

Additions to the Birds of Mansfield, Victoria

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In my paper (*The Emu*, Vol. xxxi, p. 280) I listed 121 species of native birds as occurring in the northern portion of the Shire of Mansfield. Since then, to the end of August, 1934, the following additions have been made:—

Gallinula tenebrosa. Dusky Moor-hen.—Early in February, 1932, four birds were seen feeding at the mouth of a creek. They were very shy, immediately taking wing. Moor-hens, as a rule, submerge when disturbed and shelter amongst the aquatic vegetation, but lack of that, both on river and creek, necessitated flight. A few days later, a single bird was seen.

Fulica atra. Coot.—A single bird was noted on the river on March 26, 1932. When first seen it was picking insects from the surface of the water, swimming jerkily about whilst doing so. It remained a few days, and was often seen feeding on a patch of water couch grass at the mouth of the creek.

Biziura lobata. Musk Duck.—A single specimen, a female, visited the river on January 30, 1932, and stayed until about February 17. The Musk Duck has a peculiar "dumpy" appearance, and swims very low in the water. It is an expert diver, going under without any vestige of a splash. On one occasion whilst I was standing on the edge of a deep water-hole, the bird passed under water within a few feet of me. It was swimming rapidly, using only the feet for propulsion. When disturbed on that and subsequent occasions, the bird immediately dived, and on regaining the surface, half flapped and half paddled to a point twenty or thirty yards away. The last time it was seen it was suddenly disturbed from a small rocky hole that offered no escape by diving. It rose from the surface with great difficulty and flew with heavy sidelong flight further down the river.

Circus assimilis. Spotted Harrier.—One observed systematically beating a heavily-grassed paddock. It was flying slowly at no great height from the ground.

Aprosmictus scapularis. King Parrot.—Just before sundown on October 27, 1932, a high-pitched whistle was heard, and upon my imitating this call a female (?) flew across and settled within a few feet of where I was standing. Another bird was seen feeding on quinces on June 2, 1933.

Alcyon azurea. Azure Kingfisher.—One bird visited the river on March 26, 1932.

Micropus pacificus. Fork-tailed Swift.—Great numbers flew over, apparently on migration, on March 15, 1934. (See *The Emu*, Vol. xxxiv, p. 97.)

Lamprolaima plagosus. Golden Bronze Cuckoo.—This bird is a regular summer visitor. It is usually seen on the topmost limb of a dead tree, whence it utters its plaintive "pe-pe-pe" note, long repeated.

Myiagra cyanoleuca. Satin Flycatcher.—For the last couple of years a pair of these birds have haunted a small patch of scrub, where they bred. A shy species, it generally keeps to the sapling tops. Grinding notes somewhat similar to those of the Restless Flycatcher, though more subdued and broken, are frequently uttered.

Megalurus gramineus. Little Grass-bird.—Extremely rare in the district. Has been noted very few times during a ten-years' sojourn on the river, but was not definitely identified until February, 1932.

Cisticola exilis. Fantail Warbler.—A single bird noted singing from a post bordering an oat crop, on November 5, 1933.

Artamus leucorhynchus. White-breasted Wood-Swallow.—A pair, first seen in company with a colony of Dusky Wood-Swallows, were haunting a ring-barked paddock, on October 16, 1932. They subsequently bred, choosing a hollow limb high up for the site. A conspicuous, graceful species, rather shy.

Pardalotus striatus. Striated Pardalote.—A common species and resident all the year. For years I suspected the presence of a species similar to, but distinct from *P. ornatus*, but no specimen was handled until July, 1934. Mr. A. G. Campbell confirmed my identification. This species has a distinct two-syllable call, "wit-chu." *P. ornatus*, with the conspicuous white wing patch, calls "whit-e-chu." This latter bird is also apparently resident, as I have notes of the species taken throughout the summer, and also in mid-winter.

Meliphaga fusca. Fuscous Honeyeater.—Has been noted a few times, but is certainly not a permanent resident.

Taniopygia castanotis. Zebra-Finch.—One only seen—January 29, 1932. The bird, a female, was quite fearless, allowing observation from about four feet away.

The addition of the above fifteen species now brings my total for the district to 136 species.

The following list of doubtful species is included to complete my records:—

Tribonyx ventralis. Black-tailed Native-hen.—One glimpsed on the river several times, but it proved too wary to make identification certain.

Platalea sp.—Three Spoonbills noted flying high overhead on February 22, 1934.

Glossopsitta porphyrocephala. Purple-crowned Lorikeet.—A small flock of birds believed to be of this species seen.

Necphema elegans. Elegant Parrot.—A glimpse of a strange Parrot feeding with a flock of Eastern Rosellas, gave me the impression that it was of this species. It easily out-distanced the Rosellas to the summit of a high tree, and then immediately left again on its own, flying erratically like a Snipe.

Owenavis osculans. Black-eared Cuckoo.—Am almost certain of this bird, but as a second look was impossible, record it amongst the "doubtfuls."

Gerygone sp.?—During the spring and summer, a song somewhat similar to that of *G. olivacea*, is frequently heard in the bush. It has been traced to a small brown Warbler obviously of the genus *Gerygone*, but I could not procure a specimen. Probably the Brown Warbler (*G. richmondi*), but may be the Western (*G. fusca*). Mansfield is not so very far from Rutherglen, the eastern limit of the Western form.*

Meliphaga melanops. Yellow-tufted Honeyeater.—A very doubtful record.

*Almost certainly the Western Warbler. The species does not appear, however, to extend across Victoria from the west as much as down from the north, so that the use of the word "eastern" in referring to Rutherglen is hardly correct.—Ed.