

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

BIRDS IN WINTER IN THE KIEWA VALLEY, VICTORIA, ABOVE 1,500 METRES

McEvey (1962, Proc. R. Soc. Vict. 75: 315-317) has commented on the lack of data concerning the birds of the Victorian high country. From 1 June to 31 August 1975 I made daily records of all birds seen near Falls Creek in north-eastern Victoria. Falls Creek is a ski-village located at 1,500 metres on the northern edge of the Bogong High Plains. The area of observation ranged from 1,500 to 1,800 metres and included the ski-village. It is largely in its natural condition, the vegetation ranging upwards from Snow Gum *Eucalyptus pauciflora* woodland through tall alpine herbfield to alpine meadow.

I have divided the birds that I recorded into two groups. Group 1 contains those species that I regard as being winter residents because of their presence in the area for at least two of the three winter months. The species included in Group 2 were observed on fewer than three occasions.

Group 1

Callocephalon fimbriatum Gang Gang Cockatoo

Seen daily in Snow Gums, feeding on the nuts.

Calyptorhynchus funereus Yellow-tailed Black

Cockatoo

Seen in groups of three, six or nine several times a week during June and July, either flying through the area or sitting in Snow Gums. The last sighting was on 30 July when I saw a flock of twenty-six fly over the village. No sightings were made in August.

Platycercus elegans Crimson Rosella

Seen daily in Snow Gums, feeding on the nuts. Both immature and adult plumages were recorded.

Pachycephala olivacea Olive Whistler

Seen daily, usually as individuals feeding in the bushes that were exposed above the snow and in the lower branches of Snow Gums in the company of small groups of White-browed Scrubwrens.

Colluricincla harmonica Grey Shrike-thrush

Seen several times each week throughout the winter. All sightings were of single birds, and they were usually feeding on the middle and upper branches of Snow Gums.

Sericornis frontalis White-browed Scrubwren

Seen daily feeding in the lower branches of Snow Gums and in the bushes that remained exposed above the snow.

Sturnis vulgaris Common Starling

Seen daily perching on the roofs of buildings.

Strepera graculina Pied Currawong

Seen daily in flocks of up to fifty birds. They feed on scraps placed out for them on balconies and on rubbish from dust-bins and the refuse depot.

Strepera versicolor Grey Currawong

Seen several times per week, usually as individuals in the company of Pied Currawongs.

Corvus spp Ravens

Observations of relative size and calls would indicate that both *C. coronoides*, the Australian Raven, and *C. mellori*, the Little Raven, were present. Small groups of ravens were seen several times per week during June, increasing to daily during July and August. The size of the groups also increased as the winter progressed — up to forty birds by the end of August. They feed from garbage cans and at the refuse depot.

Group 2

Ardea novaehollandiae White-faced Heron

One bird seen on 25 June at Rocky Valley Dam, one and a half kilometres south-east of Falls Creek.

Turnix sp Button-quail

One bird seen on 19 August in the Sun Valley area, one kilometre south of Falls Creek.

Dacelo novaeguineae Laughing Kookaburra

One bird seen on 18 June at Falls Creek.

Petroica phoenicea Flame Robin

Several birds in male plumage seen at Falls Creek on 31 August.

Acanthiza pusilla Brown Thornbill

One bird seen on 19 August at Falls Creek.

Pardalotus striatus Striated Pardalote

Several calls heard on 19 August at Falls Creek.

Zosterops lateralis Silvereye

Several seen on 1 July. A flock of thirty to forty birds was seen on 2 July. Both sightings were in the same area, 500 metres south of Falls Creek, on the ridge between Falls Creek and Rocky Valley.

Gymnorhina tibicen Australian Magpie

One bird seen on 7 June at the Rocky Valley Workshops, one and a half kilometres south-east of Falls Creek.