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combination *Meliphaga longirostris* of Gould is interesting as the name actually was not proposed until the meeting of the Zoological Society of London of September 22, 1846.

**Anthochaera chrysoptera.** Little Wattle-bird.

Using Gould's name *lunulata*, Gilbert records the name applied by the aborigines of King George's Sound as 'Dun-gur-uk.'

**Zonæginthus oculatus.** Red-eared Firetail.

Under the name 'Estrela' Gilbert records three aboriginal names. They are—

'Jee-ree.' Aborigines of Western Australia.

'Dwer-den-ngool-gnan-neer.' Aborigines of the interior of W.A.

'Poor-reen.' Aborigines of King George's Sound.

### *Circus fuliginosus* Diggles, 1875

By Major H. M. WHITTELL, O.B.E., Bridgetown, W.A.

Silvester Diggles (1817-1880) is well-known in Australian ornithology through his publication entitled *The Ornithology of Australia*. This was a collection of coloured plates of Australian birds published in Brisbane in 21 parts (six plates to a part) between the years 1866 and 1870. Opposite each plate there is a short letterpress, and the work includes the original naming of two species, *Strix walleri* and *Ptilonorhynchus rawnsleyi*. The work did not pay the author who, in 1875, left it on record<sup>1</sup> that " . . . . I attempted some years ago to bring out a work entitled 'The Ornithology of Australia.' It was issued at intervals, in parts at 10s., but had to be discontinued at part 21 in consequence of not paying expenses." Diggles also recorded<sup>2</sup> that the list of subscribers fell "almost suddenly from 90 to 60."

In 1873, 1874 and 1875 Diggles read some papers on birds before the Philosophical Society of Queensland and also published some articles on birds in Brisbane newspapers. In the last-mentioned year there appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* (issue of April 3, 1875) a two-column article extolling Diggles' book and suggesting that the Queensland government should aid in reprinting it. The article was entitled 'Birds and other Bipedes' and it appeared also in the *Brisbane Queenslander* of the same date. Apparently the article (and no doubt other influences) had the desired effect, as in 1877 there appeared in two imperial quarto volumes, published at Brisbane, the 'Companion to Gould's Handbook; or, synopsis of the birds of

1. *Queenslander* (Brisbane) March 13, 1875.

2. *Telegraph* (Brisbane) February 2, 1874.

Australia. Containing nearly one-third of the whole, or about 220 examples, for the most part From the Original Drawings . . . . .

This was actually a re-issue of the original work, with the addition of an index, and a few alterations in the arrangement of the plates. Three plates which were in the original work were not re-produced in this subsequent edition; namely *Microglossus aterrimus* (plate 75A); *Ardetta flavicollis* (plate 106); *Elanus axillaris* (plate 11A).

In 1875 Diggles wrote a series of articles, entitled 'Birds of Australia,' for the *Queenslander*. This paper was owned by the same interests as was the *Courier*, but was a weekly journal with a large circulation in the rural areas of Queensland and northern New South Wales. It was not unusual for an article to appear simultaneously in both papers and this occurred in the case of these bird articles of Diggles. Altogether nine articles appeared in 1875 and they covered the hawks, the owls, and the kingfishers. Whilst they are all interesting and of some importance from the 'local' information they afford, one is of importance from the taxonomic and nomenclatural point of view as in it a species of harrier was named and described. The article in question is the fifth and appeared in both the *Queenslander* (page 7) and the *Brisbane Courier* (page 3) of May 8, 1875. It contained notes on the Crested Hawk, Allied Harrier, Sooty Harrier (*Circus fuliginosus*, sp. nov.) and on the Jardine's Harrier.

The following is what Diggles wrote concerning this 'new' species—

"The Sooty Harrier—(*Circus fuliginosus*)—Diggles.—This, which I am convinced is a new species, is now, as far as I am aware, recorded for the first time. My opinion is formed from a specimen lent me by Mr. Cockerell, which he shot at Nudgee Waterholes<sup>3</sup>, 25th March, 1871. A suspicion arose in my mind at the time that it might prove a new bird, and I wrote a description of it, and took careful measurements, but my work on Ornithology being suspended, I did not make use of the information. It did not occur to me to read a paper on the matter to the Philosophical Society on a subject of so much doubt, and the fact of my not giving sufficient attention at the time to the measurements aforesaid (which ought to have convinced me at once) is perhaps the best reason I can give for not making it known before. But since I commenced this series of articles on the Raptores diurni, and bearing in mind the enquiries of the correspondent at Pimpana<sup>4</sup>, I

3. Close to Brisbane.

4. R. Livesay, in a letter in the *Courier*, had enquired why Diggles had omitted to include the "Marsh Harrier" in a list of Australian hawks published in the first of this series of articles.

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was led to look into the subject with much interest, and it is a matter of wonder to me that collectors have not sifted this matter long since. Should my opinion be right or wrong, I trust it will have the effect of a more thorough ventilation of the subject being gone into. I here append the account of its discovery as I took it down from Mr. Cockerell's lips:—It was flying over the marsh, probably in search of wounded ducks, the feathers of which were lying about in great quantities, in some places as thick as if a pillow had been shaken over the ground, and I saw it give chase to the common blue heron. Its flight was very swift and skimming, and it made sharp and sudden descents upon any objects suitable for prey. It was exceedingly shy and it was only by concealing myself behind a bush and lying perfectly still that I was enabled to shoot it at a distance (afterwards estimated by stepping) of sixty or seventy yards, as it passed in its rapid career.

"The following is a description of *Circus fuliginosus*—Crown of the head dark sooty brown; cheeks lighter; basal portions of crown and neck feathers white; nape white, each feather with a broad mark of black down the centre; back sooty brown, the tips of the feathers lighter; quills shining sooty black, slightly tipped with buffish brown, the basal portions of the inner webs reddish buff; tail and wings without bars; chin buffish brown; breast and under-surface brown, with darker margins to each feather; under tail coverts buff passing into brown; thighs brownish red delicately streaked with brown; under surface of tail light grey; eyes light brown; length 24 inches; expanse 44 inches; wing from shoulder to tip, 16 inches."

In the four volumes of Diggles' coloured drawings of birds in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, drawing no. 27 in volume 1 is entitled "*Circus fuliginosus* (Diggles) Sooty Harrier." It is signed "S.D. Oct. 21, 75" and on the page opposite is written "*Circus fuliginosus* not in handbook".

## Nesting Notes on the Red-backed Parrot

By P. A. BOURKE, Cucumgillica, N.S.W.

During the breeding season of 1950, I succeeded in overcoming the difficulties encountered in my earlier attempts to determine accurately the incubation and nestling periods of the Red-backed Parrot (*Psephotus haematonotus*)—see *The Emu*, vol. 49, p. 79. In that account reference was made to the fact that several pairs nested in hollow limbs fixed to fence posts at the local school. For the 1950 season I made a nest-box of rough boards and fitted a detachable roof. One of the limbs was replaced by this box, which the Parrots