

A handlist of the
Birds of Moorunde



John Endersby

A handlist of the
Birds of Moorunde
with annotations

by John Endersby

Study period from 2000 to 2007

"The death of each individual animal is sad but inevitable. However, the death of the forest or swamp or plain that supports the entire species is tragedy"....."if the kings and noblemen of Europe had not been avid huntsmen the stag and the boar and the bear would be extinct today. It was the huntsmen who saved the forest from the axe and plough of the peasants"

Wilbur Smith
1986

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FOREWORD

The author is of the opinion that any good science based or science connected study should expose more questions than what it set out to answer. All the information provided in this work should be seen as a launching base for further research. And the work has been compiled with this ethic in mind.

Observations and notes for this seven year study are at their informative limit; and would not be comprehensive enough to make or draw any further conclusions than that currently given. Further studies would be required for more specific conclusions or information. With this in mind some potential subjects have been cited in this list as possible examples.

As all words are open to individual definition, the written comments on each species in this annotated list are, by default, subjective. While the numerical statistics supporting them require some explanation before the reader ventures into the information they provide.

Prior to the statistical data, the status of each species in relation to the whole state of South Australia is given, providing a comparison between the State and the Moorunde status; which in turn becomes a "base line". These comments are derived from "A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia with Annotations" by H. T. Condon (1962). This dated information has been revised and updated (where necessary) by the author.

The bird names, both ornithological and common, are those recommended by Birdlife Australia as listed in '*Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds*' by Christidis and Boles (2008). However, for the benefit of bird enthusiasts who cherish their older bird reference books, common names used by H. T. Condon (1962), where they differ significantly from Christidis and Boles, are included in brackets.

In almost all cases the statistics compiled support the subjective comments - which were derived from observation and subsequent memory.

However, a limited number required support on clarification from the written notes. By combining the two, an observer (on Moorunde) will obtain a fairly accurate insight on any given species in terms of habitat preference and population status; that is, how common and how abundant.

Some explanation of gaining and compiling these statistics is required as their titles could be misleading.

1. The number to the left of each bird's common name is an overview reduced to a percentage and averaged between the two statistical results at the bottom of the notes on each species, (referred to as "statistical status"). It can be interpreted in various ways, depending on an observer's intent. Such as the chances of an observation (or sighting) out of a full score of 100. Or be seen as an indicator of that bird's status (at Moorunde) on a scale of 1 to 100 and so on.

2. Specific area - For this study, Moorunde was divided into ten approximately equal areas. Each area received four study excursions of two and a half hours duration; making a total of ten hours of study excursions per section; and one hundred hours of study overall, on this method. A G.P.S. was used to minimise overlapping in each of the four studies. This eventually resulted in forty lists of sightings. The total number of sightings set against forty study excursions, was reduced to a percentage number, once again opening to a range of uses. (Note - dates of excursions are not included due to logistical difficulties in the seven year time frame, which posed a large variant in weather conditions.

Also in a number of areas, more than four excursions were attempted but aborted if external incidents such as weather were too far outside normal range)

3. Casual Observation - This is the most misleading term; and was derived with the end use of this guide in mind, not the method used to obtain the results.

The reserve was visited on twenty separate occasions (over seven years) with a study period of five hours for each visit. The method used was to drive slowly around the entire perimeter; and penetrate five separate major habitat types. The five rain gauges were used as landmarks or excursion destinations. The reasoning here is that each rain gauge coincidentally and conveniently are located in the five main habitats that predominate on Moorunde, with the minor habitats being adequately covered by driving around the boundary.

The twenty study excursions in this method were allocated five hours each; giving a total of one hundred, matching the one hundred hours of 2. above.

Consequently a total of two hundred hours of field study was used. In addition to several intermittent informal surveys to enhance the

accuracy of the more subjective notes. Over five hundred hours of field surveys were done to obtain the data in this publication representing one hour per fifty acres and seven hundred hours of study.

Once again the total number of twenty formal studies (as opposed to the five hundred hours of informal) is set against the number of each sighting to arrive at a percentage. This complements the first percentage arrived at in 2. above; and both numbers were then averaged to give an overall view - the numbers cited to the left of the common names.

Viewing all three figures produces a surprisingly accurate assessment that can accommodate a variety of uses for the reader or observer. And readily supports the written notes by being tested in the five hundred hours of "informal" work.

The aim of this dissertation is to give a brief overview of the habitat for birds on the reserve. Some measurements and experiments were conducted for the author to arrive at various conclusions; however, the following description is by no means extensive or comprehensive.

There are places that, once visited, hold a special attraction that defies logical explanation. They draw you back, time and again, with a gravity one is unable to justify. Alternatively, it simply comes down to being part of your life and no further explanation is then necessary.

Moorunde Wildlife Reserve is managed by the Natural History Society of South Australia Inc. It is approximately 2000 hectares (5000 acres) of "Open scrub and Tall Shrubland", situated 18 kilometres north-east of Sedan. The primary purpose for setting it aside was to protect the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat. However, its value as a haven for birds is not to be ignored; especially as some uncommon and rare species in the State are well represented.

The reserve is in the shape of a reversed capital L and set amongst adjoining scrub (of varying quality) on all sides. It is about 1.6 kilometres wide and about 14 kilometres along its southern and eastern boundaries. These two features (setting and length) enhance its value for birds as the setting gives it an effective larger area of scrub and its length lays it over a wider range of habitats.

The climate is somewhat harsh, with a low (275 mm.) average annual rainfall. Summer temperatures are usually 2 or 3 degrees higher than in Adelaide on any given day. Winter frosts can be severe with the ground temperature dropping several degrees below zero. Frequently the rain comes as light showers, further reducing its value. However, the general area is prone to occasional heavy thunderstorms and "cloudbursts".

Although the reserve is situated in a "Mediterranean" climate zone consisting of the traditional four seasons, it can be considered, from a practical point of view, as having only two seasons – Summer and Spring. Breeding activity commences immediately after the first good "opening rains". Then the reserve really comes to life.

Wildflowers are never outstanding compared to other well-known areas in Australia and are most abundant through August and September. However, it is a botanically interesting place and there is always something in flower throughout the year.

From about December through to when good seasonal rains come any time from April to July, bird life is subdued and very quiet. A remarkable

feature is the contrast in activity between the months before and the days after the first good rain. The reserve undergoes a transformation of atmosphere in less than 48 hours.

Habitat is remarkably variable despite first impressions and a brief description is somewhat complicated to compile. But it is reasonable to say that there are three major types, from the point of view of bird studies.

These are as follows:

1. Open scrub,
2. Tall open shrubland and
3. Ecotones.

Strictly speaking, ecotones are not a habitat in their own right but a term given to areas where two habitat types meet. Consequently, they will not be described here.

However, ecotones are the places where fauna numbers and species are at their greatest, as animals (particularly birds) capitalise on the advantages of both habitats. Moorunde has a multitude of ecotones.

The open scrub on Moorunde is made up from four species of mallee as the dominant tree, in fact, usually the only trees. They form a canopy of approximately 50% with a similar percentage of shade density.

Unfortunately, due to charcoal burning during World War II, most of the mallee areas had the trees cut down, so what we have today is mainly regrowth. There are however, some notable exceptions, from single untouched trees to a number of fair sized groves. These give us a good idea of the former pristine nature of the scrub and provide excellent breeding hollows.

Second storey shrubs are generally sparse and low and made up mostly of various salt- and blue-bush species. However, there are frequently "islands" of shrubland within the scrub, some of sufficient size to influence the makeup of the bird population. One other notable feature is a scattering of tall shrubs immediately beneath some mallees, probably germinated from seeds dropped by birds.

Ground cover is represented by the heavy leaf and twig "litter" immediately under the trees. While a range of lichen species binds the topsoil where it is exposed. This ground area (not covered in litter) is on average about 50% of the floor. And with the lichen ranging in colour from black, brown, white, pink, off-white and light green, there is a distinctive mottled appearance.

The soil is generally a red-brown clay-loam over sheet limestone (or calcrete). It has very good moisture retention ability and once wet is very slippery and will form a paste. Under the litter the red colour is displaced and the clay nature is less obvious, probably due to the increase in organic matter. Even the exposed areas have a comparatively soft crust. Depth of the soil over the calcrete varies from about 15 cm. to one or two metres. However, there is considerable outcropping of loose stones, due mainly to uplift from the mallee roots. Visibility is restricted by the multiple but bare mallee stems to around 60 metres (on average) at one metre above ground level.

The remainder of the reserve (about one third) is made up of "Tall Open Shrubland", which varies in density from a visibility (at one metre above ground) of a few metres or less to photographic infinity. An almost negligible canopy is made up from scattered *Myoporum* trees - the numbers of which are declining. There are also *Casuarinas*, Native Pine, Native Apricot and occasionally, a tree form of "mallee" *Eucalyptus*. Contrasting with the former habitat, there are islands of mallee scrub within the shrubland, once again, some of sufficient size to influence species numbers and variety. The predominant shrubs are species of *Geijera*, *Dodonaea*, *Eremophila*, *Melaleuca*, *Acacia* and *Heterodendron*. What shade they provide is generally denser than the mallee, but being shorter, the overall shaded ground is much less.

Regrowth since the commencement of rabbit baiting in 1994 has been nothing less than dramatic. The number of shrubs has increased from 2 to 5 times post baiting - depending on which area one decides to count. Ward's Weed covers most of the ground; however, when fenced off from any grazing, Wallaby and Spear grass can become quite dense.

Once again the ground is covered in a wide range of lichen species and in places, moss and liverworts. But the mottled effect is generally hidden by the Ward's Weed. The soil is somewhat darker and much harder than in the scrub, probably due to an increase in sun exposure. It is still a clay-loam over calcrete with a depth on average much shallower. In places, there are exposed sheets of calcrete and no topsoil.

Dried *Dodonaea* flowers carpet the ground in late Spring, but in late Summer the ground is covered in dried leaves. These leaves are shed by the shrubs in an effort to reduce transpiration at a time when exposure to heat and light are at their greatest and soil moisture is at its lowest. It's the shrubland that displays the changing seasons most dramatically, waiting silently poised in the heat, ready to leap away at the moment their roots lick that first refreshing rain.

2007 REPORT OF RECENT EXTENSION OF MOORUNDE WILDLIFE RESERVE

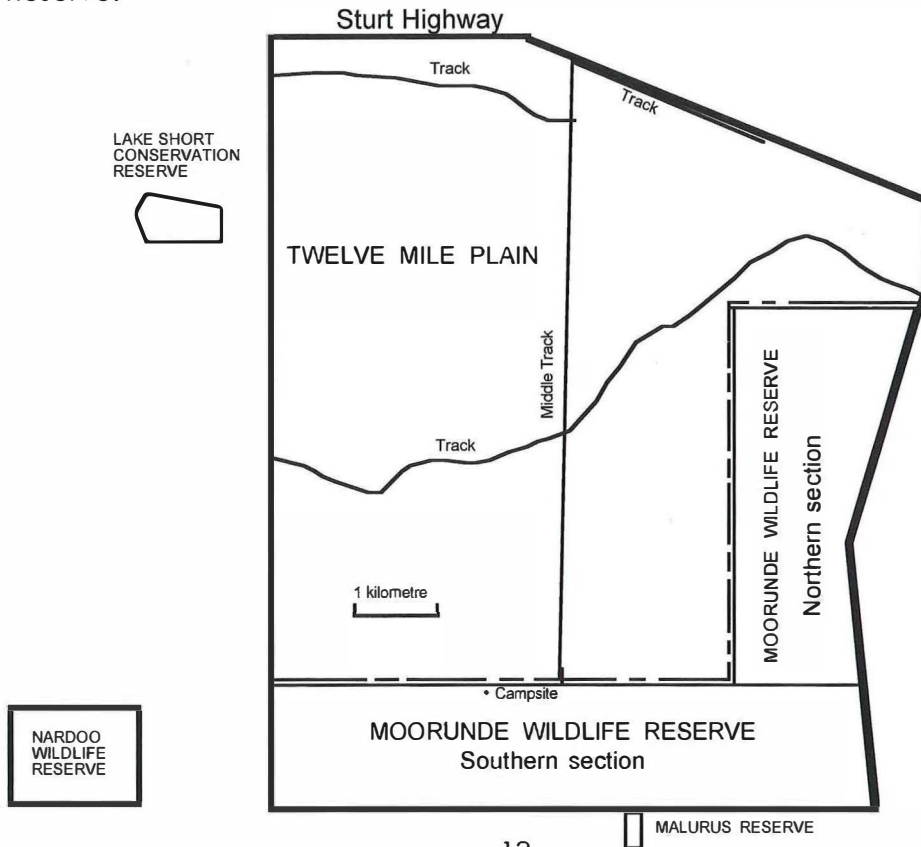
Land purchase

The most exciting development in the past year is the purchase of Sections 841 and 842, the 4860 hectare portion of Portee Station between Moorunde Wildlife Reserve and the Sturt Highway.

This fulfills more than our most ambitious dreams could have contemplated – accomplished through funds accumulated over the years for such a purpose and donations from conservation groups, but mainly through our members having donated generously, some incredibly so, and much appreciated help with transaction services and short term loans from the Nature Foundation.

The map shows the new reserve in relation to the Society's other reserves in the area.

This new area was not included in the study described in this handlist, but, as it contains similar habitats (albeit degraded by pastoral pursuits), no doubt has an influence on the observations in Moorunde Wildlife Reserve.



Most publications of this nature don't concern themselves with this type of information. However, I chose to do so as there are some remarkable similarities and then deviations to be seen; in comparing the Moorunde Reserve to another relatively close area. The most startling comparison is an almost equal number (94 - 93) of species sighted on each location, as the Moorunde Reserve is sixty times larger than the comparison area! In addition, Moorunde is well covered in its original vegetation.

The comparison area (named Johendara) is an eighty acre hobby farm, largely devoid of trees and shrubs when its bird list was commenced in 1988. The map on page 10 shows the vegetation several years ago. Some trees had 'got underway" prior to that time and the shaded areas show where tree have been planted since. In all, some 6000 trees have been planted, with approximately 1000 - 1500 failing to establish.

As the property belongs to the author (at Dec. 2007), this presented some degree of ease in compiling a bird list since 1988. It is situated near the small town of Cambrai; approximately thirty kilometres SSW of Moorunde and considered by the surrounding community as being in the same general area.

Which are the most significant factors, the similarities or the differences? And it is this question that prompted the author to consider, and try to present answers. As discoveries can come from the answers; and the questions that prompted them.

While some background is required to explain features in these two lists; this also helps to explain to the reader the problems that arise in the subjective notes on each bird and give some aid in the interpretation of them.

It is always difficult to arrive at a conclusion between what is - common or rare. The terms - very common, common, not common. uncommon, fairly rare, rare and very rare and so on are further vexed with attachments such as - abundant, not abundant, numerous, fairly numerous, frequently seen but not common, rarely seen and last seen on (date) at (place). Then we also have - resident, migratory, nomadic, frequent visitor, occasional visitor, opportunistic visitor, rare visitor and accidental visitor. All of which are inherently subjective and can vary between observer, location and over time.

I have endeavoured to overcome this deficit by adding a statistical

analysis system. And although this is remarkably accurate, for most birds its degree of accuracy is confirmed (only) by subjective observation. The accuracy therefore is confirmed by default, with each supporting the other (notes against statistics). So the addition of another bird list, with some explanations in occurrence, differences or similarities (while not being definitive either) will at least provide the reader with more or further information and to some degree also illustrate the capacity of bird species to distribute themselves.

The first similarity is the Black Swan and how it is recorded - both being heard flying over at night.

The Pt Section 118 list also contains a Little Pied Cormorant, which was found dead on top of the dog pen under a Pepper Tree. Here we have one of those unanswerable questions; was it attempting the same endeavour as the Swans? "An accidental visitor (found dead)" is how it would be recorded officially.

Yet if it was attempting the same feat as the Swans, its occurrence would be "nocturnally transient". While both incidents (plus the cormorant) highlight bird movements and activity, which is as important as knowing their residence.

Number 5 (in Pt Section 118) the Spotted Nightjar with no notes on specific area, date and only by memory seen once, highlights the importance of more comprehensive notes (a fault by the author). While experience tells me that this very much applies to what birds are seen as common today. (So I ask Rangers on Moorunde to keep up your wildlife recording regardless of expertise, as in time some trend will begin to appear).

Now, approximately two thirds (or more) of the birds recorded on "Johendara" are not residents for any extended period. While at least one third are also resident in an adjacent wider area; and subsequently making use of any resources to be found on this predominantly bare 80 acres. While most (if not all) the nomadic and migrating birds are to be found at both locations; with some significant extras at Pt Section 118. A larger proportion of "visitor range" is also recorded at Johendara compared to Moorunde. The shift in location and setting of Johendara enables most of the "visitors" to be more reliable, stay longer and be more opportunistic. This small section is significantly further south and although only thirty kilometres apart, the significance is illustrated by the observation in bird arrivals and departures. Johendara is also relatively close to the "corridor" of the Marne River and roadside "corridors" to the Mt. Lofty Ranges plus the mallee scrubs further North and East.

One aspect an experienced observer will note is the discrepancy of diurnal birds of prey. Only those species listed known to be nomadic or sporadic are not always present; and a more extensive variety, plus numbers of each are to be found in the Cambrai area. This aspect also applies to ground or grass dwellers, such as Quails and Larks.

Observation at both sites highlights the phenomenon that between each lies a range limit for some species. The best example of this is found in Ravens; with Little Ravens more common in the Southern area and Australian Ravens more common in and around Moorunde. The Little Raven is not recorded inside the study period, but it is known to extend on occasions that far north. Black-backed Magpies and their sub-species the White-backed Magpie is another example, of several more.

Two most striking factors - one the almost identical numbers of species recorded for each area; but without matching species. And two - (more importantly) the number of what are generally seen as strictly scrub dwelling birds on Johendara. The majority of these have been visitors at varying degrees of duration; while some are now permanent residents. Most have been recorded in the latter years as the planted trees get closer to maturity, with a number being seen visiting more regularly; and some species in larger numbers. A highlighting example is Apostle Birds (only recorded once at Moorunde) but are regular "breeding overflow" that attempts to establish itself on occasions near Cambrai.

The importance of the "strictly bush bird" factor is that it's an illustration of the distance (and potential) some birds can be capable of, from the view of re-establishing formerly cleared land, in addition to confirming the importance of maintaining "corridors". However, the nostalgic call of Banded Lapwings, in the evenings, emanating from a relatively bare rise, indicates that not all is lost by land clearance. While there is, and continues to be, a fluctuating effect as the replanted trees start to mimic established native bushland.

With the landscaped house garden habitat diverging from this. Some "entering species" have ousted other previously established birds in both habitat types, and they are now less common.

But a final warning is pertinent here; and it remains the most important issue. The long list of birds recorded on Pt Section 118 is only possible while areas such as Moorunde exist. Observers must not allow themselves to be "dazzled" by this long list on a small and relatively bare area.

The list provides added information only and not relaxation of vigilance!

Part Section 118, Hundred of Angas

("JOHENDARA")



 Tree planting areas

Image reproduced from Google Earth.

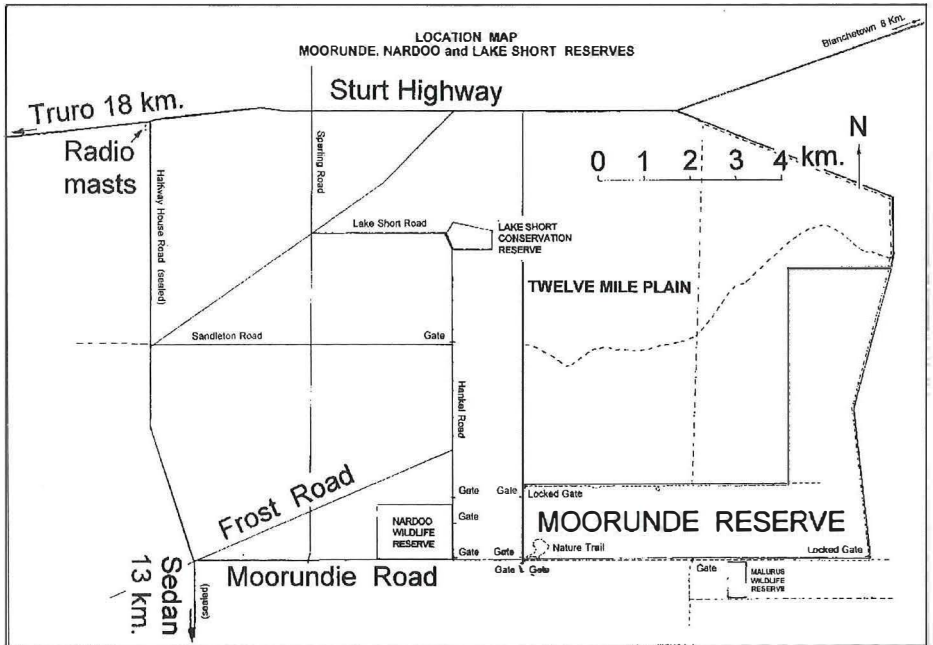
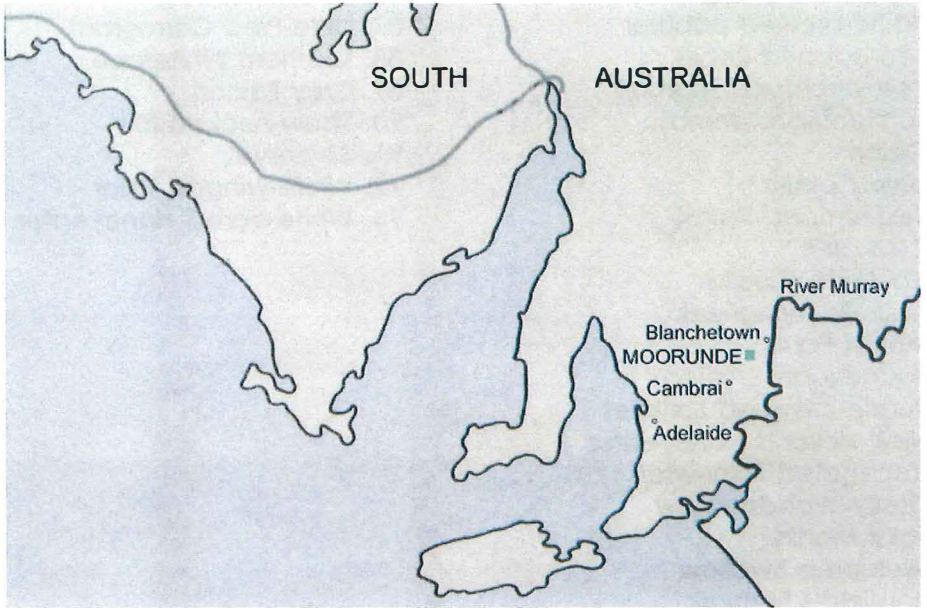
BIRD LIST OF Pt. Section 118, Hundred of Angas
from 1988 to December 2007

1. Black Swan
2. Eastern Barn Owl
3. Tawny Frogmouth
4. Spotted Nightjar
5. Magpie-lark
6. Grey Butcherbird
7. White-winged Chough
8. Australian Magpie
9. Grey Currawong
10. Australian Raven
11. Little Raven
12. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
13. Laughing Kookaburra
14. Grey Shrike-thrush
15. Pied Butcherbird
16. Grey Fantail
17. Restless Flycatcher
18. Willie Wagtail
19. Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo
20. Rufous Whistler
21. Rainbow Bee-eater
22. White-browed Woodswallow
23. Masked Woodswallow
24. Tree Martin
25. Rufous Songlark
26. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
27. Southern Boobook
28. Noisy Miner
29. Red Wattlebird
30. Peaceful Dove
31. Crested Pigeon
32. Singing Honeyeater
33. White-plumed Honeyeater
34. Silvereye
35. Brown-headed Honeyeater
36. Black Honeyeater
37. Weebill
38. Mistletoebird
39. Yellow Thornbill
40. Spotted Pardalote, Yellow-rumped form
41. Striated Pardalote

Note: The list of birds for Moorunde is used as an index and is therefore found at the back of the following notes on each species.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 42. Varied Sitella, Black-capped form | 85. Eastern Spinebill |
| 43. Brown Treecreeper | 86. Apostle Bird |
| 44. White-browed Babbler | 87. Little Pied Cormorant |
| 45. Red-capped Robin | 88. Southern Whiteface |
| 46. Yellow-rumped Thornbill | 89. Grey Falcon |
| 47. Buff-rumped Thornbill | 90. Straw-necked Ibis |
| 48. Galah | 91. Silvereve |
| 49. Little Corella | 92. White-winged Triller |
| 50. Red-rumped Parrot | 93. White-eared Honeyeater |
| 51. Cockatiel | |
| 52. Adelaide Rosella | |
| 53. Australian Ringneck | |
| 54. Mulga Parrot | |
| 55. Budgerigar | |
| 56. Purple-crowned Lorikeet | |
| 57. New Holland Honeyeater | |
| 58. Variegated Fairy-wren | |
| 59. Dusky Woodswallow | |
| 60. Fairy Martin | |
| 61. Welcome Swallow | |
| 62. Horsfield's Bushlark | |
| 63. Australian Pipit | |
| 64. Little Button-quail | |
| 65. Stubble Quail | |
| 66. Brown Songlark | |
| 67. Nankeen Kestrel | |
| 68. Collared Sparrowhawk | |
| 69. Australian Hobby | |
| 70. Black Falcon | |
| 71. Brown Falcon | |
| 72. Peregrine Falcon | |
| 73. Black-shouldered Kite | |
| 74. Brown Goshawk | |
| 75. Spotted Harrier | |
| 76. Fork-tailed Kite | |
| 77. Whistling Kite (Hawk) | |
| 78. Little Eagle | |
| 79. Wedge-tailed Eagle | |
| 80. White-faced Heron | |
| 81. House Sparrow | Not native |
| 82. Starling | " " |
| 83. Blackbird | " " |
| 84. Spotted Turtledove | " " |

LOCATION OF MOORUNDE WILDLIFE RESERVE



CASUARIIFORMES

DROMAIIDAE

1. *Dromaius novaehollandiae*
> 18 Emu

Not common; but sightings come fairly regularly, probably due to its size and observer's familiarity. The species is not static on Moorunde and ranges over a large area. No determination has been made on its habitat preference in Moorunde

Status in S.A.: Fairly numerous in lesser settled districts.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 14
Casual observation: 25



Photo: Wayne Donald

EMUS

ANSERIFORMES

ANATIDAE

2. *Cygnus atratus*

n/a Black Swan

Obviously a non-resident.

Occasionally seen or heard flying over Moorunde at night, heading in a south-easterly direction. There are no residential conditions.

Status in S.A.: Common and numerous.

Statistical status: n/a

3. An unidentified duck species is also noted to appear as above. From the call, the author believes it is the Maned Goose (Wood Duck), *Chenonetta jubata*.

Statistical status: n/a

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS

FALCONIFORMES

ACCIPITRIDAE

4. *Haliastur sphenurus*

> 2 Whistling Kite (Whistling Eagle)

Rare and probably accidental.

Status in S.A.: Very common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 5

5. *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*

2 Collared Sparrowhawk (see No. 8 Brown Goshawk)

Uncommon and rarely seen; most probably an occasional visitor, ranging over a wider area. The bird is a stealth hunter and therefore is usually seen making use of areas where there is a tree canopy.

Status in S.A.: Not common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 10
Casual observation: 0

HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES



Photo: Paula McManus



Photo: Glen Taylor

6. *Hieraaetus morphnoides*

> 1 Little Eagle

Rare and probably accidental, although seen more frequently in more open areas close to Moorunde. This bird is "a true eagle" and less inclined to scavenge as opposed to Kites.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 2
Casual observation: 0



Photo: Robin Storr

7. *Aquila audax*

< 3 Wedge-tailed Eagle

An occasional visitor; frequently seen near Moorunde, but baitlaying for rabbits has caused a decline in this prey. Known to nest in the area close to the reserve.

Status in S.A.: Numerous in the interior.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 4
Casual observation: 5

There is only one breeding pair in and around the area, other sightings are offspring still lingering.



Photo: Glen Taylor

8. *Accipiter fasciatus*

> 2 Brown Goshawk

Rare visitor. As with Collared Sparrowhawk this species is a stealth hunter, making use of tree canopy. As with most diurnal birds of prey, the male is smaller; its size range overlaps with the female Collared Sparrowhawk. The distinguishing feature is that Goshawks have a longer and rounded end to the tail; while the Collared Sparrowhawk has a slightly shorter and "square cut" tail end.

Status in S.A.: Uncommon.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 4
Casual observation: 0



Juvenile

Photo: Glen Taylor

9. *Falco subniger*

> 2 Black Falcon

Rare visitor. Hunts by "running down" birds in flight. On occasions it can be seen gliding or soaring and opening the ends of its wings into "fingers", similar to Kites and Eagles.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 5



Photo: Peter Waanders

10. *Falco berigora*

20 Brown Falcon (Brown Hawk)

Uncommon on Moorunde; moderately common in surrounding area. Prefers more open habitat. More frequently heard than seen.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 16
Casual observation: 25



Photo: Glen Taylor

11. *Falco peregrinus macropus*

< 1 Peregrine Falcon

Known to be in the "greater" district, but no sightings over the study period.

Status in S.A.: Not uncommon.

Status for Moorunde: n/a

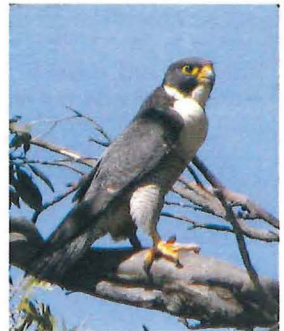


Photo: Karen Collins

12. *Falco cenchroides*

> 2 Nankeen Kestrel

Uncommon. Hunts by hovering over open areas. There is no evidence to indicate this species resides on Moorunde and is considered as a sporadic visitor. Only recorded in first year of study.*

Status in S.A.: Very common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 2
Casual observation: 0

* Possibly rabbit baiting reduced hunting habitat??



Photo: Glen Taylor

GALLIFORMES

MEGAPODIIDAE

MOUND-BUILDERS

13. *Leipoa ocellata*

< 1 Mallee Fowl

Extinct. This status situation was probably initiated by the heavy harvesting of trees during World War II to produce charcoal. Then foxes would have finished off the remainder; and kept it absent. A number of old nesting sites can be found, usually in the more sandy soil types. A single bird was sighted a few times over the study period and was considered a "Yookamurra" escapee.

Status in S.A.: A declining species.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a

Casual observation: n/a

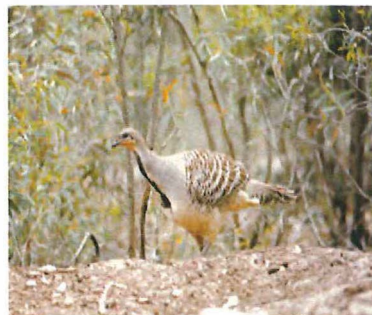


Photo: Alwin Clements

CHARADRIIFORMES

BURHINIDAE

STONE-CURLEWS

14. *Burhinus gallarius*

(*Burhinus magnirostris*)

< 1 Bush Stone-curlew (Southern Stone-curlew)

Single bird seen pre this study.

Status in S.A.: Absent in most areas; rare where it can still be found.

Statistical status: n/a. However, there is a report of one sighting near Moorunde, but on Portee on 4/2/1973.



Photo: Alwin Clements

GLAREOLIDAE

PRATINCOLES

15. *Stiltia isabella*

(*Glareola isabella*)

< 1 Australian Pratincole

One sighting (records lost) approximately 20 years prior to 2006 on eastern boundary. Author considers this to be somewhat dubious as the recording is vague and habitat on eastern boundary is not appropriate. Status in S.A.: No information on occurrence or abundance. The bird is usually an inland species frequenting bare plains and dried lagoon edges. Flocks occasionally come South e.g. temporary habitat on suitable locations around Lake Alexandrina.

Statistical status: n/a.



Photo: Peter Waanders

COLUMBIFORMES

COLUMBIDAE

DOVES, PIGEONS.

16. *Phaps chalcoptera*

> 28 Common Bronzewing

Not uncommon, but sightings are fairly rare due to plumage and habits. When water points are "open", the bird can be frequently seen flying just above shrub level in the direction of these "water holes" in late afternoon or evening (or in twilight). From July 2006 to November 2007 water points were all turned off. Author believes this would have caused a sudden drop in numbers as it does have a preference to reside near water. No opportunity available at the time of writing to test this hypothesis.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 17

Casual observation: 40



Photo: Glen Taylor

17. *Ocyphaps lophotes*

> 2 Crested Pigeon

Only one recording of a few birds around campsite and Water Point No. 1 during study period. Considered a rare visitor.

Status in S.A.: A common species that has penetrated settled districts (south of Pt. Augusta) since settlement.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0

Casual observation: 5



Photo: Glen Taylor

PSITTACIFORMES

PSITTACIDAE

COCKATOOS AND PARROTS

18. *Trichoglossus haematodus*

< 1 Rainbow Lorikeet

One sighting (during ranger duty) of a single bird at the campsite 24.9.2004.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common; the above sighting places this species outside its preferred wetter forest and woodlands.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a

Casual observation: n/a



Photo: Glen Taylor

19. *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*
> 38 Purple-crowned Lorikeet

Moderately common when mallees are flowering. Occasional at other times. Usually in fairly small flocks and more often heard than seen due to rapid flight and canopy plumage.

Status in S.A.: Cited as common in southern coastal districts.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 37
Casual observation: 40



Photo: Glen Taylor

20. *Neophema elegans*
< 1 Elegant Parrot

One sighting (during ranger duty) reported of a single bird in area near Water Point No. 2. This species generally prefers wetter areas.

Status in S.A.: Claimed to be common in "Condon" 1962. I believe this species has been and is in decline.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a
Casual observation: n/a



Photo: Peter Waanders

21. *Eolophus roseicapilla*
85 Galah

Common, but not in large flocks. Usually in pairs, to approximately five or six birds. Generally seen (or heard) flying, but when breeding they seek out hollows in the larger mallees.

Status in S.A.: Very common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 90
Casual observation: 80



Photo: Glen Taylor

22. *Barnardius zonarius race barnardi*
> 78 Australian Ringneck
(Mallee Ringnecked Parrot).

Very common. Generally found along the shrubland/mallee boundaries or in islands of mallee within the shrubland. The species has declined to some degree since commencement of 1080 rabbit baiting.

Status in S.A.: Common in mallee areas.
Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 67
Casual observation: 90



Photo: Glen Taylor

23. *Psephotus varius*

> 48 Mulga Parrot

Common, but less numerous than 22 above. On casual observation its habitat preferences also appear similar to 22 above.

Status in S.A.: Common in the drier parts of the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 37

Casual observation: 60



Photo: Glen Taylor

24. *Melopsittacus undulatus*

> 2 Budgerigar

Once a fairly common migratory visitor in the Spring. A few sightings (outside specific study excursions) have been made of small flocks passing over. Status on Moorunde would now be rated as a rare visitor.

Status in S.A.: Common in inland areas, but author believes its numbers are declining.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a

Casual observation: 5



Photo: Glen Taylor

CUCULIFORMES

CUCULIDAE

25. *Cacomantis pallidus*

> 2 Pallid Cuckoo

Very rare. A Spring and Summer visitor, usually arriving in the latter part of Winter.

Status in S.A.: Not common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0

Casual observation: 5



Sub-adult

Photo: Glen Taylor

26. *Chalcites basilis*

> 7 Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

Not common, but a reasonably regular Spring migrant, more frequently heard than seen. Prefers the more open sections of Moorunde and only a few birds arrive here.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0

Casual observation: 15



Photo: Barb Leopold

CUCKOOS

CUCULIDAE
(continued)

CUCKOOS

27. *Chalcites osculans*

5 Black-eared Cuckoo

Only two birds have been recorded within the study period. Prefers the mallee areas. Late Winter to early Spring migrant.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common and fairly widespread.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 10



Photo: Peter Waanders

STRIGIFORMES

STRIGIDAE

TYPICAL OWLS

28. *Ninox novaeseelandiae*

n/a Southern Boobook (Boobook Owl)

Uncommon, to date no sightings by the author in study period (2000-2007). Occasionally heard calling during the night.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common, but not often seen and sightings are usually of single birds.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a
Casual observation: n/a



Photo: Glen Taylor

CAPRIMULGIFORMES

PODARGIDAE

FROGMOUTHS

29. *Podargus strigoides*

> 13 Tawny Frogmouth

Probably moderately common but not numerous. True status is difficult to determine due to its night habit and remarkable camouflage. In past years this species nested in a mallee near the campsite. Occasionally heard calling in campsite at night.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 2
Casual observation: 25



Photo: Glen Taylor

30. *Aegotheles cristatus*

> 18 Australian Owlet Nightjar

At least one bird has taken up residence at the campsite and is frequently heard calling during the night. Some daytime observations during extended excursions have occurred, indicating this species is at least moderately common but in small numbers.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common.
 Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >12
 Casual observation: 25



Photo: Harry Wright

CAPRIMULGIDAE

NIGHTJARS

31. *Eurostopodus argus*

(*Eurostopodus guttatus*)

10 Spotted Nightjar

In the time frame of the study (2000-2007) four birds have been seen. However, the camouflage and habits of this bird make it the most difficult species to find (surpassing even the Tawny Frogmouth). It may be moderately common with a very low population density. As it is predominantly a ground roosting bird during daylight hours it may be susceptible to predation by foxes. With few sightings, its habitat preference is difficult to define; however, it appears to prefer roosting in areas which are reasonably open and limestone fragments littering the surface.

Status in S.A.: Widespread but rarely seen.
 Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
 Casual observation: 20



Photo: Glen Taylor

CARACIIFORMES

ALCEDINIDAE

KINGFISHERS

32. *Todiramphus pyrrhopygius*

(*Halcyon pyrrhopygia*)

> 7 Red-backed Kingfisher

A rare migrant. Appears in Spring. There is a possibility it occasionally nests (in burrows) in the softer parts of the "the depression". The study period has three records.

Status in S.A.: Considered common, but author thinks its numbers are in decline. Its occurrence in the dry mallee is thought to be unusual.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
 Casual observation: 15



Photo: Peter Waanders

33. *Merops ornatus*

n/a Rainbow Bee-eater
(Australian Bee-eater , Rainbow Bird)

Not recorded in study period but I believe , if it hasn't been seen, it should have!

Status in S.A.: A regular Spring and Summer migrant and known to nest in the mallee areas. Statistical status at this stage n/a. However, there is one incidental sighting on Saturday 11 Nov. 2006 and another on 12 Feb. 2006. These two incidental sightings (i.e. not made on specified excursion) would give a rating of 10 using the casual observation equation. More attention needs to be focussed on this species for an accurate statistical status.



Photo: Lissy Donald

PASSERIFORMES

HIRUNDINIDAE

SWALLOWS

34. *Petrochelidon nigricans*
30 Tree Martin

Common. Seen nesting most years around the campsite. Ranges over most of Moorunde but more often seen where the shrubland meets the mallee areas. Nests in small hollows.

Status in S.A.: Common and all over Australia.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 15
Casual observation: 45



Photo: Barb Leopold

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

CUCKOO-SHRIKES

35. *Coracina novaehollandiae*
> 6 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Uncommon and not numerous. Records do not indicate a habitat preference.

Status in S.A.: Very common; nomadic and found in most districts.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >7
Casual observation: 5



Photo: Peter Waanders

36. Lalage sueurii
> 1 White-winged Triller

Migrates to Moorunde in Spring but not often seen. Not common. Incidental sightings.

Status in S.A.: Condon 1962 rates this as a common bird, but I believe this comment is optimistic and probably "dated"..

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 2
Casual observation: < 1



Photo: Helga Kieskamp

TIMALIIDAE

BABBLERS etc.

37. Cinclosoma castanotum
40 Chestnut Quail-thrush

Confined to the mallee areas, occasionally mallee - shrubland fringe. Fairly common.

Status in S.A.: A declining species due to habitat loss. Requires "climax mallee" thereby restricting its numbers.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 25
Casual observation: 54



Photo: Harry Wright

38. Drymodes brunneopygia
> 23 Southern Scrub-robin

Not common. Habitat preference is mallee shrubland fringe or shrubland "islands" in mallee and occasionally vice-versa.

Status in S.A.: Common in the southern mallee areas. Threatened by habitat loss.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >32
Casual observation: 15



Photo: Glen Taylor

39. Pomatostomus superciliosus
> 68 White-browed Babbler

Common and found in all habitats on Moorunde, seems to prefer shrubland and shrubland fringing mallee. A smaller bird than the Chestnut-crowned and less shy.

Status in S.A.: Common.
Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 62
Casual observation: 75



Photo: Jackson Airey

40. *Pomatostomus ruficeps*

55 Chestnut-crowned Babbler

Not common. Probably three, or possibly four "clans" residing on Moorunde. One in the vicinity of the Grazing Enclosures. A second where the shrubland meets the mallee west of the woodcutter's hut. And a third in the mallee-shrub fringes about Water Point No. 2. Should one concentrate long enough in one or other of these areas you will find them.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common in mallee and arid woodlands in the eastern areas of S.A..

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 40
Casual observation: 70



Photo: Wayne Donald

SYLVIIDAE

41. *Epthianura albifrons*

n/a White-fronted Chat

A rare visitor. The species is known to be nomadic and/or sedentary. It prefers wetter areas of the State than Moorunde, and when present it is found in more open areas.

Status in S.A.: Common throughout the southern districts.
Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a
Casual observation: n/a

Two unrecorded sightings outside specified study time.

Photo: Peter Waanders



42. *Epthianura tricolor*

5 Crimson Chat

A nomadic species that was first seen on Moorunde in 1968. The last visit to this date was in Spring of 2005. There are no records in the author's hand of any visits in between.

Status in S.A.: Common in Australia generally but is rare in S.A. below latitude 30° S.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 10

Photo: Barb Leopold



43. *Smicromis brevirostris*

76 Weebill

Very common and fairly abundant. This bird is an active canopy feeder and occurs in small flocks wherever there are mallee trees.

Status in S.A.: Common in the Murray mallee.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 72
Casual observation: 80



Photo: Peter Waanders

44. *Aphelocephala leucopsis leucopsis*

65 Southern White-face

(Eastern White-face)

Was once a very common bird on Moorunde since commencing the study and also abundant. Numbers dropped dramatically after the 2002 drought and have only made a partial recovery since. The trial period of water points off for twelve months 2006-2007 has also contributed. However, the bird is still moderately common in the shrubland areas consistent with S.A. status.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 55
Casual observation: 75



Photo: Glen Taylor

45. *Acanthiza lineata*

> 2 Striated Thornbill

Rare, and probably only an accidental visitor. Only seen in mallee canopy fringing the shrubland.

Status in S.A.: Common in coastal forest and Fleurieu Peninsula.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 5



Photo: Jackson Airey

46. *Acanthiza nana*

> 17 Yellow Thornbill

(Little Thornbill)

Uncommon or infrequently noted due to ease of mis-identification with the Weebill with which it frequently cohabits.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 25
Casual observation: 10



Photo: Julie Burgher

47. *Acanthiza apicalis*

32 Inland Thornbill

(Brown Thornbill)

Uncommon and not often noted, possibly due to confusion with the Chestnut-rumped Thornbill. Its status needs clarification by focussed effort.

Status in S.A.: Common;

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 12
Casual observation: 20



Photo: Jackson Airey

48. *Acanthiza uropygialis*

> 42 Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
(Chestnut-tailed Thornbill)

Common. Mostly observed at eye level in small flocks where there is mallee with a good shrub under-storey. Distinguished from the Brown Thornbill by having no scalloping around the face. An active but fairly tame bird. Status in S.A.: *Uropygialis* is a common mallee form.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 45
Casual observation: 40



Photo: Helga Kieskamp

49. *Acanthiza reguloides*

16 Buff-rumped Thornbill
(Buff-tailed Thornbill)

Rare. Has been seen over a number of years nesting in small tree hollows around the campsite, which gives the illusion of being a common species, but mallee scrub is generally not its favoured habitat.

Status in S.A.: Common in Mt. Lofty Ranges and adjacent plains in Stringy-bark country.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 7
Casual observation: 25



Photo: Jackson Airey

50. *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*

1 Yellow-rumped Thornbill (Yellow-tailed Thornbill)

Rare in the mallee areas, but focussed effort may lift its status. A ground feeding bird preferring open areas with nearby woodland.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 2
Casual observation: 0



Photo: Barb Leopold

51. *Hylacola caufa*

5* Shy Heathwren
(Shy Ground-wren/Mallee Heath-wren)

Very rare. Only a limited number of sightings have been made. The birds are usually found in areas where there are mallee trees with a thick under-storey of low shrubs. From experience in other places, I make a subjective observation and claim that Moorunde is fairly impoverished with this particular habitat. Their habits are rather like those of Fairy Wrens and due to good camouflage plumage it is easy to overlook them.

Status in S.A.: Considered common in the mallee and mallee-heath formations. However, since 1962 I believe this is an optimistic view. In South Moorunde (where all sightings have been made) there has been an influx of 70-80 acre land occupation, bringing with it a cat population, over which this species is very vulnerable.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 10



Photo: Peter Waanders

* At the time of writing, Nov. 2007, last sighting was in 2002.

52. *Cinclorhamphus mathewsi*
5 Rufous Songlark

Only two records (including study period) of this species at Moorunde to this date. One in the Spring of 2006, where a pair successfully bred, between the campsite and the grazing enclosure. The second recording is for the Spring in 2007 when a single bird calling was heard from the campsite. Both these recordings are significant by default, as from and including 2005 to 2007 (time of writing) the occurrence of this species, to the southern areas, has been very rare to absent. In the Cambrai area it has been a regular Spring visitor and their call constant to the point of being almost annoying. Prefers open grassland.

Status in S.A.: Common (normally), migrating to southern areas in late Winter to early Spring. 2006 to 2007 almost entirely absent, probably because of the extensive and extended drought in northern and eastern Australia.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >0
Casual observation: 10



Photo: Peter Waanders

53. *Malurus melanotus*
60 Black-backed Wren (Splendid Wren)

Fairly common but as a family or colony species that is territorial, the species can almost always be found once an observer learns a colony's location (territory). Favours the mallee-shrubland fringe, shrubland "islands" in mallee or mallee "islands" in shrubland, but generally its appearance in sole mallee or sole shrubland should not be ruled out. Typical habitat preference is the walking trail in and around Water Point No. 2.

Status in S.A.: Fairly rare; confined to drier mallee areas.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 12
Casual observation: 20



Photo: Peter Clements

54. *Malurus lamberti assimilis*

31 Variegated Fairy-wren
(Variegated Wren)

Not common on Moorunde. Subjective observation indicates less tolerance to changing habitat types. A preference for shrubland and mallee shrubland fringes.

Status in S.A.: Assimilis form considered common in mallee districts.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 42
Casual observation: 20



Photo: Jackson Airey

55. *Microeca fascians**(Microeca leucophaea)*

40 Jacky Winter

*Common but almost always encountered in the more "sterile" mallee locations, that is the mallee with little shrub undergrowth.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common. Assimilis is a mallee form.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 30

Casual observation: 50

* The two alternate statistical equations i.e. specific area/casual observation brings out a good and typical example where statistical analysis separates a species habit preference. As almost all so-called "casual observation" comes early on the lists. This shows up, due to the first of five entries into the reserve are at Rain Gauge No. 3, where the habitat is representative of that indicated.



Photo: Glen Taylor

56. *Petroica goodenovii*

36 Red-capped Robin

Common but somewhat drought sensitive. Typical habitat is around the campsite, i.e. large mallee trees and fairly open scrub under-storey. However, it does occur in both mallee and shrubland areas but to a lesser extent.

Status in S.A.: Common, mainly inland.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 47

Casual observation: 25



Photo: Wayne Donald

57. *Melanodryas cucullata**(Petroica cucullata)*

26 Hooded Robin

Moderately common; however this species does have nomadic tendencies or else a certain amount of seasonal movement, which accounts for its "stop/start" occurrences. It favours the mallee areas but is widespread over all the reserve (when present).

Status in S.A.: Common in southern Australia.

*Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >17

Casual observation: 35

* Again the statistical equation results reflect the written (and largely subjective) notes on status.



Photo: Harry Wright

58. *Myiagra inquieta*

5 Restless Flycatcher

(Scissors-grinder).

A rare visitor. Records over study period show only one bird sighted. However, subjective memory indicates a few more than this. Habitat preference - probably widespread.

Status in S.A.: Common in some districts, rare in others.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0
Casual observation: 5



Photo: Jackson Airey

59. *Rhipidura fuliginosa preissi*

15 Grey Fantail

Not common. Habitat preference is the mallee areas and "open" mallee areas.

Status in S.A.: Common throughout the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 15
Casual observation: 15



Photo: Glen Taylor

60. *Rhipidura leucophrys leucophrys*

55 Willie Wagtail

The term wagtail in English and European birds is referred to birds that give an "up and down" motion. An Australian example is the Pipit.

Common but not abundant. Prefers the more open scrub, but ranges over the whole reserve.

Status in S.A.: Very common throughout the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 35
Casual observation: 75



Photo: Glen Taylor

61. *Pachycephala pectoralis*
 > 8 * Golden Whistler

Rare. However, immature males and female birds can easily be mistaken for Gilbert's Whistler if a "good look" isn't made. Only five recorded in the study period (2000-2007), three have been full plumage males accompanied by females. The habitat preference appears to be large mallee tree areas with some shrub undergrowth.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >7
 Casual observation: 10

* This species is by far the most attractive of the three Whistlers on Moorunde and has the best song.



Photo: Jackson Airey

62. *Pachycephala rufiventris*
 > 8 Rufous Whistler

Rare. Only one out of the total of seven sightings have been a full plumage male. Probably all the birds have been accidental or territory overflow from its usual habitat. All sightings have been in the mallee-shrubland fringe.

Status in S.A.: Common in the wetter areas.
 Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 17
 Casual observation: 0



Photo: Glyn Dawson

63. *Pachycephala inornata*
 > 62 Gilbert's Whistler

Very common. An active bird and most often seen by drawing attention with its call. Preferred habitat is the shrubland and shrubland-mallee fringes. Virtually absent in the true mallee areas.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common in the mallee country.
 Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 55
 Casual observation: 70



Photo: Helga Kieskamp

64. *Colluricincla harmonica*
80 Grey Shrike-thrush
(Grey Thrush).

Very common but not abundant. This species has a range of distinctive calls and song and is more frequently heard than seen, despite being quite tame. It ranges all over the reserve (as statistics indicate) showing no particular habitat preference, but subjective observation indicates a preference for shrubland?

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 75
Casual observation: 85



Photo: Glen Taylor

65. *Oreoica gutturalis*
46 Crested Bellbird

Common. More often heard than seen, despite its habit of calling from a high and bare stick or tree bough. The call is frequently ventriloquial (or thrown), causing the observer to look in the wrong direction. Both the male and female birds call with the sound of a muted bell and some observers have been diligent enough to distinguish between the two. It also has a rather harsh but short grating note more frequently used while ground feeding, or preparing to descend to the ground.

Status in S.A.: Common in the mallee and interior.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 37
Casual observation: 55



Photo: Robin Storr

NEOSITTIDAE

TREECREEPERS AND SITELLAS

66. *Daphoenositta chrysoptera pileata*
(*Neositta chrysoptera pileata*)
21 Varied Sitella - Black-capped form

Uncommon and sightings are always unusual by default. The observer does not "find" this species, but rather happens to be under or near a tree that a flock of 10- 15 birds fly into to feed. They have the unusual habit of starting to feed in the top boughs and descend to lower levels "upside down", then suddenly flying off to another, all the while constantly chirping to each other. Habit is widespread, wherever there are trees.

Status in S.A.: Uncommon, but ranges over most of the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 22
Casual observation: 21



Male at nest

Photo: Glen Taylor

67. *Climacteris picumnus picumnus*
81 Brown Treecreeper

Very common and abundant. One of the most frequently sighted birds on Moorunde. It ranges over the whole reserve "pure" (or "sterile") mallee to shrubland without a canopy. However, it is most common in the areas of old large mallee with a thin under-storey of shrubs. Feeds mainly by hopping up tree trunks and large boughs, but in shrubland and also places with thick ground litter it will feed on the ground.

This species needs focussed attention to determine if the White-browed species (affinis) is present, in the open timber areas.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >72

Casual observation: 90



Photo: Glen Taylor

DICAEIDAE

FLOWER-PECKERS

68. *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*
30 Mistletoebird

A moderately common visitor when Mistletoe is in fruit. This species has only one habitat requirement - that being any area with fruiting Mistletoe.

I believe it is a declining species due to increasing distance between suitable host trees for Mistletoe to parasite.

Status in S.A.: (1962) Common and nomadic over Australia.

*Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 20

Casual observation: 40

* The above statistics reflect its nomadic habit (20/40).

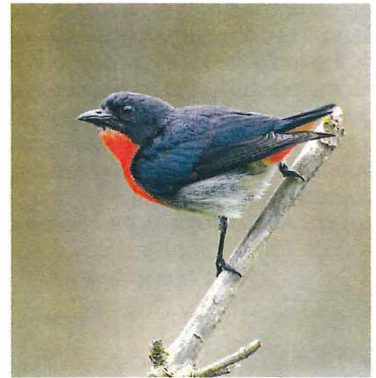


Photo: Gary Taylor

69. *Pardalotus punctatus xanthopyge*
> 57 Spotted Pardalote - Yellow-rumped form
(Yellow-tailed Pardalote)

Common, but restricted to the mallee areas, occasionally the mallee - shrubland fringe. Virtually never seen in shrubland including the mallee "islands". This species digs a burrow to nest and soil soft enough is in the "sterile" mallee areas.

Status in S.A.: Common mallee species.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 50

Casual observation: 65



Photo: Julie Burgher

70. *Pardalotus striatus*

70 Striated Pardalote

Very common. Can be found wherever there is a tree canopy. However it is rare in the "sterile" mallee (mallee that is virtually all trees). Its preference is larger mallees with a light shrub under-storey. Nest in small tree hollows.

Status in S.A.: Common throughout the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 80

Casual observation: 60



Photo: Glen Taylor

ZOSTEROPIDAE

SILVEREYES

71. *Zosterops lateralis*

> 18 Silvereye

(Grey-backed Silvereye).

Not common. On a subjective view, author considers the statistical analyses probably don't reflect the true status, as the bird can easily be overlooked. However, there is a high probability that part of the population comes from an "overflow" of the wetter districts and the statistics would reflect its permanent status as common. Habitat preference is almost exclusively mallee-shrubland fringe or "islands" of both.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 12

Casual observation: 15



Photo: Glen Taylor

MELIPHAGIDAE

HONEYEATERS

72. *Certhionyx variegatus*

5 Pied Honeyeater

Only two recordings in author's notes (2 July 04 and 11 April 06). However, Gary Taylor noticed a small flock around the area of the campsite and Barbara Bray witnessed a number of birds immediately outside her campervan. Both of these casual observations coincide approximately with the April 06 recording.

Status in S.A.: Common in inland southern Australia.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 0

Casual observation: 10

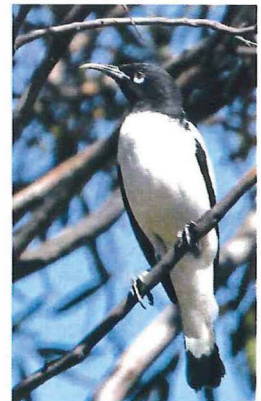


Photo: Helga Kieskamp

73. *Lichenostomus virescens*

(*Meliphaga virescens forrestii*)

> 78 Singing Honeyeater

Very common and abundant. Despite this, the author is inclined toward a degree of drought sensitivity. Numbers of individual birds appear to have fallen during the trial period of twelve months without the water points, but mainly in the study areas that embrace the two "water holes". This species gives the appearance of thriving on "impoverished areas". Its habitat preference is shrubland with a scattering of trees. However, it can be found over the whole reserve, but only entering the "sterile mallee" when it is flowering. This observation is supported by the range of divergence between the two methods of statistical status and again by its overall score of 78 > to that of 81 with the Brown Treecreeper. Although it is a very vocal bird (and somewhat aggressive or assertive), it only rarely "sings", despite its name. This is a little disappointing as its song is quite exquisite though short.

Status in S.A.: Common, *forrestii* is the mallee and dry inland form.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >62

Casual observation: 95

This species is arguably the "signature bird" for Moorunde.



Photo: Glen Taylor

74. *Lichenostomus ornatus*

(*Meliphaga ornata*)

> 63 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater

(Mallee Honeyeater)

Very common, but not abundant. Largely confined to the "sterile" mallee areas, occasionally venturing into the mallee-shrubland fringe. However, it is "bullied" by the Singing Honeyeaters and I feel this restricts this activity. This species is looked upon by many observers as the mallee equivalent of the White-plumed Honeyeater and this is reinforced with a vocal range that crosses over in both species.

Status in S.A.: Common in all mallee areas of the State.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 62

Casual observation: 65



Photo: Glen Taylor

75. *Lichenostomus penicillatus*
(*Meliphaga penicillata*)

> 2 White-plumed Honeyeater

A rare opportunistic visitor; only two sightings made during the study period. The birds came either from the Murray River or the Hills to feed on tall flowering mallee.

Status in S.A.: Common in tall woodland.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 5
Casual observation: 0



Photo: Glen Taylor

76. *Lichenostomus leucotis*
(*Meliphaga leucotis*)

36 White-eared Honeyeater

Moderately common, but not numerous and confined to the mallee areas; occasionally seen in the mallee fringing the shrubland and usually birds are seen singly. It is readily attracted by the squeaking bird caller.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common in the eastern mallee.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >52
Casual observation: 4



Photo: Glen Taylor

77. *Melithreptus brevirostris*

> 7 Brown-headed Honeyeater

Total sightings in the study period have been five and the species is most probably a rare visitor and not residential. All recordings have been made on the mallee-shrubland fringe where the trees are fairly large. However, only one sighting was of a single bird.

Status in S.A.: Common state-wide; however I am inclined to question this distribution claim.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 10
Casual observation: 5



Photo: Glen Taylor

78. *Phylidonyris melanops*
(*Glyciphila melanops*)

n/a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater.

Only one record made of this species, by inexperienced observers. It is known to be a mallee occupant but the author considers it restricted to the wetter areas than Moorunde.

Status in S.A.: Common in heathlands and mallee from the South-East to the Mt. Lofty Ranges.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area - n/a
Casual observation: - n/a

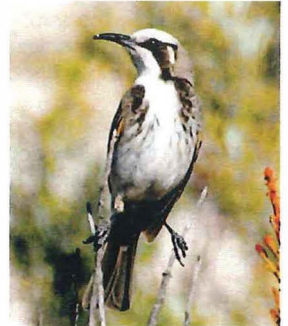


Photo: Helga Kieskamp

79. *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*
n/a New Holland Honeyeater
(Yellow-winged Honeyeater)

Two records of this species in early 2007 around the campsite. Probably opportunistic visits due to dry weather in the Mt. Lofty Ranges.

Status in S.A.: Common in the wetter parts in the southern areas.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area - n/a
Casual observation: - n/a



Photo: Glen Taylor

80. *Purnella albifrons*
(*Phylidonyris albifrons*)
> 62 White-fronted Honeyeater.

Usually very common and abundant. However, its abundance can vary markedly with quite dramatic plunges. I suspect the species is possibly quite drought sensitive; but this needs more attention. Prefers the shrubland and mallee-shrubland fringes, but will venture into the "sterile" mallee when flowering.

Status in S.A.: Not available, but is confined to drier areas and mallee.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 50
Casual observation: 75



Photo: Glen Taylor

81. *Acanthagenys rufogularis*
> 73 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

Very common and moderately abundant. Largely confined to the shrubland and mallee - shrubland fringe. This species appears to thrive on the more impoverished areas of any bushland.

I have suspicions that it gains in abundance during dry years - a phenomenon that may make an interesting study. I find it the most appealing songster of all the Honeyeaters.

Status in S.A.: Common, mainly inland.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >52
Casual observation: 95



Photo: Glen Taylor

82. Anthochaera carunculata tregallis
> 17 Red Wattlebird.

Not common and not recorded in 2007. I suspect the species is seasonally absent at times on the reserve; it becomes more abundant during profuse mallee flowering and appears absent or rare at other times.

Status in S.A.: Common.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 15
Casual observation: 20



Photo: Wayne Donald

83. Entomyzon cyanotis cyanotis
n/a Blue-faced Honeyeater

One bird sighted by Peter Clements; however, the date was lost. The recording was made near Water Point No. 1, where the bird's behaviour was quite tame allowing a close examination over an extended time. At the time the mallees were flowering profusely and attracting large numbers of Red Wattlebirds. There is no apparent reason to cast doubt on this observation and the most likely explanation is "population overflow post breeding" on the River Murray where it is still known as far east and south as Morgan.

Status in S.A.: Not uncommon along the Murray to Morgan (and one time Mannum).

Statistical status: Specific Study Area - n/a
Casual observation: - n/a



Photo: Jackson Airey

GRALLINIDAE

MUD-NEST BUILDERS

84. Struthidea cinerea
n/a Apostlebird

one record of two birds seen on the north-east boundary on 27 September 2003 by Wayne Donald during Ranger duty. This species is known to come as far south as Cambrai on several occasions. The birds usually appear with portions of down still in their plumage indicating a "population overflow, post breeding".

Statistical status: n/a



Photo: Glen Taylor

85. *Corcorax melanorhamphus*
> 42 White-winged Chough

Not common and not abundant but frequently seen, giving casual observers the illusion of being common and abundant. However, the large discrepancy between the two statistical ratios gives a more accurate insight and supports the above subjective analysis. There are probably three colonies in and around Moorunde, maybe only two and possibly as many as four. The birds are quite visible and audible, making discovery easy. They live in fairly tight families of approximately twelve individuals; and "post breeding overflow" may also account (temporarily) for the illusion of abundance.

Status in S.A.: Considered to be a declining species due to restricted habitat.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 10
Casual observation: 75



Photo: Glen Taylor

ARTAMIDAE

86. *Artamus personatus*
10 Masked Wood-swallow

A rare erratic visitor in decline. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this was a seasonal migrant that arrived in Spring in abundance. However, habitat loss in location and destination is placing this species under threat. As it is usually airborne and frequently calls, it is seen (in greatly reduced numbers) on arrival (see 87 below).

Status in S.A.: In decline; nomadic and/or migratory.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 10
Casual observation: 10

WOODSWALLOWS



Photo: Helga Kieskamp

87. *Artamus superciliosus*
> 16 White-browed Wood-swallow

Accompanies the Masked Wood-swallow. Although nomadic, the movements are generally in a north south phase but erratic. However, their arrival in the southern areas of S.A. is generally in Spring, both birds appearing in the same (once vast) flocks; with the White-browed the greatest in number (approximately two or three to one). Their demise parallels that of *personatus* above. The author has fears of possible demise in the long term. Had their habits been that of shrub or ground birds (hypothetically) they would now be considered endangered of extinction.

Status in S.A.: See 86 above.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 7
Casual observation: 10



Photo: Harry Wright

88. *Artamus cinereus melanops*
n/a Black-faced Wood-swallow

Not recorded on Moorunde; however, it can easily be mistaken for the Dusky Wood-swallow and accidental arrivals may have been overlooked.

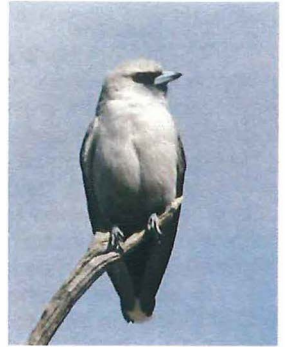


Photo: Glen Taylor

89. *Artamus cyanopterus*
> 22 Dusky Wood Swallow

Cyanopterus is a State resident but is also nomadic with a preference towards a north-south migration. More common than the White-browed and Masked, but prefers forest in the south and east of S.A. It appears that no birds linger on Moorunde for an extended period, but it may breed on the reserve from time to time. Anecdotal reference gives the bird as one being much more common in earlier years and the decline in numbers runs parallel with habitat loss. The species should be considered as uncommon and possibly rare for the reserve.

Status in S.A.: Becoming less common and in decline*.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 10
Casual observation: 35

* The species warrants careful monitoring focussed on number of arrivals, duration and date of arrivals and numbers present. And scouting for evidence of breeding etc.



Photo: Glen Taylor

90. *Strepera versicolor*
56 Grey Currawong

Common but not abundant. This species would probably stand as a good candidate to study the ratio of species size to abundance between common birds on a given area! Its habitat preference is large mallee trees with an open shrub under-storey. However, it is still reasonably common in the more "sterile mallee" areas; but is inclined to avoid mainly pure shrublands.

Status in S.A.: Moderately common.
Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >52
Casual observation: 60



Photo: Glen Taylor

91. *Cracticus torquatus*

25 Grey Butcher Bird

Not common. The various and distinctive calls of this species coupled with a reasonable boldness gives casual observers the illusion of some abundance. 25 is not a high rating for a bird of this type of behaviour and vocal frequency and as the frequency of recording tapers off when reaching the more recent records, the author is inclined to believe this species is drought sensitive. The date progression of the records run closely with the weather patterns over the study period. This deserves more focussed attention.

Status in S.A.: Fairly common in more southern wooded areas.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: 30
Casual observation: 20



Photo: Glen Taylor

92. *Gymnorhina tibicen*

65 Australian Magpie

Fairly common and frequently seen, but not abundant. Plumage, habits and habitat give an over-optimistic view to its status. Open grassland and open shrubland close to larger mallee trees are its favoured habitat. It's very rarely seen inside thick mallee or shrubland. There are two subspecies present - *tibicen tibicen*, the Black-backed and *tibicen leuconota*, the White-backed. Both can be seen separately or co-habiting; with some degree of hybridisation - extent unknown. The author has treated both as the same in compiling notes of observation, leaving scope for future study into dividing each.

Status in S.A.: Common for both subspecies.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: >50
Casual observation: 80

A subjective guess indicates a predominance of the White-backed race.



Photo: Margaret Taylor

93. *Corvus coronoides coronoides*
56* Australian Raven

Common but not abundant; most records are of one or a pair and more often heard than seen. This should be taken into account when viewing statistics on specific areas, as the bird is usually in flight to another location. Almost all records are taken of birds going somewhere else than feeding or breeding on Moorunde. The species prefers fairly open habitat. Occasionally noted perched high on a bare bough and calling to communicate with other individuals; as it works "in line" or on a "front" with companions while searching for food.

Status in S.A.: Common in the southern parts, overtaken in the north by the Australian Crow or Little Crow.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: > 47*
Casual observation: 65

* This number is misleading here as all records were of birds flying elsewhere.



Photo: Glen Taylor

94. *Corvus mellori*
n/a Little Raven

Has been known to come as far north as Moorunde, but is not recorded through the study period. Separation of the two Ravens (not in hand) is effected by the difference in call. All five species are overlooked by observers due to a lingering bias that has only an emotional basis.

Statistical status: Specific Study Area: n/a
Casual observation: n/a



Photo: Karen Collins

TAXONOMICAL INDEX OF BIRDS (Condon)

IN COMMON NAMES

Note - the number given refers to the species and not the page.

1. Emu
2. Black Swan
3. Duck species
4. Whistling Kite
5. Collared Sparrowhawk
6. Little Eagle
7. Wedge-tailed Eagle
8. Brown Goshawk
9. Black Falcon
10. Brown Falcon
11. Peregrine Falcon
12. Nankeen Kestrel
13. Mallee Fowl
14. Bush Stone-curlew
15. Australian Pratincole
16. Common Bronze-wing
17. Crested Pigeon
18. Rainbow Lorikeet
19. Purple-crowned Lorikeet
20. Elegant Parrot
21. Galah
22. Australian Ringneck
23. Mulga Parrot
24. Budgerigar
25. Pallid Cuckoo
26. Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo
27. Black-eared Cuckoo
28. Southern Boobook
29. Tawny Frogmouth
30. Australian Owlet Nightjar
31. Spotted Nightjar
32. Red-backed Kingfisher
33. Rainbow Bee-eater
34. Tree Martin
35. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
36. White-winged Triller
37. Chestnut Quail-thrush
38. Southern Scrub-robin
39. White-browed Babbler
40. Chestnut-crowned Babbler
41. White-fronted Chat
42. Crimson Chat
43. Weebill
44. Southern Whiteface
45. Striated Thornbill
46. Yellow Thornbill
47. Brown Thornbill
48. Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
49. Buff-rumped Thornbill
50. Yellow-rumped Thornbill
51. Shy Heathwren
52. Rufous Songlark
53. Black-backed Wren
54. Variegated Fairy-wren
55. Jacky Winter
56. Red-capped Robin
57. Hooded Robin
58. Restless Flycatcher (Scissors Grinder)
59. Grey Fantail
60. Willie Wagtail
61. Golden Whistler
62. Rufous Whistler
63. Gilbert's Whistler
64. Grey Shrike-thrush
65. Crested Bellbird
66. Varied Titella - Black-capped form
67. Brown Treecreeper
68. Mistletoebird
69. Spotted Pardalote - Yellow-rumped form
70. Striated Pardalote
71. Silveryeye
72. Pied Honeyeater
73. Singing Honeyeater
74. Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
75. White-plumed Honeyeater
76. White-eared Honeyeater
77. Brown-headed Honeyeater
78. Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
79. New Holland Honeyeater
80. White-fronted Honeyeater
81. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
82. Red Wattlebird
83. Blue-faced Honeyeater
84. Apostlebird
85. White-winged Chough
86. Masked Woodswallow
87. White-browed Woodswallow
88. Black-faced Woodswallow
89. Dusky Woodswallow
90. Grey Currawong
91. Grey Butcherbird
92. Australian Magpie
93. Australian Raven
94. Little Raven

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Appendix

ADDITIONAL BIRD SPECIES SIGHTED IN THE STUDY AREA
SINCE THE STUDY WAS COMPLETED IN 2007.

Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>
Little Corella	<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>
Painted Button-quail	<i>Turnix varia</i>
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus flabelliformis</i>

Author John Endersby

John's early life as a boy growing up on a dairy farm, later as a jackaroo, stockman and share farmer and more recently on his own hobby farm, forged strong links with the land.



Besides the care of domesticated animals the land supports, he has a keen interest in the native animals, particularly the observation of birds, both on farmland and in the remnants of their natural habitat.

John spent eleven years as a Prison Officer with the Department of Correctional Services. He has written of his experiences in a book entitled "Monsters in the Dark". The tensions of the prison environment led to him suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

When he retired, John joined the Natural History Society and in 1994 was appointed a Fellow. His experience contributes significantly to the wisdom of the Society's Management Committee. He is a regular writer of articles in the Society's journal "Natural History".

Among his many practical projects on Moorunde Wildlife Reserve, he has found time to conduct a seven-year bird study, the subject of this publication.