

a point just westwards of Tarcoola, the House Sparrow has not, as yet, established itself in Western Australia. During the construction of the railway line (1912-17) a man was employed to shoot these birds as and when they appeared at the construction camps. The Nullarbor Plain is waterless and unsuitable for the species, and without the assistance of man it has not been able to cross this area. The only birds seen in the State to date are a pair at Fremantle in 1927, and one that arrived on a ship in October 1946 (*Emu*, 47, 256).

Northern Territory.—I have no evidence that the House Sparrow has colonized any area within this State.

Tasmania.—The House Sparrow was introduced into Launceston from Adelaide between 1861 and 1871 and is now plentiful in all populated areas, and has also become established on King Island and Flinders Island.

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Swan River Observations

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Detailed lists of the birds of the Swan River district have appeared in *The Emu*, but additional records of new and rare species necessitates the publication of supplementary lists. With the growing interest exhibited towards migratory wading birds, together with the fact that many Western Australian species are gradually extending their range towards the south-west, it is no wonder that the list for the district is continually being increased. Since the publication of my paper (*Emu*, vol. 54, p. 212), I have visited localities within the district at frequent intervals and have made the following interesting observations.

Eudyptes chrysocome. Crested Penguin.

During a visit to Rottnest Island on January 29, 1956, P. S. Stone, W. C. Ford and I located a Crested Penguin amongst the rocks at Strickland Bay. The prominent yellow crest with a conspicuous break across the forehead, the black throat and the large sub-terminal black patch under the wing, established the identity of the bird. The Penguin was in moult. This is the third record of this species from the Swan River district, and the first from Rottnest Island since July 10, 1909.

Gelochelidon nilotica. Gull-billed Tern.

This species had not previously been recorded in the Swan River district. I observed an immature (eclipse-plumaged) bird at Cooloongup (White) Lake on April 7, 1956. On April 29, W. C. Ford and I saw two immature Gull-billed Terns at this locality. An attempt to collect a specimen was unsuccessful. Both birds were hawking for food over the western section of the lake. In view of the fact that V. N. Serventy (*W. A. Naturalist*, vol. 5, p. 23) recently recorded the Gull-billed Tern at Carnarvon and Morawa, and E. Lindgren (*W. A. Naturalist*, vol. 5, p. 143) saw the species at Moora, a movement towards the south may be indicated.

Hematopus fuliginosus. Sooty Oyster-catcher.

On September 12, 1954, W. C. Ford and I observed two Sooty Oyster-catchers on the sandy beach at Seal Island, Safety Bay, and on January 29, 1956, P. S. Stone, W. C. Ford and I saw a single bird feeding, in the company of a pair of Reef Herons, on an exposed tidal reef at West End, Rottneest Island.

Charadrius cucullatus. Hooded Dotterel.

Four immature Hooded Dotterels were seen at Woodman Point, south of Fremantle, on March 11, 1956. The head was dark brown and the throat was white, no black being evident. On the western shore of Lake Bagdad, Rottneest Island, on January 30, 1956, P. S. Stone, W. C. Ford and I saw a single bird in the presence of Little Stints and Curlew-Sandpipers.

Numenius phaeopus. Whimbrel.

On January 29, 1956, P. S. Stone, W. C. Ford and I saw a solitary Whimbrel feeding on an exposed tidal rock flat at West End, Rottneest Island. It is worth mentioning that G. M. Dunnet and L. Maclean saw a Whimbrel at Rottneest Island on June 22, 1955, and D. L. Serventy (*Emu*, vol. 47, pp. 241-286) lists only one record for the district—a bird seen at Pelican Point, Swan River estuary, in October 1936.

Limosa lapponica. Bar-tailed Godwit.

During mid-October 1956, three birds were seen on three occasions on the Swan River estuary at a tidal sand-flat between the two Fremantle bridges.

Tringa stagnatilis. Marsh-Sandpiper.

Until K. G. Buller collected a specimen of the Marsh-Sandpiper at Jandakot Lake in January 1950 (*W. A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, p. 120), this species was thought to avoid the south-west of Western Australia. I obtained a second record of this species when a single Marsh-Sandpiper in association with a flock of sixteen Greenshanks (*T. nebulosa*) was seen at Cooloongup Lake on April 7, 1956. The Little Greenshank was about two-thirds the size of the Greenshanks, and the white on the back and rump was noted. Unlike the Greenshanks, the Marsh-Sandpiper was remarkably active—it fed in the shallow water while the larger Greenshanks remained motionless.

Plegadis falcinellus. Glossy Ibis.

On January 24, 1955, at a small swamp about two hundred yards south-west of Bibra Lake, I observed two Glossy Ibis, and when W. C. Ford, L. Krygger and I re-visited the locality on January 25, no less than seven Glossy Ibis were seen feeding in association with hundreds of Grey Teal and Grey Duck. The Ibis were last observed on February 11, but there is little doubt that they left the district after unusual February rains. Records of the Glossy Ibis from the Swan River district are very few; Alexander (*Emu*, vol. 20, p. 160) recorded this bird from Herdsman's Lake and Fremantle, and E. H. Sedgwick (*Emu*, vol. 40, p. 151) observed a single bird at Lake Richmond in March 1940.

Platalea regia. Royal Spoonbill.

A single bird was seen at Coolbellup (North) Lake on August 15, 1954, a single bird was seen flying over Coolbellup Lake on October 28, 1954, and two birds were seen on several occasions at Coolbellup and Bibra Lakes during February 1955.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus. Pink-eared Duck.

D. L. Serventy (*W. A. Naturalist*, vol. 3, p. 187) refers to several records of the Pink-eared Duck in the south-west of Western Australia which were apparently a result of the 1952 irruption of northern birds, but unfortunately these records are too scanty and I believe that they are not indicative of the numbers that participated. H. Atkinson, W. C. Ford and I recorded about 150 Pink-eared Ducks on Coolbellup Lake, and W. C. Ford and I saw about 100 on Cooloongup Lake in January and February 1955. The following summer this species was again seen in unusual numbers; W. C. Ford and I saw about 54 Pink-eared Ducks at the Lagoon, Hamilton Hill on December 25, 1955, 74 at Coolbellup Lake during the January-April period, and a flock of 23 at Cooloongup Lake in April.

The Gosling of the Magpie Goose

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Mathews (1914) has described, and Delacour and Scott (1954) have described and figured, a downy gosling which they attribute to the Magpie Goose, *Anseranas semipalmata* (Latham). Subsequently Magpie Geese have been reared at the Wildfowl Trust, Gloucestershire, England, and the downy young described by Johnstone (1957).

During investigations by the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., of the Magpie Goose at Humpty Doo, Northern Territory, Australia, goslings up to three weeks old were examined in large numbers, being both hand-reared and wild-caught birds. These observations showed that the descriptions of Mathews, and of Delacour and Scott, were not those of Magpie Goose goslings, while that of Johnstone was accurate for only one stage in the gosling's development. It seems, therefore, that further description is warranted.

On hatching the down feathers covering the gosling are still partly enclosed in their sheaths, which are rapidly shed during the first day. The head, except the lores which are bare, and neck are cinnamon red, paler and extending farther posteriorly below than above. Beginning about half-way down the upper neck a dark grey stripe passes backwards, expanding as it does so and fusing with the dark grey down which covers the back and sides of the gosling to the level of the wings anteriorly and of the legs and cloaca posteriorly. The dark grey pales rapidly to white underparts below this level, while the cinnamon red forms a moderately sharp demarcation line with the white anteriorly. The undertail and underwing are pale grey. The dark grey down extends along both sides of the leg to the limit of feathering, a little above the tibio-tarsal joint.

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