

63. It is pointed out that the prolific bird life at the estuary, which is the southernmost on the east coast of the North Island suitable for waders, warrants much closer study by ornithologists.

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## Introduced Birds

By P. A. BOURKE, Rand. N.S.W.

H. E. Tarr's paper on introduced foreign birds (*Emu*, 49, p. 189) has been subjected to some criticism, but the subsequent (and consequent) notes and comments that have appeared are a measure of the interest it has stimulated in an aspect of our bird life that has been rather neglected by field observers and authors. The following comments, based on personal records, are confined to observations made in New South Wales, and may add a little to recorded distribution notes.

*Spotted Turtle-Dove*. This species reached Bathurst about 1938. It was not present there before 1937, but I saw several in parks and gardens in January 1939. Now it is quite conspicuous in the city area. Some thirty miles farther west, at Orange, I saw the species in 1946, but it may have reached there several years earlier.

*Mallard*. The large pond in Machattie Park at Bathurst used to provide a harbour for ducks during the shooting season. Two or three hundred Black Duck and Manded Geese would appear on the pond within a few days of the 'opening day'. Some stayed to breed in the bamboos around the pond, and in neighbouring gardens, and a population of hybrid Mallard x Black Duck grew up. These, as well as some of the Mallard that were released on the pond, became feral.

*Blackbird.* Numerous and conspicuous along the Murray, but it does not seem to have spread far beyond the river towns. For example, it is common at Corowa, but has not reached Rand which is about thirty miles north of that town.

*House-Sparrow.* By 1925 these birds were established in the old gold-fields areas between Sofala and Hill End. Possibly they were there much earlier. The nearest railway to the area is some miles away so it would seem that they followed the spread of settlement along the roads, perhaps from Bathurst. My boyhood memories were of sparrows nesting in hollow trees, often some distance from homesteads. Since then I realized that these two facts pointed to Tree-Sparrows so, in January 1956, I visited the district to check. All the individuals I saw then were House-Sparrows.

*Tree-Sparrow.* In Albury this species definitely outnumbers the more widespread House-Sparrow. It is also common at Corowa. I saw it in June in January 1956, and in Koorawatha several times in 1950. This points to the possibility that it occurs in such places as Cootamundra and Young.

*Goldfinch.* Odd birds could be seen at Gilgandra by 1939. There may be much earlier records as it is numerous in towns along the western railway at least as far as Dubbo. It was established in the Sofala/Hill End district by 1925, when every home orchard had its quota of nesting birds. A few miles east of Rand it seems to prefer rocky, timbered hills to the more usual garden or orchard habitat, and we have found a number of nests in *Callitris* trees. In such a place its association with thistle and sunflower plants is not obvious. January nesting seems regular in three districts where I have spent time with the species—near Rand, at Cowra and at Capertee.

*Greenfinch.* A. H. Chisholm writes (*Emu*, 50, p. 99)—“Dr. Chisholm recorded in 1926 that it was said to be common about Bathurst.” Possibly Chisholm overlooked a note by the editor of the time, W. R. Alexander (*Emu*, 25, p. 43), which reads—“Last summer we were surprised to find that the Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) was plentiful at Bathurst, N.S.W.” Certainly it was well-known by 1930, but it was neither common nor plentiful, and the finding of a ‘linnet’s’ nest was quite a thrill to egg-collecting boys. It is still not really common there, but it does appear to be increasing. The same remarks apply to its status at Orange.

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