

birds

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MOVEMENT AND PAIR-BOND OF THE MAGPIE LARK.

It has been pointed out by A. K. Morris (in lit), S. G. Lane (1972) and A. Robinson (1947) that little is known of the movements and pair-bond of the Magpie Lark (Grallina cyanoleuca) and that a banding programme is essential. Ten years of field work in the district of Inverell in northern N.S.W. throws some light on these problems although banding was not employed.

The male Magpie Lark selects a territory in which he remains until death or displacement, juveniles depart and females may do so in winter. (Rowley 1969) states that "in the autumn the territories are generally abandoned", but he was apparently referring to the "High Country" above 1500 m where cold may be a deciding factor. Inverell is only 366 m above sea level. Complete migration from the higher ranges could account for the large flocks seen by Gilbert (1935) in eastern N.S.W. The stable population at Wellington (Althofer, 1934) is similar to that at Inverell. One would expect a rise in numbers due to natural increase, that this is not so suggests that in winter the territory of the male supports one or two itinerant birds which move off in spring. Likewise there is no significant drop in numbers in late summer when juveniles move away but passage of nomadic flocks keep the total constant. It seems as if pairs remain together throughout the winter.

At Inverell when small nomadic parties pass through in autumn, one female stays within the territory of a lone male, or two may fight for the honour. This female mates with the male if his mate of the previous season does not return after roaming for food in the dry time from April to August. As most food is gathered from damp places the territory has in dry weather only enough to support the male.

The female of one pair which nested in the 1967/68 season was distinctively marked with a large white patch on the right shoulder.

It is not known if she stayed with the male in the winter of 1968 but, after nesting twice in the spring, she left in mid-April 1969. On 6 June two strange females were about, one of which stayed with the male. Nest building commenced on 25 July (6 weeks early). On 1 August the White-winged female returned fighting angrily with the other female about the nest. Next day the half-built nest was in pieces on the ground while White-wing and the male worked on a new nest in the same place. After fledging, the three chicks were left to the care of the male while the female set again hatching two more chicks. White-wing was not seen again after 12 April. Meanwhile, the displaced female had remained in the nesting territory and now fought with strangers. On April 19 one of the fighting females with a sore swollen foot accompanied the male and this pair nested in spring.

In normal seasons pairs remain together after breeding but when food is scarce the female is beaten and often leaves. On 17 May 1965, a year of severe drought, a female with one wing drooping approached the male who, with raised wings and lowered head, ran at her as she ruffled her feathers and stepped aside. The male hunted the female several times on 19 May and each time she feigned double wing injury by drooping both when attacked. On 31 May the male threatened the female but she returned to help him when he was attacked by a Pied Butcher-bird (Cracticus nigrogularis). However, when the female was accosted by the Butcher-bird, the male erected his head and back feathers and pecked the female. This female left for short periods only, braving the wrath of the male because his territory contained one of the few permanent water-holes in the arid district.

The nomadic autumn parties I consider to consist of outcast females and juveniles of both sexes although Gilbert (1935) considered them family parties. At Inverell the earliest flocks pass through in February with a peak in March/April; dates which correspond with the autumn congregations noted by Gilbert but passage from the west across the Great Dividing Range to the coast has yet to be proved. In the New England National Park, 1575 m above sea level, the Magpie Lark is a frequent visitor (Kikkawa 1965). This could be a resting place for east-west nomads but dates for each visit are essential. Flocks at Inverell ranged from eight to sixteen with an increase to twenty-four in the drought of 1965. The peak in May recorded by Thomas (1969) for the I.O.P. Scheme could be set down to similar altitudinal and food movements.

Fledglings are shared, the female moving off with hers to the perimeter of the nesting territory. She returns at intervals with her

chicks and may move away in autumn with all the young ones. That she returns periodically to the male suggests the selection of a winter territory of her own close by. Recorded movements (Lane 1972) show that immatures travel further before stopping off in an untenanted area. Such a female with chicks could well be the nucleus of a wandering band.

Small local movements are opposed to inland to coast nomadism; banding data (Lane 1972) is similarly orientated. An adult female, O70-47728, banded in December was retrapped in October 100 m away, probably with fledglings. Her recovery 300 m away two years later in July suggests temporary removal from the territory of the male in winter. It is significant that 72% of adult males banded were recovered near the banding place while only 33% of adult females were recovered there.

In conclusion, it seems from the information available that the Magpie Lark leaves the higher ranges in autumn to travel to the coast: withdrawal west of the ranges is likely also. Dry weather starts a search for food which lasts four or five months with return to territories when the wet season begins in late winter. Rowley (1969) states that pairs mate for life. My observations correspond with those of Robinson (1947) who left the matter open.

Merle Baldwin
Gilgai, Inverell. 1.9.72

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SWIFT PARROTS & GLOSSY BLACK COCKATOOS IN THE COCOPARRA RANGE.

The Cocoparra Range commences 19 km (12 ml.) north-east of Griffith and runs in a generally northern direction towards the Lachlan River forming a watershed between Rankins Springs and Hillston. The southern section of 20,648 acres has been proclaimed a National Park, whilst the middle section of the range (11,500 acres) has been dedicated as a Nature Reserve.

The range consists of rough stoney hills covered with a dry sclerophyll/temperate woodland flora association, dominated by Bimble Box (Eucalyptus populnea), Cypress Pine (Callitris columellaris "inland form"), Yellow Box (E. melliodora) and local stands of Belah (Casuarina chrystata) in the sheltered gullies and flats, and by Dwyers Gum (E. dwyerii and E. dealbata), Currawong (Acacia doratoxylon) and Mugga Iron-bark (E. sideroxylon) on the drier ridges and slopes.

Swift Parrots (Lathamus discolor)

On 10 August 1971, Mrs. E. Atkinson and I spent two hours watching a pair of Swift Parrots at Woolshed Flat, an area of man-made grassland in the south-west section of the Park. These birds were found feeding in the tips of Bimble Box and Yellow Box, approximately 8 m (28 ft.) high, and edging the banks of a dry creek. The birds were first detected only by the movement of the leaves and it was through careful searching of the thick foliage that we were finally able to see them. They were quiet for most of the time, although now and again a soft chattering was heard as they moved slowly through the tree tips, catching a twig in their bills as it was blowing in the wind. On taking flight a loud "clinking" was uttered - the flight was very swift and direct, flying from tree to tree approximately 3 m (10 ft.) above the ground and following the contour of the creek. On settling back into the trees it was extremely hard to pick them out again.

As these trees were not flowering it's possible that scale insect was the main food item as they were picking at the leaves and buds, at times hanging by their legs to do so. These parrots remained in the tips of the tall trees and were unperturbed by the strong wind gusts which blew them about. When this happened they would cease feeding and wait until the wind died down before commencing to feed again. They were unconcerned at our presence.

At first these birds were mistaken for Lorikeets but were identified as Swift Parrots by their copperish red, thin pointed tail; red

facial marks, red on the backs of the wings; and red underwings which were clearly visible in flight. The female (?) had paler red markings and one bird was noted to have odd red flecks on the breast but as this bird flew off with the others we were not able to clearly observe it further.

Glossy Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*).

On 26 April 1971 at 16.30 hours three black cockatoos flew over Woolshed Flat and settled in a dead tree near the waterhole. My companions, G. Moore and B. Moore, approached the tree with me and we were eventually able to stand directly beneath them and take down the following description.

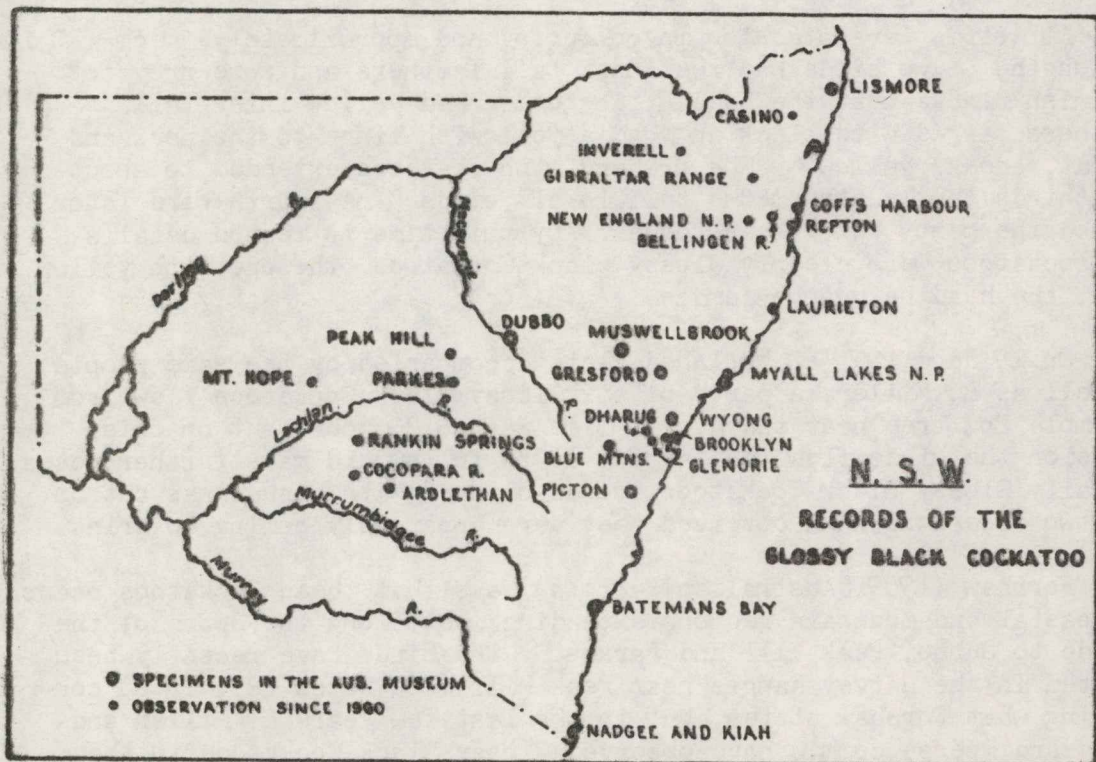
All birds were blackish in colouring and approximately 50 cm (20 in.) in length. Two birds had red inner tail feathers and were grey to brownish black about the head. The other had yellow inter-tail feathers barred with black and had a yellowish tinge to the neck and throat, cheeks yellow. The primary wing feathers extended to about two thirds the length of the tail in all birds. A fourth bird later joined the party but it was too dark by this time to record details. The cockatoos were clearly Glossy Black Cockatoos, the one with yellow about the head being the female.

On 19 June 1971 at Woolshed Flat, accompanied by the same people, as well as B. Miller, a party of six Glossy Black Cockatoos flew from a Bimble Box tree near the dam. Time was 16.30 hours but on this occasion the birds flew too far for us to follow and make further notes. Normally Glossy Black Cockatoos are associated with Casuarinas but on the two occasions when observed they were apparently coming to drink.

Forshaw (1969, Australian Parrots) says that these Cockatoos occur in coastal and mountain regions extending west along the spurs of the Divide to Dubbo, Peak Hill and Parkes. The birds have recently been sighted in the Harvey Ranges near Peak Hill (BOC Notes 483, 1972) confirming what Forshaw states, but in the last few years B. Miller and J. Izzard (pers. comm.) have observed Glossy Black Cockatoos in the Lachlan Range between Rankin Springs and Naradhan and in the hills near Mt. Yalgogoring, north-west of Ardlethan as well as in the Cocoparra Range. Three sightings of Glossy Black Cockatoos were made by Bob Miller on 20-22 February 1972, approximately 13 km (8 ml.) east along Euabalong Road from the village of Mount Hope. Four birds were seen

on each occasion, one of which was a young bird. All these sightings extend the range of the bird further west than is stated in Forshaw (1969). Because of the confusion that often occurs between this species and the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*C. banksi*) it is probable that previous observations at Cocoparra (e.g. BOC Notes 443, 1968) reported as being *banksi* were in fact *lathami*.

Mrs. V. Jenkins,
Yenda. 22.10.72



DIVING PETREL RECORDS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

Diving Petrels are small seabirds peculiar to the southern hemisphere. They are black above and white below with small wings and short bluish legs. The black bill is broad at the base and the nostrils open upwards side by side at the base of the upper mandible. When disturbed they fly close to the surface with rapidly beating wings, often punctuated with a short glide, then suddenly drop to the water and dive. The wings are used in the water as in the air and the birds are known to emerge from the water to become immediately airborne.

W. B. Alexander (1954, Birds of the Ocean) recognises four species of Pelecanoides but taxonomic difficulties still exist due mainly to the complexity of the many forms or races of the Common Diving Petrel (Pelecanoides urinatrix).

Two species are now listed in the Australian avifauna, urinatrix and georgicus, the latter being represented by a single specimen found on Bellambi Beach, 70 km south of Sydney, on 28 December 1958 (Gibson and Sefton 1959, Emu 59:267). Careful inspection is necessary to see the specific difference which relates mainly to the unusual lateral process in the nasal openings.

Though P. urinatrix is slightly larger than P. georgicus, some doubt must exist on specific observations at sea. It seems reasonable to assume however that sightings off the New South Wales coast would be of P. urinatrix which breeds in the Bass Strait region and is not uncommon off the coasts of Victoria and Tasmania.

The first New South Wales specimen of P. urinatrix was collected on Bellambi Beach (Sefton 1962, Emu 62:210). The coincidence is all the more remarkable in that I found the bird in practically the same spot where my son Gary collected P. georgicus some two and a half years previously.

Observations in the Sydney area off Malabar headland in 1967 and 1969 are now supported by specimens from Newport and Collaroy Beaches in 1972. An additional observation from Sandon Point, Bulli and a specimen from Nadgee Beach, south of Eden, also in 1972, brings the known Diving Petrel records for New South Wales to eight and they are briefly summarised as follows:

- 28.12.58 Bellambi Beach, P. georgicus, Gibson/Sefton Coll. 234:235
(only Australian record to date).
27. 8.61 Bellambi Beach, P. urinatrix, G/S Coll. 23.277
22. 6.67 Off Malabar headland, 1 bird, A.R. McGill (1967, Birds 2:17)
19. 7.69 Off Malabar headland, 2 birds, S. G. Lane. (Records of the
late K. A. Hindwood per courtesy of E. S. Hoskin).
23. 7.72 Off Sandon Point, Bulli, 3 birds, A. R. Sefton.
17. 8.72 Newport Beach, P. urinatrix, beach-washed specimen collected
by David Sawyer.
22. 9.72 Collaroy Beach, P. urinatrix, beach-washed specimen collected
by David Sawyer.
- 28.10.72 Nadgee Beach, P. urinatrix. Dry beach-washed specimen coll-
ected by P. Fullager, B. Bell & A. K. Morris. Specimen in
C.S.I.R.O. Bone Collection.

It is interesting to note that the specimen collected on Newport Beach was a female in excellent condition. The specimen from Collaroy was old and dried but in all probability both birds were cast up about the same time.

A. R. Sefton,
Thirroul. 28.10.72

MALE CHESTNUT TEAL IN DEFENCE OF YOUNG.

That it is uncommon among dabbling ducks for the male to assist the female in leading and defending the young has been pointed out by Van Tets (Emu 64:100). That writer was commenting on a case of predation by an Eastern Swamphen (Porphyrio porphyrio) on a teal duckling in which both parent Chestnut Teal (Anas castanea) pursued the attacker. Another observation on Chestnut Teal and brood which involved male participation is reported here, on this occasion in response to a human intruder.

Unlike the Grey Teal (A. gibberifrons) it is not unusual to find the male Chestnut Teal accompanying his brood. In fact Frith (1967, Waterfowl in Australia p.209) remarks that in more than half the broods he has observed the male has remained with them, sometimes until they are fledged. This has been the case in the present writer's experience with the small number of Chestnut Teal breeding in the Hunter Estuary at Newcastle. However Frith makes no mention of males participating in defence of the young. It is therefore of interest to detail the behaviour of two pairs of Chestnut Teal observed in a brackish swamp on Kooragang Island, Newcastle on 19 February 1972.

Whilst wading among dense stands of sedges I emerged in a small clearing startling four Chestnut Teal which had remained concealed by the tall vegetation only 2 m in front of me. Immediately the birds responded with a vigorous distraction display with both sexes, and in particular one male, repeatedly approaching to within 3 m as they flapped and splashed around me. This behaviour was accompanied by calling although by which individual was not noted.

The initial reaction seemed random with displaying birds on several sides but as I moved on away from the original point of disturbance this frenzied behaviour subsided. One female continued to flop along the water ahead of me giving the impression of being partially incapacitated but as I followed (for a distance of 50 m) the other teal dispersed among the branching channels and fringing sedges. At no stage was any adult seen to take flight and leave the immediate vicinity.

Early in this series of events glimpses had been obtained of three young teal as they dispersed among the sedges. Two were small downies probably less than a week old while the third was about a quarter grown, indicating the presence of two broods.

THE RETURN OF THE WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATERS.

In recent years birdwatchers have reported that Wedge-tailed Shearwaters appear to be absent from Sydney waters from early May until about mid August. In 1971 Frank Merritt and myself decided to start visiting Muttonbird Island, Coffs Harbour during August in an attempt to determine when the birds begin to come ashore on a breeding island.

Our first visit was on August 9. After about an hour on the island we were astonished to hear the calls of a few Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Searching the area we located altogether four birds. Next night (August 10) we returned to the island with C.S.I.R.C. bands and found hundreds of birds were on the surface and many were calling loudly.

In 1972 we made regular visits to the island through the winter months in an attempt to establish a more positive return date. On the evenings of July 29 and 30 we spent several hours on the island without seeing or hearing any shearwaters. I was on the island on August 1 and obtained a good view by torchlight of a dark shearwater at a range of 3 m. The following night (August 2) with Merritt, two Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were seen and captured to establish specific identity. On both nights the birds were silent so far as we could determine.

Our next visit was on August 9 when we found hundreds (perhaps thousands) of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters calling loudly.

If the above observations are typical they suggest that the shearwaters arrive back on Muttonbird Island in strength after the first week of August - a few stragglers arriving a week earlier. From that time on large numbers of birds can be seen every night flying, burrowing, courting, fighting or dozing until eggs are laid in the latter part of November. From then until the young depart in late April birds can still be seen on the surface but in diminished numbers. In fact, the only months when they are not seen are May, June and July.

Muttonbird Island is the only shearwater breeding station in New South Wales that can be reached without going to sea - in fact it is only 1 km from Coffs Harbour railway station and except in rough seas it is possible to drive a car to the island. Since 1960 nearly 9,000 shearwaters have been banded there, 3,200 of them by Merritt who can claim to have banded more birds of this species than anybody else.

For birdwatchers or photographers proposing to visit the island I would recommend late August or September/October when the birds are in maximum numbers and very active on the surface; at that time there is no risk of damaging eggs or young if a burrow collapses. Moonlit nights are to be avoided as activity falls off noticeably. The island is a Nature Reserve and permission to visit should be sought from the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

Peter Roberts,
Coffs Harbour. 12.10.72

HONEYEATERS AND REPTILES.

Recently I have been encountering strange incidents with honey-eaters. On 3 August 1972 I observed a Little Wattle-bird kill and then carry off in its bill a small lizard which I identified as a baby Common Bluetongue (Tiliqua scincoides). A Southern Figbird was also observed to kill and eat a small Common Bluetongue on 24 August 1972. On 9 September 1972, a Yellow-faced Honeyeater was observed to attack and kill a small (800 mm) snake, possibly a Black-bellied Swamp Snake.

Finally, on 20 September 1972, a White-plumed Honeyeater, which is a regular visitor to our garden, was observed to attack and eventually kill a Common Grass Skink (Leiolopsium quichenoti). The skink was then swallowed.

All observations took place in my garden and I am puzzled by the behaviour of the birds being unaware that these birds were recorded as eating reptiles.

David Tester (10 years)
Lismore. 3.10.72

THE LITTLE GREENSHANK ON KOORAGANG ISLAND.

Early in October 1972, whilst on a routine wader census on Kooragang Island with Mr. T. Kendall, a large flock of waders were observed resting on a sandy lagoon. From a distance the flock seemed to consist mainly of Godwits and Greenshanks, the latter species numbering some 300. This almost inaccessible lagoon is a noted safe day-time resting place for waders and teal. The flock of waders was again observed leaving the area to feed in the adjoining mudflats as the tide receded. In flight it was noticed that approximately half the number of Greenshanks were considerably smaller in size. The Little Greenshank (Tringa stagnatilis) was immediately suspected, however, no direct evidence could be secured to support our observation at that time. Subsequent research into available literature did not reveal any significant difference in size between male and female Greenshank.

On 14 October a similarly composed flock of waders was recorded in the same lagoon by several observers. One wounded Greenshank unable to fly was captured and six to ten Little Greenshanks were recorded in a neighbouring swamp feeding amongst flocks of Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Some Greenshanks, which joined the Little Greenshanks, allowed good comparison in size, call and plumage.

Three observers, B. Finch, B. Bailey and myself were present when the flock resting in the lagoon finally took wing again and a combined count resulted in the amazing total of 210 Little Greenshanks and 80 Greenshanks, which is the largest number of Little Greenshanks known to have been recorded in New South Wales.

On 13 October, Messrs. P. Fullager, B. Bell, G. Van Tets, C. Davies and A. K. Morris observed two flocks of Little Greenshanks, totalling 70 birds in all, which were flushed by a Swamp Harrier that was quartering one of the marshes on Kooragang. On 22 October a group of 30 amongst 60 Greenshanks was recorded in the area, on 12 November 30 were recorded and on 25 November 130 were again recorded by Mr. T. Kendall and myself.

Previous large flocks of Greenshanks recorded on Kooragang Island might well have included small numbers of Little Greenshanks not apparent because of their similar appearance; although up till now "size difference" has never become so obvious since the majority of this flock were Little Greenshank.

The breeding range covers Southern Europe to Mongolia, wintering in Africa, Southern Asia and Australia (in Litt.). However, the main arrival of birds in the tropics does not occur until late September and October. According to Pearson (1969, Birds of the World 3:887) moult into breeding plumage takes place during February and March while small numbers of non-breeders remain in the tropics to moult during the summer when migrating to their winter quarters. This species is known to congregate in very large numbers; gatherings of several hundred birds often occur. In South Africa on Lake Rudolph tens of thousands have been recorded (in Litt.). However, only few Australian records of large numbers of Little Greenshanks have been published and almost nothing is known about distribution and movement within Australia.

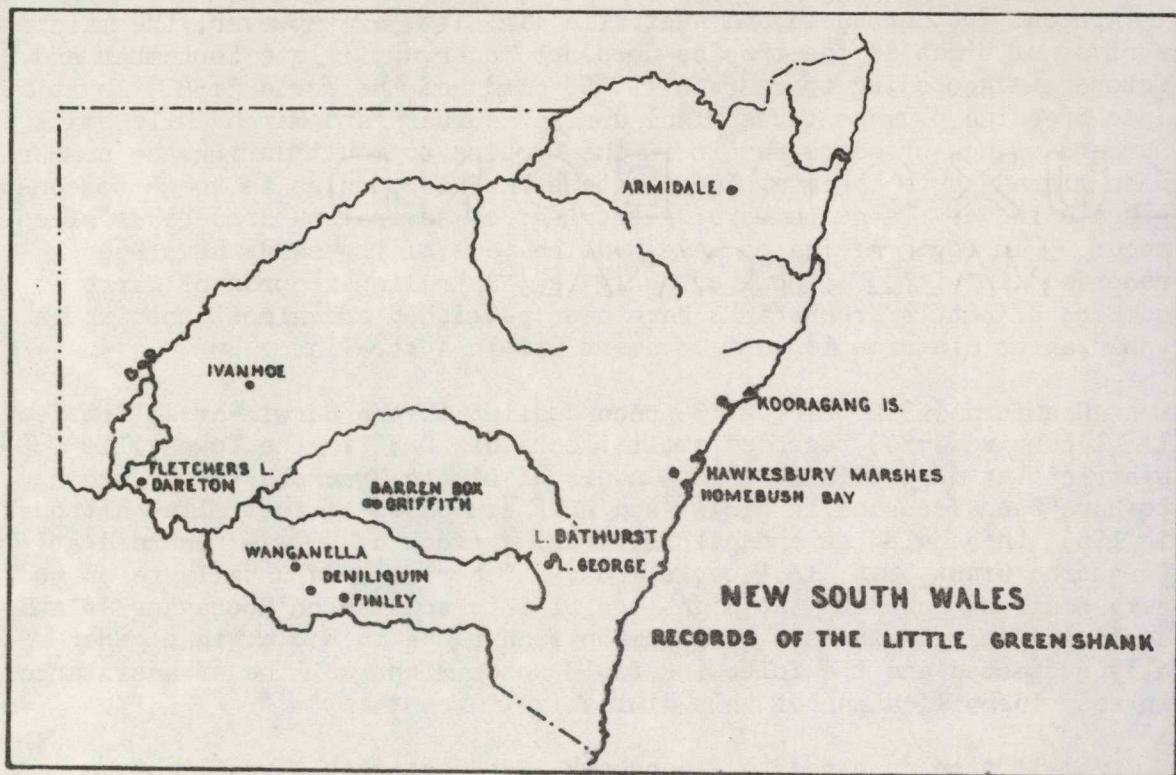
Crawford (1972, Emu 72:139 recorded 105 in the Darwin area, Griffen (1971 Sunbird 3:36) recorded small flocks of 20-30 in the Townsville District but no previous large numbers of Little Greenshanks are known to have been recorded in N.S.W. and southern parts of Australia, although in 1965, this being an exceptional year, a flock of 80 was recorded at Langhorne Creek, S.A. (S.A.O. 24:103). Other records usually refer to very small numbers and the sightings of this species on Kooragang Island could possibly indicate a more common occurrence in N.S.W. than generally suspected and the following field notes might well be of assistance in easy identification of this diminutive "Greenshank".

Small size compared to Greenshank, very noticeable in flight. When feeding the very long legs and straight slender bill are obvious. Call - "Tuwitt and Chiff Chiff" (reminiscent of a Wood Sandpiper) instead of "Tjuu Tjuu" call of the common Greenshank.

F. Van Gessel
Hamilton, N.S.W.

STATUS OF THE LITTLE GREENSHANK IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

The accompanying map indicates all known records of Little Greenshanks in New South Wales. It is obvious that since the first bird was sighted in 1957 at Wanganella, by John Hobbs, it is being seen in increasing numbers. The status of the Little Greenshank is therefore no longer "very rare" as given by McGill (1960 Handlist of the Birds of N.S.W.) but rather "A rare to uncommon summer migrant (Oct.-Apr.) frequenting marshy areas and muddy inland lake margins". Details of all records giving dates, locations and maximum numbers are as follows - all information from published data and records in press.



1957 Wanganella Dec. (1), 1958 Hawkesbury Marshes Nov-Dec. (12)
 1959 Hawkesbury Marshes Jan. (15); Dareton Nov. (1); Hawkesbury Marshes
 Nov-Dec. (5), 1960 Dareton Mar. (6), 1962 Hawkesbury Marshes Feb-Apr.
 (4), 1963 Lake George Feb. (2), 1965 Hawkesbury Marshes Jan-Feb. (4);
 Deniliquin May (1); Homebush Bay Nov-Dec. (6), 1966 Homebush Bay Jan-
 Apr. (6); Fletchers Lake Feb. (?); Homebush Bay Dec. (1), 1967 Flet-
 chers Lake Jan. (11); Armidale Oct-Dec. (?), 1968 Barren Box Swamp
 Nov. (4), 1969 Kooragang Island Jan. (22), 1971 Ivanhoe Nov. (9);
 Hawkesbury Marshes Oct-Dec. (4), 1972 Finley Jan. (4); Kooragang Oct-
 Dec. (220); Hawkesbury Marshes Oct. (4), 1973 Griffith Jan. (4); Lake
 Bathurst Jan. (6).

References as follows:- Emu 66:31, 63:87, 64:114; B.O.C. Notes 407
 and 454; Aust. Bird Watcher 3:269-272; Birds 6:85 and in press.

Editor.

CONSERVATION NOTES.

Recent letters on conservation matters written by the Secretary have included follow-up action on issues already raised but not yet resolved. No decision has yet been published about Towra Point, one of the few remaining wader areas near Sydney, which is already being exploited for grazing and gravel and whose long term future is even more worrying - Club members on a recent excursion were told "This will all be factories!" It is vital that adequate feeding areas be reserved for migratory waders - the birds must come south to escape the northern winter and the destruction of their wintering areas such as Towra Point could have a catastrophic effect. Where else are they to go? Other areas have already been destroyed, are already fully utilized or, like Kooragang Island, are themselves threatened. The case of the Brent goose of North America and Northern Europe is a grim example; when the food supply on its wintering grounds failed, the population dropped by 90% in 3 years. It would be quite wrong to ignore this example and to allow the food supply of thousands of migratory waders wintering here from Siberia, Manchuria etc., to be destroyed in the name of progress. Mangroves and mudflats lack the glamour of Lake Pedder and the Myall Lakes but as far as ornithologists are concerned the conservation of wader habitat is probably the most important conservation issue in the Sydney area.

Lake Innes - Mr. Albert Dick's article in the January issue of Birds recalled the great days of Lake Innes as a haven for ducks, especially White-eyed Ducks (Aythya australis). Lake Innes is a State game reserve but while it is open to the sea it is of little value for ducks. The Club has joined other groups in asking that the lake be restored to freshwater and has urged the NPWS to acquire a strip of shoreline around the edge of the lake to allow birds which roost and nest on shorelines or in reeds to land in safety. It is alarming to see that a land developer is advertising blocks of land for sale near the lake and that every block will have a berth in a marina to be built on the lake. Such activities as water skiing are hardly compatible with the purposes of a game reserve and it is to be hoped that the NPWS can protect the lake and its birds from this disturbance.

Lake Goran - This "deceptive lake" (Sydney Morning Herald 4.1.73) has been full of water since 1971 - but it is usually dry and fills only every 20 years or so. Some local farmers want it to be permanently drained. When full it is such an outstanding haven for waterfowl, waders and other birds that the Club has urged both the NPWS and the Minister for Conservation that instead of destroying it forever, they

should ensure its preservation as a nature reserve. A letter on the subject was published in the SMH on 15 January. A good deal of waterfowl habitat has been lost in NSW, especially through drainage for flood mitigation. The Macquarie Marshes and Narran Lake are almost the only substantial and suitable areas of waterfowl habitat in north west NSW - most other areas are too small, too close to centres of population or vulnerable to such activities as boating and waterskiing. G. N. Goodrick estimated that by 1969, 60% of wetland of high value as waterfowl habitat in coastal NSW had been lost - CSIRO Technical Memorandum 5 (Sept. 1970) p.24.

Federal Government Activity - The Minister for Customs and Excise, Senator Murphy, has undertaken to act to prevent trade in birds and other fauna in danger of extinction. The Club has written to him about the smuggling of parrots out of Australia and as it appears from press reports that a good many birds go to New Zealand, has asked him also to enlist the co-operation of Customs authorities there in preventing this illegal and cruel trade. The new Government has also set an encouraging precedent by sending an ornithologist to Gabo Island to study the effect of a proposed airstrip on colonies of nesting seabirds.

1972 BIRD REPORT.

The report is now well under way and will appear in the May issue of Birds.

Contributions received up to 14 February are gratefully acknowledged from the following people.

B. Amey, M. Baldwin, R. Bigg, C. Bonser, J. & P. Broadbent, M. Cameron, R. Cook, R. Cooper, G. & M. Dibley, B. Finch, R. Garbutt, L. C. Haynes, G. Holmes, B. Howie, F. Johnston, T. Kendal, S. G. Lane, D. Larkin, A. R. McGill, J. McNaughton, R. Miller, J. Noyce, J. Purnell, P. Roberts, A. B. Rose, D. Sawyer, N. Schrader, J. Seale, A. Sefton, L. Smith, D. Stenhouse, G. Stevens, F. W. C. Van Gessell, E. Wheeler,

Alan Rogers
Records Officer.

Alan Rogers would like to obtain Vol. 6 Part II "Birds of the World".

MUSEUM MEETINGS MARCH - JUNE, 1973.

15 March	Dr. Kerry Mueller	"Taronga Bird Collection"
19 April	Members Night	
17 May	R. Orenstein	Subject to be arranged.
21 June	Chairman's Address	

(All meetings commence at 8.00 p.m. in the Lecture Room, Australian Museum, College Street, Sydney. Meetings close 10.00 p.m.)

REPORTS OF MUSEUM MEETINGS.

21 December 1972 Two films arranged by Harry Battam were shown. "Plant Communities of Grassland and Forests" and "Migration of Birds in North America". Following the films Dr. Allen Keast, home on a visit from Canada, was able to show some slides taken on a recent trip he had made to Hudson Bay area of North America. He had excellent pictures of birds at the nest including Golden Plovers, Least Sandpiper, Long-legged Sandpiper, Western Curlew, Killdeer Plover and Snow Bunting. Also screened were a number of slides of migrating Canadian Geese returning to Ontario.

18 January 1973 The Chairman, introducing the speaker Ellis MacNamara, welcomed a record attendance of over 180 to what he called the "Annual Reunion". Ellis certainly draws a big crowd to see his latest slides. The waders photographed along the Cairns water-front included Eastern Curlew, Eastern Golden Plover and Whimbrel. From the Atherton Tablelands photographs were screened of Atherton Scrub Wren, Sarus Crane, Tooth-billed Bower-bird and Northern Chowchilla. Magpie Goose, Crested Hawk and Jabiru were just a few of the species taken on the trip. Nearer home Ellis had some excellent slides of Great Knot, Sanderling, Curlew Sandpiper and Double-banded Dotterels taken at Shoalhaven Heads. Other excellent slides included the Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Pink-eared Duck, Grey-tailed and Wandering Tattlers and a Rufous Scrub-bird displaying. Ellis had arranged his slides in family order and showed very similar species so that comparisons could be easily made. Mr. Alec Chisholm moved a vote of thanks to Mr. MacNamara.

Following Mr. MacNamara's talk, Mr. A. R. McGill showed a slide he had received from Peter Roberts taken recently on Heron Island. The picture illustrated a number of Terns, including Crested and Lesser Crested Terns, Roseate, Eastern Common Terns in winter plumage and some tentatively identified as European Common Terns in breeding plumage!

NOTICE OF FIELD EXCURSIONS.Saturday, 17 March - Stockton & Kooragang Island

Leader: G. Holmes (Sydney contact - M. Dibley 570-1298).

Coach will pick up at:-

7.00 a.m. City, eastern side of York Street, corner of Druitt Street.

7.15 a.m. Chatswood, Public School, Pacific Highway.

7.35 a.m. Hornsby, bus stop east side of Station, in George Street.

7.30 p.m. Coach arrives back in City.

Saturday & Sunday, 7-8 April - Dharug National Park.

Leaders: G. & M. Dibley 570-1298

Meet at 8.30 a.m. Dharug Nat. Park camping area. Directions - Cross Wisemans Ferry, turn right and proceed towards Spencer for c.4 miles, cross Mill Creek, pass old orchard on left and take the track on left and a long low sign says "Camping Area". Proceed up track about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to barbeque area. Late-comers proceed up walking track. Members may come Saturday or Sunday or spend week-end - please let leaders know if you are coming.

Saturday, 19 May - Kenthurst

Leader: A. Colemane 630-6504

Meet 8.30 a.m. Rogans Hill in Old Northern Road, Aylward & Kennedy's Hardware Store.

REPORTS ON FIELD EXCURSIONS.

"Packsaddlers" Megalong Valley, 9 & 10 December, 1972. This weekend trip was held at Carlons Farm, Green Gully via Megalong Valley. The weather was good and ten members stayed overnight in the cabins whilst six camped along Galong Creek and four came for the Saturday only. On Saturday the party walked along Galong Creek to Breakfast Creek and bird-life was prolific. Many nests were located including Noisy Friarbird (4), Olive-backed Oriole (2), Rufous Whistler (2) and Yellow Robin (3). Carlons Creek was alive with Bell miners at the mating stage. A 6 a.m. start was made on Sunday down Galong Creek, when going got rough half way down the falls we took to rocky ridges on the left and climbed to more open country. Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, King Parrots, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Flame and Scarlet Robins were sighted, excellent

views were had of a Brush Cuckoo while Cicada Birds and Wonga Pigeons were heard calling. When returning home some members stopped at the "Coachwood Nature Trail" near Blackheath and recorded nests of the Black-faced Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Scrub Wren whilst a Rufous Fantail put on the broken-wing act to distract attention. 71 species (17 nesting) were recorded. (George Dibley)

Pennant Hills Park, 20 January 1973. 50 members had a rather hot but rewarding day! Lola Smith led the morning walk into the Park from Day Road, Cheltenham. Crimson Rosellas, Variegated Wren, Shrike-tit, Rufous Fantail, Brown Warbler and a male Leaden Flycatcher were observed. All had excellent views of a young Sacred Kingfisher being fed whilst Spine-tailed Swifts and a few Fork-tailed Swifts were observed through out the day. A dead Dollar-bird was picked up at midday and all were able to see its beautiful plumage. After lunch Barbara Howie led us into another section of the Park from Dawson Road, Thornleigh and she was able to show us two Boobook Owls. These were soon being harried by three Pied Currawongs, but eventually found good cover. A female Cicada-bird was briefly seen and a Koel heard. At a feeding table in Dawson Road Rainbow Lorikeets and Red wattle-birds were busy - 49 species recorded. (Robin Bigg)

ERRATUM NOTICE.

In the January Issue, Birds 7.55, second paragraph, the Grey-backed Shearwater (Puffinus bulleri) shown as being collected on 23 January 1972, was in fact collected on 23 January 1971. Subsequently in Table 1, page 54, this same bird was shown as being collected in February instead of January. (The Editor apologises).

SALE OF EMU.

Volumes 68, 69, 70 in good condition for sale, contact A. K. Morris.

CHANGE OF NAME FOR "BIRDS".

A number of members have expressed concern that the title of our journal is the same as that of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds journal. Whilst our journal commenced several months ahead of the latter, the RSPB journal does have a much wider and more international distribution. The Committee therefore feels that the title of our journal should be altered to "New South Wales Birds", abbreviated as "N.S.W. Birds". Members views on the proposed name change are sought.

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Scientific and Vernacular names used in this journal are in accordance with "An Index of Australian Bird Names" C.S.I.R.O. Tech. Mem. No.5 1969

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