

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

It was moved by Mr. Jarman and seconded by Miss Wigan that Mr. P. T. Sandland be elected an Honorary Member, having completed fifty years' membership. Carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS

In discussing the two suggestions of Mr. Pescott, Miss Wigan said that she had many photographs taken by the late Mr. Tom Tregellas, and slides. Miss Wigan thought that a committee should be formed to take up the matter of establishing such collections. She moved and Mr. Bryant seconded that Council investigate the matters raised by Mr. Pescott. Carried.

It was moved by Miss Aston and seconded by Miss Field that when Council deals with the matters brought up in the South Australian Report, they should also consider the position regarding Victorian birds carried over the border. Carried.

First Tattler Records for South Australia

By BRIAN GLOVER and R. SCHODDE, Adelaide, S.A.

Because of its geographical position, one might assume that South Australia is visited by fewer migratory waders, both as regards species and numbers of a species, than the eastern and western States, for, although inland records of several species indicate that some birds fly across the continent, it is probable that most migratory waders follow the coastline.

Thus there were several species listed as either regular or occasional visitors to Victoria or south-western Australia which had not been recorded in South Australia when Glover's paper: 'Recent Observations on South Australian Migratory Waders'² was published in 1954. Such species included the Large Sand-Dotterel (*Charadrius leschenaultii*), Grey-tailed Tattler (*Tringa brevipes*), Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*Erolia melanotos*), Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*) and Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*). Also, the Mongolian Dotterel (*Charadrius mongolus*), which occurs as a coastal species elsewhere in Australia, is included on the South Australian list on the basis of a rather questionable sight observation made at Coward Springs in the far north of the State.

The apparent richness of wader species in Victoria, and possibly also in south-western Australia, is no doubt due in part to the more concentrated observation by a number of competent field workers. In South Australia, with very few observers actively interested in waders, and with large tracts of suitable wader habitat that are rarely worked by bird ob-

servers, it is probable that some, if not all, of these species occasionally visit this State.

During 1957 two of these species were observed in South Australia. The Great Knot was collected on Troubridge Shoal by C. Leo. McPherson,⁴ and we have made the following sight observations of a tattler which we consider to be the Grey-tailed.

On the afternoon of May 11, 1957, a strange wader was flushed by us from the edge of the I.C.I. saltpan adjacent to Buckland Park Lake, near Port Gawler, about 30 miles north of Adelaide. Its flight was remarkably like that of the Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleuca*), i.e. a few rapid wing-beats alternating with short glides with wings held stiff and well below the horizontal. On alighting it wagged its tail up and down several times in typical *Tringa* fashion. Its size was between that of the Common Sandpiper (8 inches) and the Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) (12 inches).

At rest the bird showed a plain, rather dark grey upper surface with darker wing-tips, a pale grey breast, white abdomen and pale face. A thin dark line passed through the eye, above which was a distinctive pale eyebrow stripe, and the crown was dark. The bill was straight and fairly long; the legs yellow.

In flight the entire upper surface was a uniform dark grey with darker wing-tips and no pale markings on wings, rump or tail. Although short flights were as described above, long flights were similar to those of other waders. Upon its flushing, a two-note call was invariably given; we interpreted it as 'weet-eet'.

The bird was under observation from close range, in good light, with 10 x 50 binoculars, and neither of us had any hesitation in naming it a tattler, one species of which, the Grey-tailed, is known to us both from interstate experience.

On December 28, 1957, in company with four other members of the South Australian Ornithological Association, Misses A. Barton, S. Douglas and S. Holyoak and Mr. D. Kraehenbuehl, we observed another tattler on a rocky section of the shore of the tidal American River inlet, Kangaroo Island. This bird resembled the Buckland Park bird in appearance and flight and was observed closely while perched on rocks at the water's edge, by all members of the party. Although mostly silent, it occasionally called a single or double 'trreet' when flushed.

What was presumably the same bird was seen at the same place on two occasions early in January, 1958, by four members of the above party, including one of us (R.S.).

Both species of Tattler have been recorded as summer migrants to Australia; the Grey-tailed (*Tringa brevipes*) and the Wandering (*T. incana*). The former is common on the northern coastline of Australia, becoming progressively less plentiful to the south; the latter is only rarely recorded,

although it could easily be mistaken for the more common *T. brevipes*, which it resembles very closely in plumage. For field observations on both species see Hindwood and Hoskin,³ pp. 237-239. The two species may be separated by the relative lengths of the narial grooves, that of *T. brevipes* extending about half-way along the length of the beak, that of *T. incana* about two-thirds. This feature is impossible to see in the field except under ideal conditions.

The calls are stated to be diagnostic, that of *T. brevipes* being described as 'troo-eet', and 'ter-wee', and of *T. incana* as a series of six to ten individual notes, 'whee-we-we...', uttered in the same pitch and rapid succession, but each of shortening duration.¹

On the basis of the call we believe both individuals recorded were of the Grey-tailed species.

REFERENCES

1. Condon, H. T., and McGill, A. R. (1952), *A Field Guide to the Waders*.
2. Glover, Brian (1954). 'Recent Observations on South Australian Migratory Waders', *Emu*, 54, pp. 51-57.
3. Hindwood, K. A., and Hoskin, E. S. (1954). 'The Waders of Sydney (County of Cumberland), New South Wales, *Emu*, 54, pp. 217-255.
4. McPherson, C. Leo (1957). 'Greater Knot: New Record for South Australia', *Emu*, 57, pp. 346-347.

Woodhens on Lord Howe Island.—Visiting the island in April 1957, my wife and I were particularly interested in this species. Despite many more visitors nowadays than a few years ago, the numbers who traverse the Erskine Valley and climb Mt. Gower are not increasing relatively. We were assured that the Woodhen did not now occur in the valley but only high on the two mountains. (There is a local 'prohibition' on attempting to climb Mt. Lidgbird, after a fatal accident a few years ago).

We saw no sign of the Woodhen during our ascent of Mt. Gower—on a bad weather day when the low clouds obscured sight of the steep falls from the narrow ridge by which we ascended. On the top of Mt. Gower a fox terrier dog that had attached himself to our party put out a bird from a hollow at the base of a tree, and, despite the rain, we followed it some distance through the wet scrub. We saw no sign of the species as we descended—though we did encounter thousands of the Brown-headed Petrels 'grounded' and fluttering at our feet—but, as we turned the shoulder of Mt. Lidgbird to creep along the narrow ledge under the mighty cliffs, a Woodhen suddenly appeared. It stood stationary, except for a flicking tail and inclined head, for something more than two minutes, while we watched it from less than six feet away. This appearance gave the lie to the statement that the species is now confined to the 'tops'.—C. E. BRYANT, Melbourne, Vic., 12/6/57.