

Greater Knot: New Record for South Australia

By C. LEO. McPHERSON, Caulfield, Vic.

The Greater Knot, *Calidris tenuirostris* (Horsfield), is one of the rarer waders to visit Australia. According to Condon and McGill (*Field Guide to the Waders*), it has been collected at five localities in the north, whilst records have occurred in the south-west (seven), near Brisbane (one), and occasionally near Sydney. In 1895 a single specimen was obtained from the Gippsland Lakes, Victoria. There has been no previous South Australian record.

On May 6, 1957, I found an injured bird of this species at Troubridge Shoal, an island lighthouse station in the Gulf of St. Vincent, South Australia. Troubridge Shoal—the name is descriptive—is situate on the western side of the Gulf, about five miles from Edithburgh, Yorke Peninsula. It comprises roughly twenty acres of coastal heath, bounded by sandy beaches and a wide littoral region, much frequented by waders in the summer.

The bird was first sighted through a telescope, in the early morning, feeding well out on the tidal flats, in company with six others of the same species. The whole flock, with the exception of the injured bird, which was lagging behind slightly, was in an unusually compact group, only an inch or two separating each bird from its neighbour. On closer approach, the main body flew off, leaving behind the injured member which was then easily captured. On examination the injuries, judging by the feeble attempts made at flight, appeared to be to one or both of the wings.

The bird was placed in a disused aviary where it was fed on shellfish, which it ate voraciously whenever they were offered, and at times took food from the hand. At this time it was thought that the bird was possibly merely weakened by hunger or exhaustion; soon after, however, it died. As it was still unidentified, though a search through the limited reference books then available at the station indicated the likelihood of its being the Greater Knot, it was thought desirable to send the specimen to a museum. It was accordingly forwarded to the National Museum, Melbourne.

The following day six more birds, assumed to be the original flock, were observed feeding along the water-line at a distance of approximately one hundred yards. They were observed through binoculars, and it was noted that two of the flock showed rufous about the scapulars, whilst, in the remaining four, only drab non-breeding plumage without marked coloration was seen. Most of the time the birds were in single file along the water's edge, again grouped very closely together, bill almost touching tail. The flock soon flew off, but was seen again briefly two days later on a sand-bank

about three hundred yards from the shore, after which the birds were not seen again.

Shortly after this a reply was received from Mr. A. R. McEvey of the National Museum, advising me that the bird had been identified as *Calidris tenuirostris*, that it was in the beginning of breeding plumage, and that the specimen was registered as No. B7085 in the National Museum Collection. Mr. McEvey also kindly supplied the information that the four other specimens in the National Museum were from Napier Broome Bay, Carnarvon, and Cairns. Contact was then made with Mr. H. T. Condon of the South Australian Museum, and the fact elicited, amongst other helpful information, that there had been no previous record of the species for South Australia.

Notes taken of the soft parts while the bird was alive are as follows—bill brown, darker on the upper mandible; legs, yellowish brown; irides, dark brown.

Glossy Ibis Notes

By V. T. LOWE, Mystic Park, Vic.

Little has been written on the habits of this species (*Plegadis falcinellus*). Therefore these notes might be of interest, although it seems certain that they refer to an unusual individual. I had had this bird under observation for some time and had speculated on its possible movements when, to my surprise, Alan Johnson of Ballarat told me of recorded notes he had of a parallel nature. On returning to Ballarat he sent me his notes and I present them as furnished to me, with my own following.

Alan Johnson records—

The first occasion on which I noted this species at Ballarat was on Jan. 16, 1952, on a swampy area close to the city. The bird was accompanied by nine Straw-necked Ibis. It was rather shy, but preferred to feed away from the 'Straw-necks' and would join them only when they were flushed. The bird was there again the following evening in the same company. On Jan. 18, 1952, the Glossy Ibis was in the company of a number of White-necked Herons, the Straw-necked Ibis having disappeared. It was fairly easily approached on this occasion.

On Feb. 1, 1952, the Straw-necked Ibis had returned but the Glossy had gone, and I did not see it again that year. However, on Sept. 24, 1953, a single Glossy was noted on the south-west corner of Lake Wendouree. Despite heavy traffic on the road about one hundred yards away, including noisy trams, the bird was feeding quietly and would permit one to approach to within fifteen feet before flushing. The bird remained in the area until Oct. 9, 1953, when it departed for haunts unknown. The bird was not injured and seemed quite content.

At Mystic Park during the winter of 1952, flood-waters covering pastures attracted numbers of Glossy Ibis. It was quite usual to see as many as twelve birds together, and once a group of twenty-seven. However, in one spot a lone Glossy Ibis was seen on several occasions, never joining groups