pers. obs.) have shown that movements occur from late evening to dawn. Unless disturbed the birds rarely leave their habitat during daylight.

The data nevertheless clearly indicate the instability of a small transient Black Swan population, with probably few, if any, birds being resident for more than one week.

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18 February 1968, revised 17 April 1969.

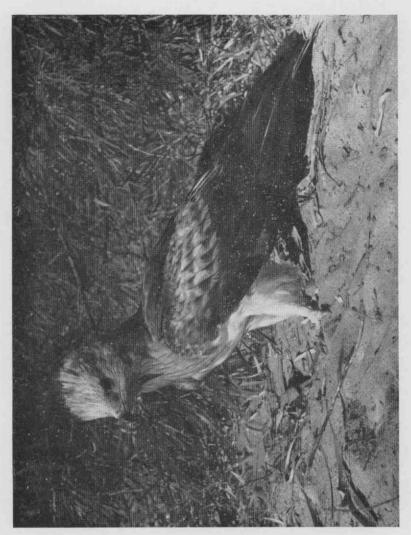
## The taxonomic status of Acanthiza katherina De Vis

The most recent reviewers of the genus Acanthiza (Mack 1936: Mem. natn. Mus. Vic. 10: 86-118, Mayr & Serventy 1938, Emu 38: 245-292) regard Acanthiza katherina as a subspecies of A. pusilla. The two forms are closely related, but we consider that they are distinct species. A. katherina is greenish dorsally with deep olive-buff forehead and yellowish-buff underparts. Thus it differs from the various forms of pusilla and approaches murina of New Guinea. It differs from murina in having faintly developed breast streakings, more pronounced forehead scallopings, a pale dull rufous rump, a longer tail and shorter wing. No form of pusilla is so dull on the rump or has breast streakings and forehead scallopings so poorly developed.

An important character for separation, missed by previous reviewers, is the light coloured iris of katherina. De Vis (1905: Ann. Qd Mus. 6: 41-45) gives the iris colour of katherina as yellow. Birds caught in mist nets on Mt Lewis (16°34'S lat., 145°12'E long.), north Queensland, had cream-white irides. Those of pusilla and murina are reddish and yellowish-white respectively. Both katherina and murina inhabit montane forest and their general behaviour is similar, but katherina frequents the forest canopy rather than the undergrowth where pusilla is found. The contact call of katherina is quite different from that of pusilla, but unfortunately a quantitative comparison is not possible because no tape recording of the voice of katherina is available.

A specimen of *katherina* from Mt Lewis is in the CSIRO collection (Reg. No. 6588) and was identified after the examination of the type and other specimens of *katherina* in the Queensland Museum. We are grateful to R. Schodde for first drawing our attention to the presence of a thornbill on Mt Lewis.

J. L. McKean and W. B. Hitchcock, Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, Canberra, ACT 2600. 19 February 1968.



Square-tailed Kite, female, Southwest Island, Sir Edward Pellew Group, N.T., 26 July 1967.

Photo by W. B. Hitchcock