

Description of a New Sub-species of *Platycercus elegans* (Gmelin).

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Colour.—As compared with *P. elegans*, the adult birds of the form under review are scarlet rather than crimson; head, nape, rump, and lower back bright scarlet; hind neck, mantle, scapulars, and most of the greater wing coverts black edged with bright orange-red; patch on shoulder black; median and lesser wing coverts light blue; outer webs of primaries, secondaries, and some of the wing coverts, basal part of exposed portions of outer web, dark blue; central tail feathers dull green on the inner web, other portions of tail feathers blue, the outer four feathers broadly tipped with pale blue; chin or lower cheek blue; under side, including under tail coverts, uniformly bright scarlet; under side of tail feathers, with the exception of the broadly-tipped portions of the four outer feathers, deep black; under side of wing black, with the exception of the large shoulder patch, which is blue.

In less developed specimens, in the mantles and scapulars the edgings show more or less green, also some of the feathers on the nape and rump have pale edges. This race is distinguished from all other forms of *P. elegans* (with the exception of *P. adalaidæ*) by the scarlet colour replacing the crimson, and from the latter in the generally more brilliant scarlet plumage, and in the case of old specimens the green feathers on rump and back are entirely replaced by scarlet.

Habitat.—The Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia, the extremity of which is familiar under the name of Cape Jervis. The peninsula was thus named at the time of Flinders and Baudin's exploration of St. Vincent Gulf; but later the name was dropped, until, in 1911, at the request of Count Fleurieu, the grandson of the famous French Minister, the name was replaced on the South Australian maps.

While we have recognized for a long time that a highly-coloured strain of the Adelaide Rosella was frequently seen in the neighbourhood of Myponga, and even extending as far as the Meadows, along the same range, it has fallen to the lot of Mr. Frank E. Parsons, R.A.O.U., and myself to locate the true home of these highly-coloured birds on the occasion of a rather hurried motor trip to Cape Jervis last Easter. I am indebted to Mr. Parsons both for specimens and help in attempting to elucidate the problem of this highly-coloured form.

We consider that their headquarters are between Normanville and Cape Jervis. Between Normanville and Second Valley every flock had its quota of highly-coloured birds. They were met with in numbers in the gums along the water-courses.

If it be decided to distinguish these geographical races by

trinomial designations, I suggest the name of *Platycercus elegans fleurieuensis*, or the Fleurieu Peninsula Rosella, for this form. On the other hand, should it be decided to make *P. adalaidæ* a dominant species, then this form under review and *P. flaveolus* would be sub-species of *P. adalaidæ*.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE FLEURIEU PENINSULA ROSELLA,
AND COMMENTS ON THE AFFINITIES OF *Platycercus adalaidæ*
(GOULD) AND *P. flaveolus* (GOULD).

I have collected specimens of *Platycercus elegans* from the western portion of Kangaroo Island and the Mount Gambier district of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Southern Queensland, and have specimens from Cape York, Northern Queensland. In Mr. Mathews's 1913 "List" the western form is called *melanopterus* (North), and the northern *nigrescens* (Ramsay), both sub-species of the intermediate or dominant form, *elegans*.

A comparison of these skins shows that the rich crimson coloration, subject to some divergence of shade, is persistent throughout the whole series.

Now, the Fleurieu bird, in the case of the adult specimen described, at first glance appears to have closer affinities with *P. elegans* than with *P. adalaidæ*, in that the whole of the green coloration is replaced with red; but on closer study it is evident that the character of the red links it up with *P. adalaidæ*, and suggests the possibility that *adalaidæ* is more nearly related to *flaveolus* than to *elegans*, of which it is made a sub-species in Mr. Mathews's 1913 "List."

On comparing the Fleurieu skins with those in Capt. White's, the South Australian Museum, and Mr. Parsons' collections, I find that, while no skins of *adalaidæ* show nearly as much red as the highly-coloured skin described, several skins exhibit nearly as much as the less brightly-coloured skins from Second Valley. Two of these highly-coloured skins in Capt. White's collection came from Mount Compass, a place distinctly within the range assigned to the new bird. The examination of a large number of skins establishes the fact that exceptionally bright *P. adalaidæ*, although rarely, do occur throughout the Adelaide Hills, that could not be specifically separated from the second class skins of the Fleurieu birds; but in the best the latter stands out as very distinct in the brilliancy and extent of the scarlet coloration.

We therefore establish the fact that skins exist that, when carefully selected and placed together, will show a gradual transition from the brilliantly scarlet bird of Second Valley to the more sombre green-backed and more or less green-rumped form so common in the Adelaide Hills.

But on carrying this investigation further I find that intermediate forms between *P. adalaidæ* and *P. flaveolus* are not only not rare, but there is every reason to believe that the substitution of pale yellowish-green on the back and almost yellow on

the under side, as occurs in typical *P. flaveolus*, for the scarlet and more sombre green of *P. adelaidæ*, largely corresponds with the decreasing rainfall.

My investigations lead me to the conclusion that *P. fleurieuensis*, *P. adelaidæ*, and *P. flaveolus* are all one species. The types of each race are certainly widely different, but undoubtedly intermediates exist, making one doubt the advisability of referring to any of them as other than varieties of the one dominant form.

The following notes on some of the skins examined should be of interest:—

Platycercus flaveolus (Gould).—Of two adult birds shot out of the same flock at Wirrabara, September, 1916—(1) shows red above beak, slight red wash over crown, upper side pale yellowish-green, and a considerable amount of red distributed over the general yellowish ground-colour of the under side. (2) Also red forehead, but the reddish-orange extends over the crown; upper tail coverts, outer ones broadly fringed with red, and some of the scapulars showing red; under side, breast and tail coverts bright red, with some yellow distributed throughout. Both were adult males. (3) Skin from Melrose, also in the Flinders Range, shows still more red both in upper tail coverts and scapulars. (4) Skin obtained at Watervale, April, 1914, by Mr. Parsons, has on the under side the general yellowish ground-colour of *P. flaveolus*, but the forehead and crown are bright red; the upper tail coverts have a considerable number of red feathers distributed throughout, and the general tone of the upper side is deeper than is usual in this species; some of the scapulars are brightly tipped with red, and the secondaries red-fringed; the breast and under tail coverts bright red and yellow; bright red distributed throughout the under side. (5) Skin taken by myself on River Murray, 12 miles above Mannum, is fully as red as any of the preceding, but has the mantle and shoulders almost black.

P. adelaidæ (Gould).—(6) Shot by myself at Kangarilla, in the Adelaide Hills, on 10th November, 1914, is almost identical with the foregoing, except that the pale yellowish-green fringe to the feathers of the mantle and scapulars is more marked.

Bird Notes from Tasmania.

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The Black Strepera on the "Roof of Tasmania."—A friend who spends a great deal of time on the mountain plateaux of our island tells me that in a certain valley at high altitude it is the custom of the large "Black Jay" (*Strepera arguta*) to flock in the spring of the year in order to feed upon the native berries (*Astroloma pinifolium* and others) which are there in profusion. At this time the usually noisy *Strepera* is very silent, and one does