, rather than a greeting and in many respects it resembled McCulloch's (op. cit.) description.

Subsequent to this display I withdrew some 5 metres and sat on a fallen log. The immature bird then swooped back over the nest to a branch about 5 metres from it and 3 minutes later the adult flew to a branch a metre from the nest thus revealing its position. Another 3 minutes passed before the adult flew to the side of the nest and immediately upon settling on it, in the fork of two horizontal branches, it wiped its beak on the right hand branch a number of times.

Besides the behavioural aspect, this record is interesting since there is apparently no previous record of the species breeding in immature plumage. The of the appearance of adult plumage is still a mystery.

I would like to thank the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research for allowing me to examine some skins in their collection.

Reference: McCulloch, E.M. (1969) - 'Suggested defensive display by black-faced 'cuckoo-shrikes' Emu 70:86

LATE-AUTUMN BIRD POPULATIONS IN DOWNTOWN CANBERRA

Throughout the world it is generally more interesting to do ornithological field work in natural ecosystems than manmade habitats, especially urban ecosystems. Yet with the urbanization of many parts of the globe, bird-population studies in cities may unfortunately prove both more representative and more indicative of avian things to come, even if not as much fun in the doing.

After having carried out winter bird-population studies in the urban core of Colorado Springs, Colorado, in the United States for several years, the author had occasion to make a similar study in downtown Canberra, A.C.T. during the late autumn of 1972. Colorado Springs is a city somewhat larger than Canberra and just over 100 years old, located in inland, semi arid, high-plains grassland at the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains, including 14,110 foot Pikes Peak. Canberra, of course, is a much younger city but surrounded by some communities older than Colorado Springs.

The area chosen for censusing in Canberra was in Civic (City), the "seven blocks" bounded by Northbourne Avenue on the west, London Circuit on the south, Ainslie Avenue on the east, and Bunda Street on the north, and including Garema Place. Essentially the area is one of buildings, both low and high, housing businesses and offices, with parking lots, streets, sidewalks, and the Garema Place mall. The acreage is approximately 12 acres. There are some tree (especially plane trees) and shrub plantings within the census area, but no residential-type landscaping (i.e. no lawns, gardens, etc.). Eight field trips were carried out during May of 1972 (May 2-14), with about six hours of observations (total) during both morning and afternoon.

The following table summarizes the results of the field work, with Canberra species arranged in decreasing order of abundance and compared with a 1971 published winter census for Colorado Springs (American Birds 25: 664):

CANBERRA Civic (1972)

Species	Trips Seen (out of 8)	Av No. (12 ac)	Per 100 ac
Rock Dove	8	75	623
House Sparrow	6	17	141
Starling	4	3	25
Silver Gull	5	2	17
Black-backed	2	1	8
Magpie			
Australian	1	+	-
Raven			

(+ = less than .5)

Average Total:	98	
Density (100 acres)		815
No of Species:	6	
Number of Species in Common:	3	
Number of Distinctive Species:	3	

Cont'd.

COLORADO SPRINGS Urban Core (1971)

Species	Av No. (25 ac)	Per 100 ac
Rock Dove	6	24
House Sparrow	13	52
Starling	2	8
American	1	4
Robin		
House Finch	1	4
Australian	1	4
Cedar Waxwing		

Average Total: 24
Density (100 acres):
Number of Species : 6
Number of Species in Common: 3
Number of Distinctive Species: 3

The majority of the rock doves seen in Civic were at Garema Place, where they perched on west-facing and south-facing building ledges and on the plaza, where people would feed them. The number of doves seen on a single trip ranged from 32 to 141, while the range for the house sparrows, seen in the same general area, was from 4 to 36. The starlings liked to perch on TV antennas or on a ledge of the David Jones store; while one of the magpies was observed atop a pole on the 10-story MLC Building. Coincidentally, an American

Cont'd.

Crow, related to the Australian raven, was recorded once during a 1972-73 winter census of downtown Colorado Springs (American Birds 27: 698-699). The greater population of rock doves and house sparrows in downtown Canberra as compared with Colorado Springs must in large measure be due to a greater availability of food in Canberra through actual feeding, and wastes from restaurants, grocery stores, and people's snacks.

The interesting (though not unexpected) similarity between the two widely separated urban areas is that the three dominant species are the same for the two sites and constitute species which in neither case are natives but rather are of Eurasian origin. These three--rock dove, house sparrow and starling-- are good indicators for urbanization around the world. Any species recorded in an urban area in addition to this trio tend to be a reflection of the variety of included habitats, landscaping, and proximity and adaptability of native birds... or may simply be accidentals.

It would have been provocative to follow the establishment and increase in population of the three exotic species in downtown Canberra as the city developed; and perhaps this would still be a possible project in one of the newly developed A.C.T. suburbs. It is known for the Colorado Springs area that the first house sparrows were recorded about 1895 and the first starlings in 1939; no date is available for the first rock dove record.

Richard G. Beidleman,
Department of Biology,
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COLORADO U.S.A.

Recent Observations

The following are some extracts from members sightings recorded in the observations book during 1973.

Nankeen Night Heron	Kellies Swamp	11/6
Glossy Ibis	" "	1 /1 , 24/2
White Breasted Sea Eagle	Lake George	5/8
Brown Quail	Foxlow	30/12
Banded Land Rail	A.N.U.	8/10
Diamond Dove		18/3
Brush Bronzewing (1st A.C.T. Breeding Record)	Brindabellas	6/1
Spotted Turtledove.	Botanic Grdns	1/10
Cockatiel	Canb Aerodrome	9/1
	Curtin	
	Latham	10/7
	Murrambateman	23/10
	Sutton	1/1
Superb Parrot	Ginninderra	Nov
Horsfield Bush Lark	Belconnen	3/2
Chestnut tailed Heath Wren	Black Mountain	7/10
	Tinderry Ranges	11/11
Red Cap Robin	Mount Ainslie	3/8
	Scullin	29/8
Olive Whistler	Black Mountain	8/10
Regent Honeyeater	Botanic Gardens	17/9
	Ginns Gap	16/12

Cont ' d .

Yellow Tufted Honeyeater	Torrens	26/5	2/6
		8/6,	6/8
Tawny Crown Honeyeater	Torrens	23/8	
Little Wattle Bird	Botanic Gardens	13/11	

BIRD STATUS IN THE A.C.T. Continued

GOLDEN PLOVER Pluvialis dominica

Accidental visitor in spring and summer. It has been recorded twice at Lake George. The first A.C.T. record was of one on November 13, 1965 at the East End of Lake Burley Griffin. Four were observed at Kelly's lagoon on November 4, 1970. In Australia the Golden plover is chiefly a coastal species, but it may occur inland on passage. It favours mudflats and estuaries, and open grassland away from the coast. It breeds in the Northern Hemisphere.

RED-CAPPED DOTTEREL Charadrius ruficapillus

Appears to be an uncommon resident. There is only one record for the A.C.T. - two at the East end of Lake Burley Griffin on December 16, 1965. It has been recorded throughout the year at Lake George and Bathurst. In September and October 1970 it was present in some hundreds on the islets in Lake Bathurst, the birds' behaviour suggesting that nesting was in progress. The breeding season in eastern Australia extends from August till about March.

DOUBLE-BANDED DOTTEREL Charadrius bicinctus

Regular winter visitor. In our area it occurs between March and August, chiefly at Lake George and Lake Bathurst. The only record for the A.C.T. so far is of one at the Fyshwick sewage ponds on March 15, 1971. It was reported very abundant at Lake Bathurst later in the same year, on June 26. Like the red-capped dotterel, this species frequents mudflats, lake-shores and river banks. It breeds in New Zealand.

BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL Charadrius melanops

Common resident: Its characteristic habitat is wide shallow creeks with sand or shingle bars, on which it nests. It also occurs along rivers, lakes and dams, in pairs, family groups or small parties. The breeding season extends from October to January in our area, the nest being a scrape in the ground. It sometimes nests on the verges of gravel roads, and one nest with three eggs in November 1964 was situated in the middle of such a road, between the vehicle ruts (Breeding success not known)

MEETING

February 13: Dr. Dick Schodde (C.S.I.R.O.) talks on "The importance of New Guinea in understanding Australian Birds". At 7.45 p.m. Land Research Building .C.S.I.R.O. Black Mountain.

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All contributions for publication should be addressed to the Editor.

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Chris Green
Terry Gourlay

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