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EASTER 1970 CAMP AT 'KELVEDON', SWANSEA DISTRICT Ivor Lea

THIS year the property 'Kelvedon', near Swansea, was the site of the Club's annual camp. Consistently bad weather over most of the week-end prevented much external activity, but many hardy souls did get out to the hills and the beach, and a surprising variety of specimens was collected. Kelvedon is a fairly typical East Coast property stretching from the coast to the wooded foothills of the Eastern Tiers. There are several habitats: cleared land used for grazing, in places retaining clumps of trees; dry sclerophyll woodland on the hills, partly cleared but thick in the gullies; a series of dams on the creek running through the property, with well-developed reed beds in places.

From the beach 19 varieties of shell were collected and identified, including two specimens of Sydney Mud Arc, a fossil shell which is often washed up on the East Coast beaches.

Shells were as follows: Abalone Notohaliotis ruber; Oyster; Ostrea angasi; Scallops (3 kinds); Pecten meridionalis; Limpet Patelloida latistrigata; Cowry Notocypraea angustata; Wavy Turbo Subnina undulata; Sand Snail Pollinices autocoglossa; Frilled Venus Callanaitis disjecta; Mussels Mytilus planulatus and Brachidontes rostratus; Cartrut Dicathais orbita; Whelk Cabestana spengleri; Pear Helmet Xenogalea pyrum; Half-grained Helmet Antephallum semigranulosum; Mitre Eumitra rhodia; Volutes Ericusa sowerbyi and Amorena undulata; Dog Cockle Tucetilla striatularis; Razor Solen vaginoides; Spoon Scaeolea crassa; Titron Mayena australasia.

Plants collected were identified either by members or Mr. D. Hamilton of the University of Tasmania as follows: Pussytails, Ptilotus spathulatus; the grasses Paspalum dilatatum, Ammophila arenaria (Marram), Spinifex hirsutus (Spinifex); the rush Leptocarpus brownii; Cushion Bush Calocephalus brownii; Pimelia humilis; Aaron's Rod Verbascum thapsus; Triglochin striata (in ditches); Yellow Buttons Cotula coronopifolia (in ditches); Lobelia alata; Fat Hen Chenopodium album; Mushrooms Psalliota campestris; the ferns Adiantum aethiopicum (Common Maiden-hair), Cheilanthes tenuifolia (Rock Fern); Elodea canadensis (in the ponds).

The bird species present were typical of the habitats described above.

Notable features were: the presence of a pair of Black-fronted Dotterels Charadrius melanops on the edge of one of the dams; a pair of White-breasted Sea Eagles Haliaeetus leucogaster, perched in dead trees in one of the dams; the numbers of Little Grassbirds Megalurus gramineus in the reed beds; Black Duck Anas superciliosus, Chestnut Teal A. castanea, Grey Teal A. gibberifrons, Hoary-headed Grebes Podiceps poliocephalus, and a Coot Fulica atra, as well as a small flock of tame Mallards A. platyrhynchos, on the dams; a large population of White-backed Magpies Gymnorhina hypoleuca, probably as a result of the retention of scattered clumps of trees. Migrants were scarce, as expected in late-March, but a flock of Swift Parrots Lathamus discolor, swallows and martins were seen. Further afield, several broods of Black Swan Cygnus atratus (about 4 weeks old) were seen on Moulting Lagoon, and more than 30 albatrosses were at sea off Friendly Beaches, no doubt driven in-shore by the appalling weather.

Aquatic life was sampled from the pond in the water meadow below the cottage, tentative identifications being: Freshwater Limpit Problancylus sp.;

Freshwater Snail Potamopyrgus (sp. nigra?); Freshwater Shrimp Gammarus (?) sp.; Cyclops Microcyclops australis; a spider mite Hydracarina sp.; Odonate larvae, possibly damsel flies, and Culicine larvae and pupae (probably Culex pipiens) were plentiful, as were the beautiful protozoan Volvox.

The only fish known to have been caught in the creek were mountain trout, a galaxid. These were a puny catch compared to the Brown and Rainbow Trout caught at Tooms Lake last year.

Despite the weather, the camp was still most enjoyable. The shearers' cottage was warm and dry, and the usual good companionship of Club's camps and outings was much in evidence. Our thanks are extended to Mr. Cotton for his generous permission to use the cottage.

SEA BIRD MORTALITY ON THE WEST COAST OF KING ISLAND

M. T. Templeton

EACH autumn with the ocean wanderers moving out from their southern breeding grounds, numbers perish and are washed up on our beaches. King Island (40°S), 77 km long by 26 km wide, situated in Bass Strait, off the north-western coast of Tasmania, is in the path of the Roaring Forties, making the western coast an ideal collecting area for derelict specimens.

In June 1969 I selected 7 km of beaches, interlaced with rocky outcrops, situated practically in the centre of the western coast, covering Half Moon Bay, Porky Beach to Unlucky Bay, for regular weekly patrols. This area has large sections of open beaches, and is free from feral cats which, in parts of the Island, live partly on beach-washed birds. One visit was also made to Whistler Point near the northern end of the Island, where all the prions washed up had been eaten by feral cats, with only the wings remaining.

In all, sixty-eight specimens and remains, not including Short-tailed Shearwater Puffinus tenuirostris, and Little Penguin Eudyptula minor were collected. The greatest mortality was amongst the prions, with forty-six of four species being collected. All specimens were forwarded to Mr. R. H. Green, Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, for identification and preservation.

A solidified oily substance was found adhering to the feathers of about half the birds collected. In some instances this was only a trace, in others the carcass was almost encased. Prions and Little Penguin were the most affected. Its source has not been determined, but it appears to be the probable cause of mortality.

The eighteen species, number and dates collected are :-

Pelagodroma marina: White-faced Storm Petrel; one desiccated specimen from Porky Beach on the 29 July, and one on 1 December.

Pterodroma macroptera: Great-winged Petrel. Desiccated specimen from Porky Beach on 24 June. Desiccated specimen from Half Moon Bay 6 February 1970.

Pterodroma lessonii: White-headed Petrel. Fresh specimens from Porky Beach on 24 June (1), 3 July (1), 8 July one fresh and one eaten out, 28 July (one decomposing in kelp), 4 August one about three days old at Unlucky Bay.

Macronectes giganteus: Giant Petrel. Bones and feathers were found at Whistler Point on 17 August, just off the beach where a feral cat had consumed numerous prions leaving just the wings.

Daption capense: Cape Petrel. A fresh specimen was found at Porky Beach on 3 July, and a slightly decomposing one at Half Moon Bay on 11 July.

Halobaena caerulea: Blue Petrel. A decomposing bird was collected near the estuary of Porky Creek on 28 September.

Pachyptila salyini: Medium-billed Prion. One beach washed specimen was collected on 25 June, five on 10 July, and two on the 26 July.

Pachyptila turtur: Fairy Prion. Two specimens were collected on 24 June, three on 3 July, six on 10 July, four on 26 July, two on 20 August, one on 10 October, and one on 25 February 1970.

Pachyptila desolata: Dove-Prion. A skull was collected on 24 June, with other beach washed specimens being one on 10 July, two on 24 July, one on 29 July, and two on 20 August.

- Pachyptila belcheri: Thin-billed Prion. On the 24 June one exhausted bird, which died during the night, was collected at Porky Beach. On 26 June one dead bird was found half a mile from the sea up Porky Creek. Other specimens collected were two on 3 July, three on 10 July, three on 20 July, two on 29 July, and one on 20 August.
- Pelecanoides urinatrix: Diving Petrel. One specimen collected at the estuary of Porky Creek on 4 July.
- Diomedea exulans: Wandering Albatross. One bird in sub-adult plumage was found at Half Moon Bay on 11 July, a dried out Snowy specimen had been collected at Unlucky Bay and sent to the Queen Victoria Museum in January 1969.
- Diomedea melanophris: Black-browed Albatross. One decomposing specimen was found in kelp on Porky Beach on 4 July.
- Diomedea chlororhyncha: Yellow-nosed Albatross. One desiccated specimen collected at Whistler Point on 17 August.
- Diomedea chrysostoma: Grey-headed Albatross. One decomposing specimen collected at Porky Beach on 8 July, and one fresh specimen from Unlucky Bay on 28 July.
- Diomedea cauta: White-capped Albatross. One specimen near Unlucky Bay on 28 July.
- Phelectria fusca: Sooty Albatross. One fresh, but eaten out possibly sub-adult specimen lacking the orange line on the beak was collected at Porky Beach on 27 June.
- Puffinus gavia: Fluttering Shearwater. One beach washed specimen collected on 10 October at Porky Beach.
- Puffinus tenuirostris: Odd birds commenced turning up dead on Porky Beach on 10 October.

RARE TASMANIAN BIRDS AT ROSTREVOR LAGOON

D. Milledge

ROSTREVOR LAGOON, a freshwater dam north of Triabunna on the East Coast, has recently yielded records of three birds very seldom seen in Tasmania. They are the White-headed Stilt Himantopus leucocephalus, Whistling Eagle Haliastur sphenurus, and Magpie-lark Grallina cyanoleuca.

The White-headed Stilt was first recorded on 5 May 1969 when I observed it standing in about four inches of water on the eastern edge of the Lagoon. It then moved out on to the mud revealing long pink legs, and joined a group of Spurwinged Plovers Vanellus miles novaehollandiae where it commenced preening. A description from my field note book reads 'a bird at first resembling a Greenshank Tringa nebularia but with long pink legs. Body and head white, wings and back black. Patch at back of head black grading into grey-brown and extending down back of neck. Bill long and fine, blackish. Stood as high as Spurwinged Plover but much slimmer in build.'

The Stilt was subsequently seen by L. E. Wall and D. G. Thomas on the 11 May and L. E. Wall obtained a number of colour photographs which show the bird very clearly. From the grey-brown colouration of the back of the neck, the bird was apparently a juvenile.

Previous records of the White-headed Stilt for Tasmania are one shot at South Arm in April 1852 (Littler) and an unpublished sight record of a bird seen at Stingray Bay (3 miles north of Granville Harbour) in 1965 by Dr. E. R. Guiler. Ewing (1842) listed the White-headed Stilt as 'doubtful'.

Both the Magpie-lark and Whistling Eagle were seen at Rostrevor on the same day, 14 October 1969. I had stopped my car by the side of the Lagoon when I noticed a small and conspicuous black and white bird fly past. It alighted in a nearby Acacia and called and was immediately recognisable as a Magpie-lark. The bird flew down to the edge of the Lagoon and began feeding. It was noted to be lame in the right leg which it trailed in flight. Evidently a male, the bird had a black throat and white eyebrow and apart from the yellowish eye, was completely black and white in body colouring.

From conversation with locals, it seems that a Magpie-lark was also present about Rostrevor Lagoon last year (1968) — possibly the same bird.

After watching the Magpie-lark I walked around the Lagoon and saw a large eagle flying low over the water. It perched in an old eucalypt close to the dam wall and allowed me to approach within about forty yards. Predominantly brown streaked white above, it had a dusky band across the chest reminiscent of the Osprey

Pandion haliaetus. The underparts were fawnish-white with darker brown streaks on the breast. The tail was very pale brown above with a darker tip and in flight appeared unevenly rounded. Most of the underwing was pale brown but there was a dark rectangular patch along the trailing edge and the primaries showed as very dark 'fingers'. Quite a bulky bird, almost the size of a White-breasted Sea Eagle Haliaeetus leucogaster and was determined as a Whistling Eagle.

The Whistling Eagle was first recorded from Tasmania at Falmouth in 1964 (see the Emu Vol. 65: 75-76). Since then it has been seen on several other occasions and there is now a skin collected at Exton in the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. I had previously seen one bird at Tinderbox (south of Hobart) on 18 November 1967.

Restorvor Lagoon, except during dry times, is always a good place for seeing birds. As well as the three species already mentioned, in recent years I have recorded such others as the Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica, Dominican Gull Larus dominicanus, Brown Bittern Botaurus poiciloptilus and Black-fronted Dotterel Charadrius melanops.

Being so close to the Highway, it is worth a stop when passing and should be watched for future possible unusual occurrences.

FROM FROM THE SIXTIES

A. J. Dartnall

THERE has been a resurgence in marine research throughout the world during the last decade. Marine biology and geology, oceanography and fisheries science - all have developed and expanded as new techniques became available and new needs became apparent. The five books listed below are a personal selection of books about marine biology published since 1960.

The Log from the Sea of Cortez by John Steinbeck. 1960 edition. Pan Books

For many persons involved in marine science Ed Ricketts bids fair to be the epitomy of a marine biologist. Ed, 'Doc' of Cannery Row and Sweet Thursday, ran the Pacific Biological Laboratories in Monterey. Steinbeck and Ricketts chartered a boat in 1940 to 'see what we see, record what we find' in the Gulf of California. The 'Log' is the account of the expedition and is fascinating reading. The accounts of 'sailing directions' and the vagaries of the 'Hansen Sea-Cow' are, to me, the best of Steinbeck. Carnival under the sea by R. Catala. 1964. Sicard-Paris.

In 1955 Rene Catala and his wife built the Noumea Aquarium which is famous for its displays of coral fluorescence. 'Carnival under the Sea' is Catala's story of his marine biological station and, apart from the illustrations of fluorescent corals, contains photographs of animals that are rarely illustrated. A visit to Noumea is beyond the means of many. This book brings some of the magic and interest of tropical seas to the reader.

Great Waters by Sir Alister Hardy. 1967. Collins.

On 24th September 1925 the Royal Research Ship 'Discovery' sailed south. Her mission - to study the natural history of Antarctic Seas. Sir Alister's collation of research results, personal diary (he was Chief Zoologist to the expedition), and illustrations is an immensely readable account of 'Discovery's' voyage and the knowledge that was gained.

The New Zealand Sea Shore by J. Morton and M. Miller. 1968. Collins

This book is a guide to the sea shores of New Zealand. Treatment habitat-by-habitat, from wharf pile to sandy beach, rocky shore to mud-flat, is detailed and clear. The cool temperate shores of New Zealand show some similarities to those of Tasmania and this masterly treatment is a 'must' for the shore naturalist.

Australian Seashores in Colour. K. Gillett and J. Yaldwyn. 1969. Reed.

This handbook was planned by its authors to complement Daldin's 'Australian Seashores' which is the classical account of the littoral life of south-eastern Australia. Modern techniques of colour printing, superb photography by Gillett and a very readable and accurate text have fulfilled that aim. The photographs of the Banded Coral Shrimp (p. 71) and the Parchment-tube Worm (p. 63) are amongst the best of their kind.