

## The Mangrove Honeyeater : An Extension in Range

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Details of the présence of the Mangrove Honeyeater (*Meliphaga fasciogularis*) in coastal north-eastern New South Wales were published recently in *The Emu* (1956). Briefly, it can be stated that the birds were found breeding near Yamba, at the mouth of the Clarence River, in 1947; additional observations were made in 1955. An extension of 100 miles southward in the range of the species can now be recorded. On October 10, 1958, M. S. R. Sharland and I visited Stuart's Point on the New South Wales coast between Macks-ville and South-west Rocks. We saw there several Mangrove Honeyeaters, which were watched as they called loudly and moved about in the rather low mangroves close to a long, narrow footbridge that crosses to the sand-dunes and ocean beach opposite the settlement of Stuart's Point. One bird was seen to leave the mangroves and fly about 100 yards and sip the blossoms of a flowering coral-tree close to the township.

The locality is near the old mouth of the Macleay River and the shores of both the mainland and the adjacent islands are fringed with mangroves which extend at least six miles south to the present mouth of the river and its estuarine waters. The actions of the birds seen, and their loud and persistent calls, indicated that they were probably breeding. However, we were unable to locate any nests during a search lasting about half an hour. Other species noted in the mangroves were the Brown Honeyeater (*Gliciphila indistincta*), the Mangrove Heron (*Butorides striata*), the Mangrove Warbler (*Gerygone cantator*), and the Bar-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*).

It would seem that the Mangrove Honeyeater has only recently colonized the Stuart's Point area. M. T. Goddard made a thorough investigation of the bird-life of the Macks-ville district, a little to the north of Stuart's Point, throughout the years 1944 and 1945. He did not observe the Mangrove Honeyeater there, but he did find the Mangrove Warbler and he located a number of nests of that species. At the time his record (1946) was the most southern for the Warbler though it has since been recorded (1956) from Harrington, 80 miles south of Macksville. Goddard visited Stuart's Point on several occasions without noting the Mangrove Honeyeater. Had the species been present it could scarcely have been overlooked because of its loud and distinct call. Thus it would seem that the birds seen by Sharland and me have only recently extended their range to Stuart's Point, presumably sometime between the years 1946 and 1958. The locality concerned is some 230 miles north of Sydney.

## REFERENCES

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## The White Ibis in Tasmania

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The autumn and winter of 1957 proved an interesting period in Tasmania in connection with the arrival of species not previously recorded here, the migration of others considered rare, and a great increase in the number of some annual visitors. The reason for this is believed to be the dry conditions in their normal habitats in the mainland States.

In this report I propose to deal only with the influx of White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) which have been the most spectacular of our unusual visitors. It is the first occasion that the species has been recorded in Tasmania, and its appearance caused much interest to ornithologists as well as to the general public.

The first report was from Oatlands, central Tasmania, on May 31, 1957, and following the publication in the local paper of the record, further reports were soon given from areas in northern Tasmania.

As these reports were received, it became apparent that the birds arrived here some time prior to the date given, but had not been recorded because the observers had not realized the significance of the occurrence.

I was able to spend two weeks in the north-west of this State checking reported accounts and making personal observations, and this resulted in acceptable records from more than 20 localities extending over 100 miles of the coastal area.

It appeared that the birds probably first alighted in the far north-west of the island, as up to 300 were reported there about the same time, and then divided and quickly spread eastwards along the coast, and then inland to the mid-lands. Between 50 and 100 had settled near Deloraine and were feeding on an area of irrigation near the butter factory. They had left, however, when I reached the locality on June 1. Two days later I watched 13 feeding in a paddock near Chudleigh, not far from Deloraine, and following information received I obtained a specimen from the master of Chudleigh school, who stated that a pupil had found it dying from gunshot wounds. The skin of this bird, a female, is at present in my possession, and is, I believe, the only Tasmanian-collected specimen in existence.