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REPTILES OF KING ISLAND

M. T. Templeton

RAWLINSON (1967) listed five lizards and three snake species for King Island. Green and McGarvie (1971) included one additional species, the Small-scaled Skink Leiopisma pretiosum

The finding of this skink, which is endemic to Tasmania, at Porky Beach in March 1969 suggested the possibility of another endemic species L. ocellatum being present also. This led to an intensified search for skinks, mainly on the West Coast of the Island. Although L. ocellatum was not found, an enhanced pattern of the distribution of species has been formed.

These are as follows :

Whites Skink Egernia whitii. Naracoopa (Rawlinson 1967), Boulder Point (Green and McGarvie 1971); the rocky foreshores near Cape Wickham, open paddocks with heaps of debris at Reekara, from under granite slabs on the plains near Sea Elephant River, on the east coast and Pearshape in the south.

Southern Blue-tongued Lizard Tiliqua negrolutea. East Wickham, Pearshape, Grassy, (Rawlinson 1967), Pegarah forestry (Green and McGarvie 1971). It can be found in all types of habitat throughout the island.

Tussock Skink Leiopisma entrecasteauxi. Cape Wickham, Parenna, Seal Rocks, Naracoopa (Rawlinson 1967); Pass River (Green and McGarvie 1971). Possibly the most common skink, being found in all types of habitat and collected at Martha Lavinia, Wickham, Whistler Point, Reekara, Loorana and Cataraqui Point. One favoured habitat, where it occurs with L. pretiosum is amongst rocks and vegetation above high tide mark near Porky Creek Estuary.

Three-lined Skink Leiopisma trilineatum. Two specimens in National Museum, no localities given (Rawlinson 1967); Pegarah forestry (Green and McGarvie 1971). This species is not common having been collected in sparsely grassed sand dunes at Yellow Rock, coastal grassland at Loorana and once at Reekara, all on the west coast.

Metallic Skink Leiopisma metallicum. Parenna, Yarra Creek, six miles N. W. of Currie (Rawlinson 1967); Pass River (Green and McGarvie 1971). It is

very common in and above damp areas at Loorana; amongst debris in tree covered country at Reekara and Sea Elephant, and was collected in tussocks at Cape Wickham.

Small-scaled Skink Leiopisma pretiosum. Littoral zone at Porky Beach (Green and McGarvie 1971). It has since proved to be widespread on the west coast, but has been found only in and near rotting kelp in the littoral zones of beaches and the rocky areas just above. It has been collected at Cape Wickham, Whistler Point, Porky Beach, Porky Estuary, Cataraqui Point and near Stokes Point.

White-lipped Whipsnake Denisonia coronoides. Pegarah, Parena, three miles west of Naracoopa (Rawlinson 1967); Pearshape Lagoon, Pegarah forestry reserve (McGarvie and Green 1971). It has subsequently been collected in wet areas at Loorana and Cataraqui Point and in sand dunes above Porky Beach.

Copperhead Snake Denisonia superba. Six miles east of Loorana; Parena, three miles west of Naracoopa; Naracoopa; four miles east of Egg Lagoon; East Wickham (Rawlinson 1967); Pegarah and Pass River (Green and McGarvie 1971). Subsequently recorded in swampy areas at Loorana, and also at Pearshape, Stokes Point, Etrick River, Reekara, Martha Lavinia, Egg Lagoon, Wickham, Whistler Point and above Half Moon Bay. The Brown Tree-frog Hyla ewingii has been found in the stomach of most specimens examined.

Tiger Snake Notechis ater. New Year Is., Christmas Is. off the west coast; Seal Rocks (Rawlinson 1967); New Year Is., Egg Lagoon (Green and McGarvie 1971). The only two additional sightings have been in swampy areas at Reekara.

Loggerhead Turtle Caretta caretta. Off the east coast of King Island (Scott and Mollison 1956; Green 1971). In August 1971 a dead turtle was found in a decomposing condition in rotting kelp 6 km. north of Currie. It was dragged above high water, photographed and allowed to dry out. While drying out the carapace and bones were scattered, but most were collected in October and with the photograph and spirit preserved head forwarded to the Queen Victoria Museum, where they were pieced together and identified as of this species.

A tortoise species was collected crossing a road at Pass River in March 1971 and later released in the same area. Two were reported caught in Camp Creek near Currie about 1966. Two were also reported escaped at Egg Lagoon about 1962, one of which inhabited a lily pond for some time.

My appreciation to R. H. Green of Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston for the identification of specimens, which have been added to the Museums collection.

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BIRDS RECORDED IN SOUTH WEST TASMANIA

J. S. & L. E. Luckman

THOMAS and WALL (Tas. Nat. 29 & 30, 1972) drew attention to the scarcity of published ornithological records from South West Tasmania. This prompted us to consult our notebooks for several field trips to the area. As these trips were not primarily for bird-observing our notes are only of those birds readily noted on the route or around one-night camps, except for several days' camp at the foot of Mt. Mackenzie in March 1948.

The Trips :

Brief details of the visits made to the area are given below. Places visited and mentioned in the bird list are included :

- (1) March 1948. Boat trip to Port Davey, Southport Lagoon, Mt. Mackenzie, Spring River, Bathurst Harbour, Balmoral Hill, Schooner Inlet and Spain Bay.
- (2) December 1952. Kelly Basin, Bond Bay, Payne Bay, De Witt Range, West Coast N. of Green Island, Svenor Beach, Stephens Beach.
- (3) 1 - 12 January, 1953, Port Davey : Horseshoe Inlet, Moth Creek, New Harbour, Ketchum Bay, Wilson Bight, South West Cape, Falls Creek.
- (4) January 1956. Lake Pedder.
- (5) December 1958.- January 1959. Cox Bight, Rocky Boat Harbour, New River Lagoon.

Annotated List of Species

Eudyptes sp. : A crested penguin, very tired, at Cox Bight, 2 Jan. 1959.

((Bronzewing Pigeon : Pigeons, probably of this species, were seen at Schooner Inlet, Bond Bay and a pair flying to and from a small island about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off Stephens Beach.))

Brush Bronzewing : 1 at Lake Pedder.

Short-tailed Shearwater : Rocky Boat Harbour.

Albatross sp. : unidentified bird off Rocky Boat Harbour.

Little Black Cormorant: 2 Falls Creek, New Harbour; 1 Lake Pedder.

Gannet : diving in Payne Bay

Silver Gull : Bond Bay; numerous on beach north of Green Is. ; rookeries on rocky point near wreck of "Svenor" and on a rocky reef just beyond the breakers on beach south of Svenor Beach (about 35 birds); numerous Ketchum Bay; 4 at Lake Pedder.

Pacific Gull : Bond Bay, south of Stephens Beach, Ketchum Bay.

Pied Oystercatcher : Bond Bay, numerous beach N. of Green Is. ; 2 beach south of Svenor Beach; 2 Ketchum Bay; 3 reported to us, Lake Pedder. (our list for Lake Pedder was passed to Mr. M. S. R. Sharland and could account for his reference in "Tasmanian Birds").

Sooty Oystercatcher : 2 pairs on rocky point and rocky reef just off-shore from camp, Mt. Mackenzie; 6 beach N. of Green Is. ; pair nesting on rocky reef Stephens Beach.

Hooded Dotterel : 2 on sand-spit, Kelly Basin.

Red-capped Dotterel : 6 on beach N. of Green Is. ; common Stephens Beach;
common Ketchum Bay.

((Bar-tailed Godwit : Kelly Basin.))

Greenshank : 1 Kelly Basin.

Japanese Snipe : on plain N. of Cox Bight.

White-faced Heron : Spring River.

((White-necked Heron : 2 on rocks in Rocky Boat Harbour, 14 Jan. 1959)).

Black Swan : Numerous Bathurst Harbour; numerous Horseshoe Inlet; several Falls
Creek; numerous New River Lagoon.

Duck spp. : numerous ducks, including 6 small ducklings, Horseshoe Inlet.

Black Duck : two flocks, of 15 and 32, Spring River; Bond Bay ; 2 Lake Pedder.

Teal sp. : 12 on Spring River.

Wedge-tailed Eagle : 3 over ridge, Ketchum Bay; 2 Lake Pedder.

White-breasted Sea Eagle : 2 Balmoral Hill; 1 Spain Bay; 1 Bond Bay; 2 Kelly
Basin; 1 over coastal scrub W. of De Witt Range; New River Lagoon.

Spotted Owl : heard on ridges NW of New Harbour; heard Lake Pedder.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo : 6 on plains N. of Kelly Basin; 10 De Witt Range;
4 Lake Pedder.

White Cockatoo : N. of Bond Bay; in scrub inland from Svenor Beach.

Green Rosella : Spring River; Bond Bay; Kelly Basin; 3 Lake Pedder.

Blue-winged Parrot : 2 Moth Creek.

Orange-bellied Parrot : several bright green parrots with deep yellow underneath,
easy to approach, in low bushes near camp, were identified as of this species,
Stephens Beach.

Ground Parrot : 3 on plains N. of Kelly Basin; 6 end of De Witt Range; 6 in vicinity
of Horseshoe Inlet; 2 Moth Creek; Falls Creek; 2 on plain N. of Cox Bight;
1 Lake Pedder.

(In "Birds of Port Davey and south coast of Tasmania" (Emu 61 : 223-236, 1961)

Green and Mollison refer to Leo Luckman seeing 'a nest of large feathered
young about Jan. 1 in the South-east Cape area'. This is incorrect. Leo
Luckman took colour photos of feathered young some distance behind Clayton's
house at Bond Bay, Port Davey in Dec. 1958).

Fantail Cuckoo : heard in scrub inland from Svenor Beach; heard Lake Pedder.

Welcome Swallow : 1 Lake Pedder.

Tree-Martin : numerous Southport Lagoon; 2 on ridge above Wilson Bight; 3 Lake
Pedder.

Grey Fantail : Bond Bay.

Flame Robin : pair Lake Pedder.

Pink Robin : near creek S. end of Ketchum Bay.

Dusky Robin : pair Moth Creek; Lake Pedder.

Olive Whistler : Bond Bay.

Grey Shrike-Thrush : several in coastal scrub along beaches, Bond Bay, Payne Bay;
3 Lake Pedder.

Brown Scrub-Wren : several around camp Mt. Mackenzie; Bond Bay; Lake Pedder.

Striated Field Wren : Lake Pedder.

Little Grassbird : Lake Pedder.

Superb Blue Wren : numerous Moth Creek; 3 Lake Pedder.

Grey-breasted Silveryeye : Lake Pedder.

Yellow-throated Honeyeater : Mt. Mackenzie; Bond Bay; Moth Creek.

Crescent Honeyeater : numerous in scrub behind beach Ketchum Bay; numerous Lake Pedder.

Yellow-winged Honeyeater : Stephens Beach; numerous Lake Pedder.

Pipit : Kelly Basin; on plains N. of Kelly Basin.

Firetail Finch : numerous Southport Lagoon; several around camp Mt. Mackenzie; in low scrub Kelly Basin; numerous in low scrub on granite South West Cape; pair Lake Pedder.

Forest Raven : 1 Lake Pedder.

Black Currawong : numerous Kelly Basin; 2 Lake Pedder.

(Species included in double brackets are those that were not identified with certainty, plus one, the White-necked Heron, which is so rare in Tasmania that a sight record cannot be accepted unequivocally without a substantiating field description taken at the time of sighting - Ed.)

BIRDS OF A SUBURBAN GARDEN

D. G. Thomas

Introduction:

Suburban gardens are largely given over to the cultivation of introduced plants and support large numbers of introduced bird species. Consequently, few ornithologists make regular observations of the species occurring in their gardens. Yet there is quite a lot of useful information to be gained from so doing. The following account is based on almost five years' observations, from 23 June 1966 to 28 May 1971 in a Lutana garden and adjoining paddock. My house was close to the River Derwent and water birds are included.

My method was to keep a chart on which every species seen on any day was recorded. Observations were made whenever possible and were not restricted to particular times. The results obtained can be treated mathematically, but what follows is qualitative rather than quantitative. A total of 58 species was recorded during the period, with a daily mean of 9.5 species.

List of Species :

Little Penguin Eudyptula minor. A single record.

Indian Turtle Dove Streptopelia chinensis. Resident in small numbers. Less common in 1970 when it was not recorded in several months.

Eastern Swampphen Porphyrio melanotus. One record of a small party.

Coot Fulica atra. Present in small numbers in most years from April to September. Earliest 30 April, latest 21 September.

Black Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo. Present in every month. Noticeably less common July - November. Breeds on piles in the river.

White-breasted Cormorant P. fuscescens. One record only.

- Little Pied Cormorant *P. melanoleucos*. Present in every month, commonest April - August.
- Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*. Uncommon. Recorded every month but more frequently January - March.
- Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*. Common all year.
- Pacific Gull *L. pacificus*. Present in every month but more numerous June - December.
- Dominican Gull *L. dominicanus*. Uncommon in 1966 and 1967, becoming more common in 1968. Recorded every month from February 1968 - May 1971, except November 1968, January, May, July, September, October 1969, November 1970 and January 1971.
- Sooty Oystercatcher *Haematopus unicolor*. A single sound record.
- Spurwinged Plover *Vanellus miles*. Fairly common, recorded every month.
- White-faced Heron *Notophoxyx novaehollandiae*. Present in most years. Records for every month except January and September.
- Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*. Occasional visitor. A pair with 5 large cygnets spent a few days in the area at a time when a family of the same size was reported in the press as having disappeared from the Kingston area.
- Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*. Four records, 1 in January and 3 in February.
- White-breasted Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*. A single record of a bird flying up-river. This bird had been seen passing over the city a few minutes earlier by L. E. Wall.
- Little Falcon *Falco longipennis*. A single record, June 1968.
- Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*. A single record, August 1968.
- Brown Falcon *F. berigora*. The most frequently seen raptor with a total of 19 occurrences in all months.
- Nankeen Kestrel *F. cenchroides*. A single record, February 1968.
- Musk Lorikeet *Glossopsitta concinna*. A single record, September 1967.
- White Cockatoo *Kakatoe galerita*. Seen and heard on several occasions, all except one, when 5 birds were present, almost certainly aviary birds.
- Galah *K. roseicapilla*. A single bird seen on several occasions. Almost certainly an aviary bird.
- Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*. A few birds (2 - 5) are present in most winters; Earliest 22 March, latest 28 September.
- Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*. Regular summer visitor, August to February, most numerous in September and October, becoming uncommon after December. In 1970 a small flock wintered in the area. Earliest 22 August, latest 19 February.
- Spine-tailed Swift *Hirundapus caudacutus*. Flocks occasionally occur briefly in the area, two occurrences during the period being considered, in February and March.
- Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*. A regular summer visitor from September (occasionally August) to December, after which only occasional birds, invariably juveniles, are seen. Earliest 23 August, latest 23 February.

- Fan-tailed Cuckoo Cacomantis pyrrhophanus. Occasional visitor. Six records, all of single birds, four in October in the same year. Also recorded in November and February.
- Golden Bronze Cuckoo Chalcites plagosus. A single sound record, October 1967.
- Welcome Swallow Hirundo neoxena. Regular summer visitor, occasionally breeding within the area. Present September to January or February. Only a single record outside this period - in April 1970. Earliest 4 September, latest 25 February.
- Tree Martin Hylochelidon nigricans. Occasional summer visitor between October and February.
- Grey Fantail Rhipidura fuliginosa. Three records, one in May and two (in different years) in October.
- Satin Flycatcher Myiagra cyanoleuca. A single record, November 1970.
- Scarlet Robin Petroica multicolor. Winter visitor, both males and females, in most years, April to July.
- Flame Robin P. phoenicia. Winter visitor in most years in small numbers, May to September.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike Coracina novaehollandiae. Occasional visitor, September to November.
- Blackbird Turdus merula. Common resident.
- White-fronted Chat Ephthianura albifrons. Three records of small flocks passing through the area, June July and November.
- Brown Thornbill Acanthiza pusilla. One record, June 1968.
- Superb Blue Wren Malurus cyaneus. A party of five (1 male, 1 female, 3 immature males) was present occasionally from September 1968 to January 1969 and regularly from then until August 1969. The party disappeared and was not seen again until January 1970 when it was seen on most days until it again disappeared in April 1971.
- Spotted Pardalote Pardalotus punctatus. A regular winter visitor from May to to September, occasional in other months.
- Yellow-tipped Pardalote P. striatus. Recorded in all months from July to March, most frequently August to October, suggestive of the arrival of migrants. Absent April to June.
- Grey-breasted Silvereye Zosterops lateralis. Recorded in all months in most years but generally most numerous in winter, April - August. Does not breed in the study area.
- Eastern Spinebill Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris. Occasional winter visitor, April - July.
- Yellow-throated Honeyeater Meliphaga flavicollis. One or two birds present from March to July 1967 and February to August 1968.
- Crescent Honeyeater Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera. Regular and common winter visitor April to September, uncommon at other times.
- Yellow-winged Honeyeater P. novaehollandiae. A winter visitor in some years. Not recorded in 1969 and 1971 (but present again in 1972). Occurs usually in small flocks.

- Yellow Wattlebird Anthochaera paradoxa. Occasional visitor outside the breeding season. Three records - March, April and September.
- Skylark Alauda arvensis. A summer visitor, breeding in small numbers. Uncommon February to June.
- Pipit Anthus australis. Two records of small flocks, March and June.
- Greenfinch Chloris chloris. Seldom recorded before June 1968 since when numbers have increased markedly. Now an established local breeder. Forms flocks outside the breeding season.
- Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis. Common breeding species. Forms nomadic flocks outside the breeding season. Much less numerous March to August.
- House Sparrow Passer domesticus. Common breeding species. In some winters becomes significantly less numerous.
- Starling Sturnus vulgaris. Common breeding species. In winter very large flocks pass over on their way to and from the roost on the lift-span of the old Hobart bridge.
- Forest Raven Corvus tasmanicus. Common outside the breeding season, February to September. Does not breed within the area and decidedly less common October to January.
- Grey Butcherbird Cracticus torquatus. Irregular up to April 1969 when a pair established themselves in the area, remaining until September 1971, since when it has only been an irregular visitor.
- White-backed Magpie Gymnorhina hypoleuca. A single record for July.

Discussion

Certain conclusions about the status of various species can be deduced from the above.

Resident breeding species. Ignoring introduced species, only a few species of native birds appear likely to establish themselves as breeding - Swift Parrot, Pallid Cuckoo, Welcome Swallow, Superb Blue Wren, Grey-breasted Silvereeye and Grey Butcherbird.

Regular summer visitors. These comprise Swift Parrot, Pallid Cuckoo, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Yellow-tipped Pardalote and Skylark. All except the Skylark are migratory.

Regular winter visitors. These comprise Coot, Eastern Rosella, Flame Robin, Scarlet Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereeye, Yellow-throated Honeyeater, Crescent Honeyeater, Yellow-winged Honeyeater. Of these, the Silvereeye is known to be a partial migrant with numbers crossing Bass Strait, and the Flame Robin is thought to be one. The occurrence of the other species of land birds suggests that they are altitudinal migrants.

Occasional visitors. The occasional occurrence of species such as the White-fronted Chat, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Spinebill and Yellow Wattlebird during winter months suggests hard weather movements. This is somewhat of a misnomer because birds do not move as a direct response to hard weather (i. e. cold) but to a local failure of the food supply which may be the direct result of cold weather.

The occasional occurrence of the Satin Flycatcher, Yellow-tipped Pardalote, Grey Fantail, Fantail Cuckoo and Golden Bronze Cuckoo suggests that these species are migratory.