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AN EARLIER DATE FOR THE ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA OF JOHN GOULD'S "A SYNOPSIS OF THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA AND THE ADJACENT ISLANDS".

The Queensberry Hill Press published in 1979 a beautiful facsimile of John Gould's "A Synopsis of the Birds of Australia". My good friend and Gouldiana colleague, Allan McEvey, contributed a detailed "Note on Synopsis". Under McEvey's reference note 5, is the following statement: "Part 2 of the Synopsis appeared in April not January 1837 as printed on the contents issued with bound sets after 1840. Apart from the date printed in the wrapper, John Gould wrote to Sir William Jardine on Feb. 27, 1837 commenting "The Beagle is commissioned and will sail in a month or so. I am preparing a few copies of the 2nd part of the Synopsis purposely that they may be taken out with them" ... The Beagle under Captain J.C. Wickham arrived in Australian waters in December, 1837. (*Aust. Dict. Biog.* Vol. 2 p. 489). It is probable therefore that Gould's first illustrated plates of Australian birds arrived in the Colony before Gould himself". (The February 27, 1837 let-

ter from Gould to Sir William Jardine is in the Newton Library, Zoology Department, Cambridge, Mr Ron Hughes, Librarian).

In the University of Kansas Spencer Library-Ellis Collection is item Ellis Aves E62 which is the "Synopsis" in the original four parts as issued. Part I is dated January 1937 on the wrapper, Part II is dated April 1837, and Parts III and IV are both dated April 1838. The dates of issue are the same as McEvey stated.

The aspect of McEvey's note that is of interest, is the final sentence "It is probable therefore that Gould's first illustrated plates of Australian birds arrived in the Colony before Gould himself".

In the process of compiling material for my book on the life of John Gould (1804-1881), I have accumulated

much information hitherto unpublished, mainly from Gould related correspondence. In the Royal College of Surgeons of England are letters from Dr. George Bennett of Sydney to Professor Richard Owens of London. (Photocopies were kindly supplied to me by E.H. Cornelius, Librarian).

A letter from Bennett to Owens dated 26 September 1837 is of interest with regard to Gould's "Synopsis" Part I being received by Dr. Bennett in Sydney. The pertinent extract follows: "My Dear Owen, Thanks to Gould for the 1st Part of the Birds of Australia; there is an error however in the colouring of *Tropidorhynchus corniculatus*, the head & cheeks are not of a blue, but of a black color, it is known in the colony by the name of "Bald-headed Friar" & is common in all parts of Australia. I sent you specimens in spirit shot in the

Botanic Garden at Sydney ... Gould's work is much admired, both King & M'Leay are much pleased with it. I consider some copies would sell here ... yours ever sincerely, George Bennett".

There is no further information in the letter when Gould's Part I was received. Since Dr. Bennett had already shown his copy to King (Phillip Parker King) and to M'Leay (undoubtedly Alexander Macleay), Bennett must have had it in his possession at least a few days or weeks earlier than September 26, 1837. The trivial point at least is that yes, Gould's first illustrated work on Australian birds did precede him to Australia, sometime before September 26, 1837. The naturalists on the *Beagle* also had a copy, or copies, of the "Synopsis" Part I & II when they arrived in Australia in December 1837.

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SUGGESTED NESTING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEADEN FLYCATCHERS AND NOISY FRIARBIRDS.

It has been noticed at Moruya, NSW, (Marchant 1979), Canberra (Lenz 1981; Anon 1981) and Armidale, NSW, (H.A.Ford *in litt.*) that Leaden Flycatchers *Myiagra rubecula*, when nesting, seem to associate with Noisy Friarbirds *Philemon corniculatus*. During the breeding season of 1981-2, when both species were more common than in the previous six years, I tried to investigate this matter in about 1 km² of forest and woodland along Maulbrooks Road, Moruya. Part of the area is not suitable breeding habitat for either species, as shown in Figure 1, because it has been cleared or damaged to the extent that there are few large trees with horizontal branches, spreading into small open spaces, or suppressed saplings of the right size, both of which Friarbirds seem to like for nesting, or large trees with the small dead branches chosen as nesting sites by the Flycatchers. Most of the rest of the area proved suitable for the nesting of both species in previous years.

All nests that I found in 1981 were inaccessible except one of each species and therefore results are less satisfactory than if I had been able to inspect the contents of each regularly and measure distances accurately. Yet, by watching the behaviour of adults at the nests I probably got a reasonable notion of the history of each. Distances measured on the ground were probably reliable to about a metre but vertical distances were certainly poorer approximations. None of the birds was individually marked so that I could not be sure that the same pair nested again after losing a nest or indeed whether a pair moved from one place to another. In all,

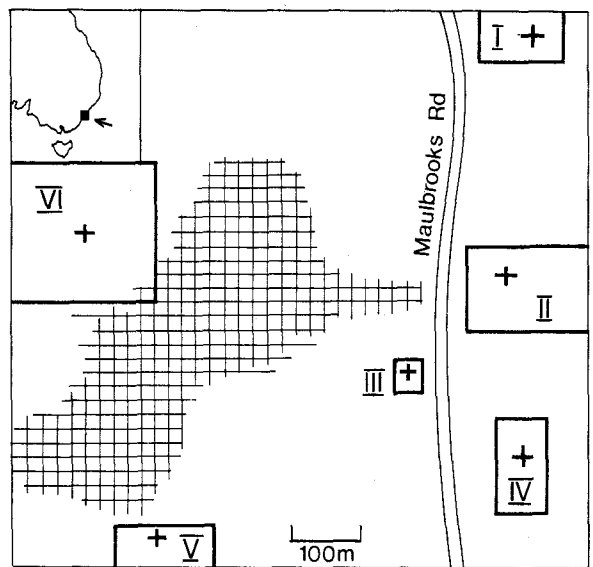


Figure 1. Sketch map of area at Maulbrooks Road, Moruya, showing approximate area of unsuitable habitat for Leaden Flycatchers and Noisy Friarbirds (cross-hatched) and localities (I-VI) where these species bred.

I found eight occupied nests of Noisy Friarbirds and three others that had been lost or finished, probably attributable to eight pairs of birds. I knew fifteen nests of Leaden Flycatchers, perhaps attributable to nine pairs.