



canberra bird notes

Vol. 3 No.2

April 1975

NEW EDITOR

Earlier this year, Dr. G. Van Tets, editor of the Canberra Bird Notes, was forced to resign this post due to pressure of other work. The Committee therefore approached Mr. S. J. Wilson, who agreed to become our new editor. He will be assisted in his task by Messrs. B. Baker, D. Purchase and G. Clark. Steve's editorship starts with this issue and we offer him all good luck in the task he has taken on.

Frank Crome
President, C.O.G.

EDITORIAL POLICY

At the time of a change of Editor, an opportunity presents itself to state editorial policy for Canberra Bird Notes.

Much thought has been given in recent years to the place of the various journals in Australian ornithology and there is no need to review this matter here except to say that we are well served by The Emu in its particular sphere. What is then needed are journals covering bird watching generally at all levels with more technical matters appearing in a Bird publication. These must be Australia wide journals (as is The Emu) and may be one can hope that The Australian Bird Watcher and the Australian Bird Bander can be developed to really fill these niches.

EDITORIAL POLICY (cont'd)

If these views are accepted (and unfortunately, in practice, they are not) the role of the regional journal such as Canberra Bird Notes is readily seen. In no sense is it a competitor with Australia wide journals and there is no intention to force it in that direction. It follows therefore that material which is of Australia wide importance has no place in Canberra Bird Notes.

This is a medium of communication on all matters of local "birding" interest. Space is offered for the publication of all forms of material of local importance. Readers will be kept informed of the doings of members in the field, of sightings of local interest, changes of status of local species and similar matters. It is hoped with the cooperation of the leaders to publish reports of C.O.G. outings; these are important in reviewing constantly what is happening in the local avifauna.

So the role of Canberra Bird Notes is to provide a medium for publication of things of local interest in our field and also a vehicle for communication among our members, and thus to generally promote interest in birds in the A.C.T. scene.

To succeed in this area cooperation must be forthcoming from members by way of material for publication. One could hope that, in this community, sufficient material should be available for a quarterly 24 page issue; but this is entirely in the hands of the members.

S. J. Wilson, Editor.

A REPORT ON BANDING ACTIVITIES ATNEW CHUM'S ROAD, A.C.T.

Tony Stokes

The banding programme at New Chum's Road in the Brindabella Ranges some 50 kilometres west of Canberra is well known in the annals of local ornithology. The history of the programme and the vegetation of the area was described by Lamm and Wilson (1966) and there are several other published papers on ornithological aspects. The work on the bird population of New Chum's Road concentrated mainly on the changes in the species composition, longevity of individuals, data for the compilation of average life statistics and plumage

A REPORT ON BANDING ACTIVITIES AT
NEW CHUM'S ROAD, A.C.T. (cont'd)

changes with lesser attention to moult, weights and measurements. A very considerable amount of information was accumulated especially regarding the more common species such as the White-browed Scrub-Wren Sericornis frontalis and the Brown Thornbill Acanthiza pusilla. This is currently being prepared for publication.

Future work on this site will continue along the same lines although, because of a recent bush fire, other aspects will also be studied.

At the beginning of 1972 the programme, which commenced in 1961, was beginning to flag as none of the banders in the A.C.T. able to continually devote the considerable time and effort needed to maintain the regular schedule of trips. Rather than let twelve valuable years of work lapse, a meeting of banders was called by the Regional Organiser of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme to debate methods of continuing the work. The Brindabella Banding Group was formed at the meeting and six banders agreed to be responsible for the work and to lead teams on two occasions *in* each year, thus ensuring regular monthly trips. Team leaders are responsible for recruiting and management of the team and for the work on their allotted days.

The Group has no constitution and operates with little formality, It has, however, proved necessary to allocate specific duties to some members and thus there is a Project Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, Treasurer and Equipment Officer. Meetings are held only as necessary, the aim being to function informally and reduce meetings to one each year which will review the year's work and allocate monthly trips for the coming year. A newsletter is published quarterly for members of the Group and others interested.

There are 31 net sites at New Chum's Road and, of these, a particular 20 are used regularly each month, others being used as opportunity arises. Each net site is numbered. Nets are in position at dawn and are open for a specified period on each day. Full details of each bird banded or

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A REPORT ON BANDING ACTIVITIES AT NEW CHUM'S ROAD, A.C.T.
(cont'd)

retrapped are recorded together with the net number and the time. This procedure facilitates later statistical analysis of the data.

Fire and the Banding Programme

On 21st December 1972 an intense wildfire burnt several square miles of the eastern Bull's Head slopes including two-thirds

of the New Chum's Road study area. With so many years of banding results in hand, the fire presented a golden opportunity to pursue a study of the long-term effects of fire on the bird population. However, at this time there was no one able to take the sole responsibility for regular monthly trips and several were missed. This was unfortunate as analysis of available results suggests this was a most profitable time. Nevertheless many interesting things have been revealed by data and banding is now back on a regular monthly basis.

The fire introduced a new facet to the previous work for now the population dynamics could be explored for the total bird population present and for individual species in relation to vegetation regeneration after the fire. Results could be compared with those of the pre-fire period and also between the burnt and the unburnt areas. To link results with vegetation changes was beyond the capabilities of the individuals of the Group. As none were competent botanists, the assistance of officers of the Forestry and Timber Bureau, Canberra **was** sought to advise on the type of vegetation analysis which should be done and how to do it. The outcome of discussions with officers of the Bureau was an offer of Collaboration by Messrs. J. Hoare and P. Cheney in a study of relationships between regeneration of the flora and the bird population. This aspect will be a most important one in future work in the area and the Group takes this opportunity to offer thanks to the Bureau for all assistance given.

New Chum's Road is a short forestry access road only but an increasing number of cars and trail bikes were tending to disrupt the banding work. Thanks to the cooperation of the Uriarra Forestry Officer and the Bendora Dam Ranger the road is now closed to

A REPORT ON BANDING ACTIVITIES
AT NEW CHUM'S ROAD, A.C.T.
(cont'd)

traffic on banding days and again the Group would like to thank these officers.

Finally an invitation is issued to readers to join a trip to New Chum's Road; an enjoyable day is promised; it is a lovely piece of country and the birds are interesting. Please contact the author at Toad Hall, A.N.U., the editor of Canberra Bird Notes or any member of the Group at meetings of C.O.G.

Reference: Horey G.M. and Wilson S.J. (1971) A Banding project in the Brindabella Ranges, Australian Capital Territory Emu 65 183-207.

Mr. A. Stokes, 16 Badgery Street, Macquarie, A.C.T., 2614.

PARTIALLY ALBINO RAVEN IN BELCONNEN

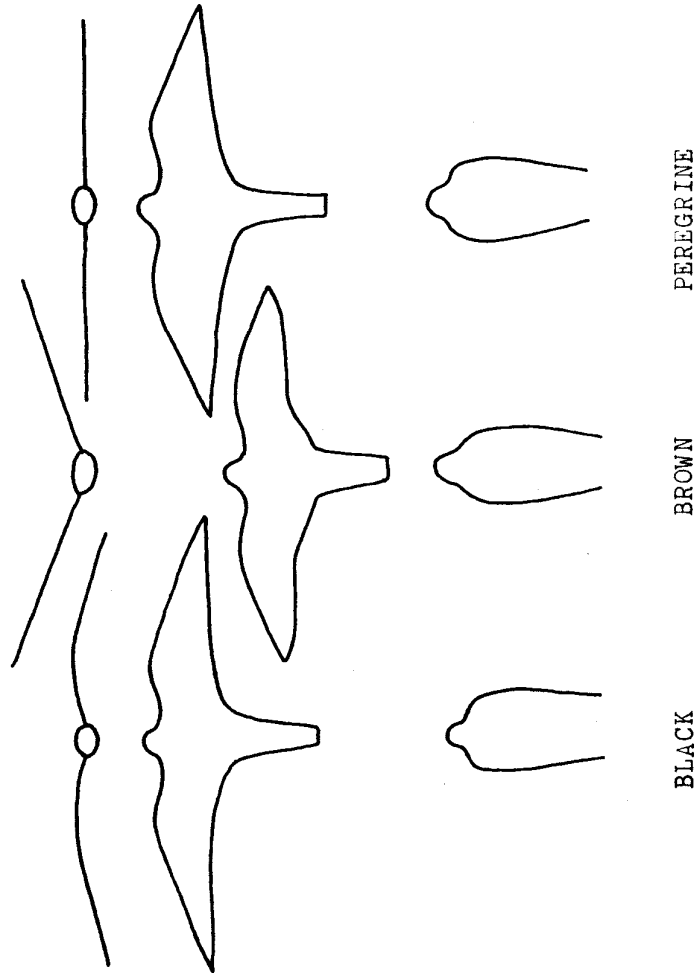
Jon Prance

On Saturday, 19th April, 1975, at about 10 a.m. I noticed an unusual black and white bird flying across Belconnen Way, Scullin. I managed to obtain a closer look at the bird, which was evidently a partially albino Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*. It settled in a eucalypt in Scullin for some while and later flew off, giving the typical wailing call, with two Magpie-larks *Grallina cyanoleuca* in pursuit. I noticed large patches of white on the wings and tail. appeared to be an adult bird, which I believe is unusual in cases

of abnormality like this. I wonder if anyone else has seen this bird. How rare is such an occurrence?

Mr. J. Prance, 2 Millhouse Crescent, Higgins, A.C.T., 2615.

Editorial Note: In C.B.N. No.9 October 1970, N. & G. Clark reported the sighting of a partial albino at Scullin on 19 July 1970 and there have been other unpublished reports since, so it would appear to be the same bird. It would be of great interest if a diagram of the plumage could be published. The first note stated "White flight feathers and tail". Would any Belconnen reader sighting this bird please send in a drawing of the plumage.



Schematic diagram of front on, underneath, and face on perching views of three falcons.

THE BLACK FALCON IN THE FIELD

Jerry Olson

I have been requested to forward some observations on field identification of the Black Falcon Falco subniger a bird often present in Canberra but overlooked by bird watchers. I would first like to mention several points about the bird related to identification which I have encountered in texts or in communication with other bird watchers which run contrary to my experience.

Firstly, I have never seen a Black Falcon with yellow legs, feet, cere and orbit. They are blue grey in young birds turning gradually to whitish grey as the bird ages. This is the best known method at present to age the birds. Although adults are generally lighter in plumage than their offspring and the birds lose about an inch off their tail after the first moult, some birds have shorter or longer than average tails in their first year. It has been suggested that first year Black Falcons have no barring on the primaries, moustachial stripe or speckling on the undertail coverts as older birds do and are in fact, wholly dark except for the white patch under the chin. However I have seen birds only seven weeks old displaying these characteristics and have seen totally black adults. Added to this is the varying rates at which individual birds fade as they approach the moult.

Many sources refer to this falcon as not really black but a dark sooty brown. This is true in many cases; however some individuals are truly black as dark as a raven but without the gloss. These falcons, like many others, vary considerably in size and plumage and standards regarding appearance are consequently difficult to set.

The Black Falcon is reported to disappear when the nest is molested but it has been my experience that parent birds will attack human intruders at a nest site in the same manner as a Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus in seventy percent of cases observed.

The three birds most often confused with the Black Falcon in the Canberra area are the Peregrine Falcon, the Australian Raven Corvus coronoides and the dark phase Brown Falcon Falco berigora. Little need be said about field identification of the Australian Raven and there is no substitute for experience in recognising the other three birds because of intraspecies variability, especially in the Brown Falcon.

THE BLACK FALCON IN THE FIELD(cont'd)

Brown Falcons in flight generally have more of an overarm rowing motion and a very loose wing appearance. Flying style is somewhat erratic involving much jiggling and side slipping unlike the Black and Peregrine Falcons whose flight is more direct. The ends of the wings are rounded as the third primary is longest in all Brown Falcons examined, while the second has been longest in all Black and Peregrine Falcons examined making the latter's wings more pointed. The tail of the Brown Falcon is round and the underwing is lighter at the base of the primaries which have dark tips. The underwing of a Black Falcon is dark and the tail tends towards squareness as it does in the Peregrine. There is often a diagnostic "step" on the outside of a Black Falcon's tail resulting from the two outer tail feathers being shorter than the rest. This characteristic is important for field identification of Black Falcons and I am working on its possible significance in ageing these birds.

Black Falcons fly with a stiffer wing action somewhat flickering like a Peregrine but with the wing tips held down, forming an arc. A Peregrine glides with its wings flat while a Brown Falcon holds its wings at a dihedral. A Black Falcon's flight is very like that of a Nankeen Kestrel (Falco cenchroides) except for the hovering.

When soaring, the Black Falcons wings are very pointed with the wing joint forward and trailing edge of the wing straight across. A Brown Falcon's wing is rounded and a Peregrine's appears quite triangular.

A perched Black Falcon has little or no leg showing as the short tarsi are covered by feathers. Most Brown Falcons have much longer legs. The Black Falcon has a smaller head than the Brown Falcon giving the appearance of very broad square shoulders as in a Peregrine. The Brown Falcon appears to have rounded shoulders like a Nankeen Kestrel. The Peregrine appears much more stocky than a Black or Brown Falcon when perched.

THE BLACK FALCON IN THE FIELD(cont'd)

An important key to watching for birds of prey in the Canberra area is close observation of magpies and currawongs. If there is a raptor in the area they will see it and may mob it in the case of a bird like the Brown Goshawk, (Accipiter fasciatus) or crouch low, cocking their head for a better view of the sky and allow a close approach if a hunting falcon is in the air.

Mr. G. Olsen, Poste Restante, Canberra City, A.C.T., 2601

Editorial Note: Excellent hints regarding species difficult to separate in the field. Could we now have detailed sightings of these species please with date, place and number. The Field List of the Birds of Canberra and District indicates that the Black Falcon is irregular in occurrence throughout the year; but is it? Maybe Jerry and other members could provide information to make this assessment more accurate.

LATE NESTING OF THE WEEBILL

Cyril Appelby

On a sunny Saturday morning, 29 March 1975, I was in the Canberra Botanic Gardens watching a group of Weebills Smicrornis brevirostris feeding on a small blue gum, Eucalyptus globulus. One of them flew into and out of a nearby Cootamundra wattle, Acacia baileyana, and on closer inspection I found that this wattle contained a domed weebill nest, lined with feathers. It appeared to be newly finished, and this surprised me because most books give the weebill breeding season as September - December. The nest was only 1.2 metres from the ground, in a cuter branch which overhung one of the garden's principal paths: It was empty, but when I approached the area again on 5 April, an adult weebill flew from the nest, which now contained 2 light brown eggs with darker speckles.

These had hatched before 12 April and on 19 April the fledglings were banded by the Senior Ranger, Mr. A. McWhirter. They were

LATE NESTING OF THE WEEBILL (cont'd)

still in the nest, vigorously begging, on 23 April, but by Friday 25 April the nest was empty. It appeared to be undisturbed, and there were no dead birds on the ground. Many adult weebills were again feeding on the adjacent E. globulus, but despite a careful search I could not see any banded young.

Dr. C.A. Appleby, C.S.I.R.O., Division of Plant Industry, P.O. Box 1600, Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601.

RECORD OF THE PINK ROBIN IN A
CANBERRA SUBURB AND NOTES ON ITS BEHAVIOUR

Graham Clark

About three-quarters of our garden at Scullin is fairly well covered by thick vegetation ranging from 2 to 5 metres in height. This vegetation is exclusively native being composed mainly of acacia, grevillea, and hakea spp. Surrounding gardens are of the normal Canberra suburban type providing very little cover for birds. As a result there have been quite a few interesting bird visitors to this garden.

On the 8 August 1974, two "brown" robins were seen in the garden. These were seen for a very short time (about one minute) and they then flew around the corner of the house and disappeared. They were the colour of the female Flame Robin Petroica phoenicea but they behaved slightly differently. However it was impossible to identify the birds with any certainty.

Two days later on 10 August, a "brown" robin was seen for a period of about 30 minutes in the back garden. This time the bird was identified positively as a Pink Robin Petroica rodinogaster because of the following points:-

RECORD OF THE PINK ROBIN (cont'd)

- (i) The size of the bird which was similar to that of the Rose Robin Petroica rosea;
- (ii) The lack of any colour or wash on the breast;
- (iii) The buff wing bars; and
- (iv) The lack of white in the tail, although there was a very pale buff edging to the tail feathers.

The main reason for the original interest in the bird was its behaviour, which was completely different from that of any other robin. Nearly all its time was spent within one metre of the ground and a fair proportion, actually on the ground. It was fearless and would approach within 1.5 metres of the observer even going so far as to hop up the back steps. As soon as there was sudden movement, the bird retreated into a thick part of a bush. Most of the time it stayed in or underneath bushes hardly ever venturing out into the open. When it flew, it went low and fast between patches of cover and on alighting often flicked its wings, which it also did when hopping. The call it made was a 'tick, tick, tick', quick, soft and yet metallic. It had a soft low song which it gave occasionally.

During the following month, one or two birds of this species were seen on seven separate occasions the last being on the 10 September. Also in the garden during that period was a "brown" Flame Robin (3 September) and a brown Rose Robin Petroica rosea (11 September) which allowed confirmation of the identification.

On each occasion Pink Robins were seen, they appeared from foliage as though they had been present for some time and they could have been overlooked easily, since each time the observer had been present in the garden for some time before they were seen. The interesting point is that on all occasions when it has been banded in the Brindabella Ranges (one or two a year since 1962) the banders were unaware of its presence until it was found in a net. (S.J. Wilson - pers comm). Similarly the bird was

RECORD OF THE PINK ROBIN(cont'd)

never seen in our garden unless the observer had been in the garden for at least five minutes.

These retiring habits indicate that the bird can be easily overlooked. Belcher mentions that the birds around Geelong moved from wet to dry scrub for winter. Perhaps that is happening in our district and the birds are moving from the wetter Western side of the ranges to the drier eastern side.

The lack of observers on the western side especially in the wet, dark, scrubby gullies favoured by this species, could easily mean the overlooking of this quiet bird.

Reference: Belcher C.F. (1914) - "The Birds of the District of Geelong Australia", Geelong: W.J. Griffiths.

Mr. G.S. Clark, 24 Adair Street, Scullin, A.C.T., 2614

BOOK MARKET

As a trial venture Canberra Bird Notes will run this feature for the next few issues to see if there is a demand.

The idea is to bring together people who need certain books and people who wish to sell books.

It will also cover back numbers of ornithological journals.

Therefore if you have books you want to sell or there is a book you require write to BOOK MARKET, P.O. Box 301,

Civic Square, A.C.T., 2608, or contact G. Clark, phone 541279.

FOR SALE

Birds of the Great Southern by Ray Garstone \$1.50

Australian Bird Watcher Vol.4 No.8 to Vol.5 No.3(inc.) \$2.75

BOOK MARKET - FOR SALE (cont'd)

Galapagos Island of Birds by Brian Nelson \$10.00

Birds of British Somaliland and Gulf of Aden
Vols. 3 and 4. by Archer and Godman (for the pair) \$20.00

WANTED

A Hand List of the Birds of New South Wales by A. R.

McGill The Birds of Sydney by Hindwood and McGill

The Birds of Borneo by B.E. Smythies

Tasmanian Birds by M. Sharland

Fairy Wrens by N. Cayley

DONATIONS

Any donations of books or journals made to Canberra Ornithologists Group will be either sold or raffled and the proceeds passed to C.O.G. funds. So donations of books and journals will be gratefully received.

AN A.C.T. SIGHTING OF THE WHITE (GREY) GOSHAWK

John L. McKean

Although a resident breeding species on the southern N.S.W. coast the White (Grey) Goshawk Accipiter novaehollandiae is of rare occurrence in the A.C.T.

AN A.C.T. SIGHTING OF THE WHITE (GREY) GOSHAWK (cont'd)

On March 16, 1975 I was surprised to see a white phase Grey Goshawk fly across the Tuggeranong Freeway near the Molonglo River crossing. The bird was seen quite clearly and my identification was based on its white plumage, the typical broad, rounded wings of an Accipiter and its swift gliding flight.

Mr. J.L. McKean, C.S.I.R.O., Division of Wildlife Research,
P.O. Box 84, Lyneham, A.C.T., 2602.

STATUS OF BIRDS OF CANBERRA AND DISTRICT
(CONTINUED)

WHITE BROWED BABBLER Pomatostomus superciliosus

No longer present (?). Barrett (1922) recorded the bird as being present near Tuggeranong, Matthews gave its status as "occasional" and Frith (1969) states a flock existed near Mt. Stromlo until at least 1950. No further records.

GOLDENHEADED CISTICOLA Cisticola exilis

Breeding resident, occurring in long grass and vegetation around areas of water (e.g. East End of Lake Burley Griffin and Lake George). Few records in winter probably because of its secretive habits during that period. Breeds from November to March.

LITTLE GRASSBIRD Megalurus gramineus

Breeding resident, occurring in reeds and similar vegetation around water. Not uncommon in our area but its secretive habits make it very difficult to see. Breeds September to December.

STATUS OF BIRDS OF CANBERRA AND DISTRICT (cont'd)COMMON REED WARBLER Acrocephalus stentoreus

Breeding summer migrant, occurring around freshwater wherever there are reed beds. The majority of birds arrive in our area in September and remain until April (occasionally till July). Breeds November to January. It is possible that birds may occasionally remain over winter in our area but there has been no proof of this to date.

BROWN SONGLARK Cinclorhamphus cruralis

Breeding (?) Summer migrant. Rather rare occurring irregularly in small numbers on open dry grassy areas. It is not clear from our records whether it is a regular visitor to our area or not and when it breeds. Records in our area are in the period September to January. Definitive information on the status of this bird is required.

RUFIOUS SONGLARK Cincloramphus mathewsi

Breeding summer migrant. Occurs in open forest country where there are large eucalypts without an understorey of shrubs. The numbers in our area appear to fluctuate considerably from year to year but there are usually a few pairs present. Breeding in our area is from November to January.

BLUE WREN Malurus cyaneus

Breeding resident, common throughout our area wherever there are thick shrubs including Canberra gardens but occasionally only in the wetter parts of the Brindabella Ranges. Breeds September to January with a few nests until March.

STATUS OF BIRDS OF CANBERRA AND DISTRICT (cont'd)WHITE THROATED WARBLER Gerygone olivacea

Common breeding migrant. Occurs in dry sclerophyll country and can be found occasionally in Canberra suburbs. The birds arrive in September and stay until April or May. It is possible that individual birds may overwinter. Breed October to January.

WESTERN WARBLER Gerygone fusca

Breeding migrant. Although not as numerous as the preceding species it is still fairly common in the Canberra area in dry open forest. The exact status is unsure because of its secretive habits and the similarity of calls with the White-Throated Warbler. Appears to arrive in September with most birds leaving in March with occasional birds staying until later. One record in August suggests that birds may stay over winter.

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON: Nycticorax caledonica

A.D. Ross

These notes are based on observations in the general Kelly's Swamp area of Canberra, over three "seasons" roughly November to February, in 1972-73 which was hot and dry, the lake level being low; 1973-74, when no birds were seen; and 1974-75, which was wet, the lake level being very high. There were two observation points; the Dairy Flat Road, at the large pond opposite the sewage farms, and the pond on Jerrabomberra Creek behind the Causeway tip.

Domestic, transport and work disasters precluded the observations from being as frequent and regular as might have been desired and experience suggested that it would have been much better if there had been simultaneous observations from both points.

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON(cont'd)

The observation points were visited mostly in the evening, from about an hour before sunset until after sunset, but visits were made, and herons seen, in the morning also. Details are given in the schedule. The evening sightings ranged from those in broad daylight, with the sun still well above the horizon, to the crepuscular. The evening sightings showed great regularity of sun-timing. The evenings of most frequent sightings and greatest activity were those of dull light, with high humidity or during or after rain.

The focus of all the activity seen was a group of willows - perhaps one single willow - on the left bank of Jerrabomberra Creek just before it debouches into the large pool behind the Causeway tip. The willows would be easily accessible from the water but access from the laid side would involve some wet scrambling. Neither mode was attempted.

From the pond observation point, birds were regularly seen to enter and emerge from one particular willow; the Dairy Flat Road observation involved or implied emergence from the postulated focus.

Away from the focus, and engaged in feeding activity, the birds showed considerable regularity in the sites taken up; particular tree stumps, posts, eyots and stretches of water edge were highly preferred but not so that the presence of a bird at a particular site could be guaranteed. Most of the sites were by or over open water but some stretches of nearby grass were also worked. One aberrational sighting was of two birds standing on the artificial wall of Lake Burley Griffin about a kilometre from the focus.

Most observations were of birds on the wing or engaged in seeking food/contemplative postures. A few were of birds emerging from or entering the focal willows. The entry process was swift, the emerging process leisurely, but as the focal willows overhang water there may have been an element of seeking food in it.

Three flight patterns were seen. First, a rapid, direct, very low altitude transit from the focus to an activity site or the

NANKEEN NIGHT HERON (cont'd)

bird being disturbed, from one activity site to another, Secondly, a rapid, direct, high altitude flight (100 metres). This was seen in the morning (10 am), early afternoon (2.30 pm) and evening. In the morning and afternoon sightings, the birds (immatures) were coming from the direction of the main body of the lake towards the focus. The evening high altitude sightings were of birds coming from the focus towards activity sites along the Dairy Flat Road; in these cases, the birds made very steep descents to the landing point. The third flight pattern was a nondescript, apparently directionless series of moves, at low altitude, from one activity site to another. All birds but one seen in food seeking /contemplative positions were immobile, although slight head and eye movements indicated awareness. The exceptional sighting was of a bird that was working a stretch of marshy grass. Feeding birds were seen on mid-water posts and stumps, branches overhanging water, grassy verges and - the aberrational sighting - the artificial wall of the Lake.

The birds seen were comparatively bold. A loud, unseen approach was far more disturbing than a direct, open approach even in broad daylight. The observer was within 20 metres of some birds at the Dairy Flat pond without the birds being affected. Heavy traffic on the Dairy Flat Road left these birds quite unaffected. No bird was heard giving voice, even when disturbed.

After discounting all possible double sightings of the same bird(s), the largest number seen during any one observation period was Minimum sightings of 4 and 3 were also made.

So far as could be ascertained, all birds seen in 1972-73 were mature. The first 1974-75 sightings (mid-November 1974) were of immature birds which, nevertheless, were self-supporting. Birds with immature and sub-adult plumage were seen as late as 9 February 1975.

L=Good W=on wing
(S)=Successive sighting
of samebird(s)

F=feeding/contemplative

P=Perch

Date & Time	Place	Weather	Observations
6.1.1973 7.15/7.30pm	Creek pond	?	1W(high) coming from lake
10.1.1973 7.30/8.30pm	"	?	1W(high) coming from lake
25.1.1973 7.15/8.30pm	"	L-good-dull- warm	1F(dusk)
26.1.1973 7.30/8.30pm	"	L-poor- failing; warm	1F(dusk)
9.2.1973 7.30/8.20pm	"	L-good- failing-warm	3W & P(together)
16.11.1974 10 am	"	L-dull; cool	1W(high) coming from Lake & proceeding towards Dairy Flat Road. Immature
17.11.1974 2.30 pm	"	L-dull; cool	1W; 1W(S). Immature
12.1.1975 7.00/8.15pm	"	L-good; warm	2F; 1W(S). Immature
13.1.1975 6.45/8.30pm	"	L-good; failing; warm	1W; 1F(this bird emerged from focal willow - Immature)
19.1.1975 7.30/8.00pm	"	L-good; failing; warm	1W(this bird emerged from focal willows)

SCHEDULE (cont 'd)

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Place</u> (a)	<u>Weather</u>	<u>Observations</u>
2.2.1975 7.208. 30pm	Dairy Flat	L-good; warm; windy	2W
9.2.1975 7.20/8.00pm	I	L-good; warm; damp	3W & F; 1W(S); 1W(S);1W(S); 1W(S) (Immature); 3W(S) OW&F(S) 1W & P(S). Minimum 3, of which one full adult, one sub-adult, one juvenile.
11.2.1975 7.20/7.50pm	II	L-dull-rainy	1W & F; 1W & F; 2W & F; 1W(S) Minimum 4. Two birds subsequently took off, flying high one towards the Molonglo, the other towards a higher point on the Jerrabomberra.
16.2.1975 7.30/8.00pm	I	L-dull-after heavy rain	2F
18.2.1975 7.30/8.00pm	II	L-brilliant; warm	1W(7.30, sun high); 3W & F (7.45, sun just set); 1W & F(7.55); 2W(S); Minimum 5
16.4.1975	Lake edge, C 100 m Manuka side of Kings Av. Bridge	L-very dull wet	2P. Seen from and undisturbed by car. When observer, having stopped car, approached on foot, the birds took off towards centre of East Basin.

(a) In all Dairy Flat sightings of W birds, marked not (S) the birds came from the direction of the local willows.

Mr. A.D. Ross, 64 Sprent Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T. 2604

A SUBURBAN PEACEFUL DOVE

A.D. Ross

Authorities describe the Peaceful Dove Geopelia striata as rare in the A.C.T. One was, however, a daily visitant to a Narrabundah garden for a period of just over two weeks in late 1974.

It was first seen in mid-afternoon on 24 November 1974, feeding in the midst of a flock of sparrows on the back lawn and the feed table (budgerigar mix, sunflower seed and crusts). Thereafter, it was seen daily, feeding in the same way or pottering about the vegetable patch, generally in the company of sparrows. The bird was not ringed and there were no obvious indications of its being an escape from captivity. It appeared to be in good feather and flew strongly.

It was not timid and could be approached to within about 5 metres. When disturbed, it normally removed itself to closely adjacent garden trees or the clothes hoist from where it cooed in a wary posture.

Most sightings were made around 8 a.m. (reflecting the observer's viewing opportunities) but at weekends there were later sightings, e.g. 11 am, 4 pm and 5.30pm, some of which lasted for up to an hour.

The roosting place was not discovered but was, presumably, close by.

The bird ceased to appear after 8 December. It may have been taken by a cat - neighbour's cats frequent the garden - but no feather traces were found.

The memory of this Peaceful Dove now joins that of a Forest Bronze wing Phaps chalcoptera which in mid 1973 had spent four days perched on the house roof in an obviously distressed condition.

Mr. A. D. Ross, 64 Sprent Street, Narrabundah, A.C.T., 2604

AN INTERESTING RECORD

Pink-eared Duck Malacorhynchus membranaceus. Two were present in the lower part of Jerrabomberra Creek just above the lake on 18 May 1975. It appears in the A.C.T. very irregularly (see C.B.N. 2 (4) October 1972 P.15).

S.J.W.

BOOK REVIEW

Birds of the Great Southern by Ray Garstone: published by A.C. Blair, Perth.

This book of 64 pages (each 135 x 212 mm) is a check list of the birds of the Great Southern area of Western Australia. It contains information about birds recorded in the area categorised under habitat, notes and nesting. The book is well produced on glossy paper and as well as the check list contains a map of the area, one photograph of habitat, ten photographs of birds and an introduction including a description of the local habitat. The cover is from a colour photograph and the indexing is particularly well done - by vernacular and Latin names & a systematic index is included.

For those people (like myself) who enjoy regional check lists and for those who are travelling through the area this book is worth having. It is obviously a labour of love, and a well presented one at that.

If I have one criticism it would be that I would have preferred to have seen more photographs of habitat and less of birds, but that is a personal preference only. It is interesting to compare species notes from Western Australia with the behaviour of the same species in our area. For instance the nest of the Jacky Winter Microeca ceucophoea is often built one metre or less from the ground over there, whereas in our area it is normally higher. There are similar differences in other species.

Probably the most surprising record in the book was of three Great-winged Petrels Pterodroma macroptera, remembering that the Great Southern area is well inland. If this type of note interests you, why not buy the book yourself and do your own digging?

Copies are available at \$1.50 from: Ray Garstone, Woodanilling, W.A., 6316.

(G.S.C.)

Bird in the Hand, H.J. de S. Disney and others. Editor S.G. Lane. Published by the Bird Banders Association of Australia.

Commencing in March 1963, Mr. Disney, Curator of Birds, Australian Museum, Sydney, has with minor assistance from other competent ornithologists, produced a series of articles with the above title in the Australian Bird Bander. That series has now been revised, re-edited and published in book form.

This book is a timely reminder that we have much to learn about our avifauna by comparison with the information readily available regarding the birds of Europe and North America. The aim is to assist the reader

to identify, age and sex a bird in the hand by its external characters alone; this data is singularly lacking in Australian bird books generally.

The information is derived from aged and sexed museum specimens and the whole, as one would expect is superbly accurate and detailed. Photographs of most species are given but the main information is in the text, vital points being illustrated by like drawings. The book covers 40 articles covering nearly 80 species. Particular emphasis is given to those species which are likely to be confused and comparisons are given frequently. Future additions to the series will be published in *The Australian Bird Bander*; one could wish that this form of detailed information were already available for all species.

The five "red" robins are dealt with in great detail for the male plumage end diagnostic points given for separation of birds in any plumage but full details of the female and juvenile plumages are not given. No doubt this reflects a lack of correctly identified museum specimens. A useful addition to the detail for these somewhat difficult species (especially when in juvenile or female plumage) would be tarsus length, which is a further diagnostic item for the Pink Robin in particular and probably others also.

Production is based on the original *Bird Bander* format and reproduction of all material **is** very good. Glossy paper is used.

Species covered are generally those occurring in the south-east of Australia and this publication is a must for all interested in our birds who like to know precisely what they are seeing. The work is equally valuable to the casual bird observer and to the person handling birds.

Not since Mr. Disney's predecessor A.J. North, produced his famous "Nests and Eggs of Birds found breeding in Australia" over 50 years ago has so much new and detailed information been made available in one relatively small volume. This is a valuable addition to the literature of Australian birds.

(S.J.W.)

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