

Some Erroneous and Doubtful Records for North-west Queensland

By JOHN LIDDY, Riverside, Tas.

Herbert J. Kersey spent five weeks at Dolomite, some six miles west of Cloncurry, during January and February. The year is not stated, but it was probably 1918 or 1919. Notes concerning some 58 species of birds were published in *The Emu*, vol. 19, p. 50. The notes unfortunately contain many errors.

Comment on some of the species listed by Kersey is detailed below. This comment is largely based upon personal observation between July 1954 and December 1958, during which time I lived at Mount Isa, some 80 miles west of Cloncurry. In some cases, nomenclature used by Kersey differs from that of the second edition of the *Official Checklist* (his paper preceding its publication). Where that is so, the Checklist name is included in parentheses.

Phaps elegans. Brush Bronze-winged Pigeon.

"One bird seen in the trees along the banks of the Cloncurry River on 26th January."

The range of the Brush Bronze-wing is southern Australia and Tasmania, and it does not occur in north-west Queensland. The species in the area is the Common Bronze-wing (*Phaps chalcoptera*).

Lobivanellus lobatus. (*Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ*). Spur-winged Plover.

"This bird was heard during the nights of 6th and 15th February."

Again a southern species; the species in the area is the Masked Plover (*Lobibyx miles*).

Dendrocygna arcuata. Whistling-Duck.

"Heard almost every night. Seem to be very numerous."

During the period of the monsoonal rains, usually January or February, tree-ducks are often heard overhead at night, but I, personally, would not be able to distinguish between the two species by their calls. Based upon sight records, the Plumed Tree-Duck (*Dendrocygna eytoni*) is much more common than the Whistling Tree-Duck (*D. arcuata*). See also Berney, *Emu*, vol. 6, p. 156, and MacGillivray, *Emu*, vol. 13, p. 147.

Hieracidea (Falco) berigora. Brown Hawk.

"The most common bird of the West. One flock on the wing was estimated to contain not less than 500 birds."

The Brown Hawk is a relatively common hawk in north-west Queensland, but the notes, quoted above, almost certainly refer to the Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*).

Licmetis (Kakatoë) tenuirostris. Long-billed Cockatoo (Corella).

"Very common."

Again a southern species; the species in the area is the Little Corella (*Kakatoë sanguinea*).

Aprosmictus scapulatus. (A. scapularis). King Parrot.

"Four of these birds were seen flying over on 19th February."

This is a surprising inclusion, as the King Parrot is generally considered to be confined to the heavily timbered ranges and brushes of eastern Australia. The species most likely seen was the Red-winged Parrot (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*) which is not uncommon on the water-courses in the area.

Centropus phasianinus. Pheasant-Coucal or Spur-footed Cuckoo.

"Heard on one occasion."

This species is a very rare bird in the interior of north-west Queensland, if it occurs at all. In view of the other errors in the list, considerable doubt must be placed upon this identification.

Smicrornis brevirostris. Short-billed Tree-Tit.

"Single birds seen on 23rd and 24th February."

The *Official Checklist* lists the Brown or southern form of the Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*) and the Yellow or northern form (*S. flavescens*) as separate species. Some workers unite both forms in the one species (*S. brevirostris*). The bird in the area is the *S. flavescens* of the *Official Checklist*.

Pachycephala rufiventris. Rufous-breasted Whistler.

"A very rare bird in the West. A pair was seen on 25th February."

This is not "a very rare bird in the West". It is widely distributed, and is relatively common in suitable habitat (personal observation; see also Berney, *Emu*, vol. 5, p. 75, and MacGillivray, *Emu*, vol. 13, p. 174).

At the end of his paper, Kersey mentions the presence of another whistler, which he was unable to identify. As far as I can determine, no other whistler occurs in the area.

Pardalotus affinis. (P. striatus). Yellow-tipped Pardalote.

"Were often seen. The 'drives' or 'mines' of these birds were seen in almost every bank."

Pardalotus affinis does not occur as far north as the Cloncurry area. The two species in the area are *P. melanocephalus* and *P. rubricatus*.

Tropidorhynchus (Philemon) corniculatus. Friar-bird.

"A very small number was seen on 6th February."

The range of *P. corniculatus* is eastern Australia, and Cloncurry is west of its normal range. However, Berney, *Emu*, vol. 5, p. 76, noted it occasionally in the Richmond area, some 180 miles east of Cloncurry, and it is possible that it occasionally wanders further west.

I did not see the species during my residence at Mount Isa. The Silver-crowned Friar-bird (*P. argenticeps*) was noted on a number of occasions at Mount Isa, including one nesting pair. It is my opinion that the birds seen by Kersey were more likely to be *P. argenticeps*.

Corone australis. (Corvus coronoides). Australian Raven.

"Four or five of these birds were seen on one occasion."

The Cloncurry area is north of the range of this species. The bird in the area is the Crow (*Corvus cecilæ*).

Queensland Collectors of the Godeffroy Museum.—The Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg had numerous collectors all over the world during the second half of the nineteenth century. The original labels were unfortunately removed in most cases, and it is often very difficult to ascertain the exact place of origin of Godeffroy specimens still extant in various European Museums, including the Rothschild Collection. Prof. Panning (Zool. Mus., Hamburg) has kindly informed me that Queensland material in the Godeffroy Museum was sent by two collectors.

Amalie Dietrich was in Queensland from about 1863 to about 1871. From Brisbane she apparently went to Gayndah in the Burnett district, later to Gladstone/Curtis district (24 deg. south). After July 1868 she was at Lake Elphinstone, inland from Port Mackay, and after a short visit to Cape York she was back in Port Mackay in 1869. From there she went to Bowen and Port Denison, where she was at least until 1870. In 1872 she was in the Tonga Islands.

The other collector was Eduard Daemel, who sailed for Sydney in 1871. He subsequently shipped collections from Rockhampton, Clermont (Peak Downs), 300 miles west of Rockhampton, and from the Wide Bay district along the Burnett River. After a trip to Bass Strait he returned to Hamburg in 1875.

The detailed history of the Godeffroy Museum has been told by Dr. Albert Panning (1955-1958, *Mitt. Hamburg Zool. Mus. Inst.*, 53-56).—ERNST MAYR, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., 4/11/59.