

Early Hunter Region avian records Part 1. 1901-1925 Articles in *The Emu*

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Articles about 1901-1925 Hunter Region birdlife appearing in *The Emu* are reviewed. A full bibliography is included, and the birds of six nominal sub-areas within the Region - Upper Hunter, Lower Hunter, Gloucester/Comboyne, Port Stephens, Great Lakes/Taree, and Offshore - are discussed separately. The distribution or abundance of many species appears to have changed in the past 100 years, with several of them having contracted in range while others surprisingly were absent or rarely recorded in 1901-1925. 204 species are documented to have been present, with breeding records for 81 of them.

INTRODUCTION

Ornithology in the Hunter Region has a long history dating from at least the early 1830s, when Charles Coxen (John Gould's brother-in-law) began to be active in the Upper Hunter (and NSW more widely). Gould himself spent a considerable time in the Region in 1839-40, and described several Australian species from specimens taken locally (Albrecht & Albrecht 1992).

Presumably the documentation of avian records continued in the post-Gould years. If so, the reports are difficult to come by without a laborious search through the archives in miscellaneous libraries. Fortunately, in 1901 the (Royal) Australasian Ornithologists Union¹ (RAOU, now Birds Australia) began publishing *The Emu*, which appeared quarterly and comprised an eclectic mixture of learned articles, short notes, snippets from members, RAOU meeting minutes, etc. Thus, *The Emu* became a collection house for new knowledge about Australasian ornithology².

In this paper, I review articles in *The Emu* about the Hunter Region in 1901-25. My intention, in time, is to produce two additional papers (dealing with 1926-50 and 1951-75). Sources other than *The Emu* should also prove valuable, and my hope is that, eventually, they too will be reviewed.

¹ The Australasian Ornithologists' Union (AOU) gained a royal charter in 1910 and became the RAOU.

² Tables of Contents for every issue can be accessed at www.publish.csiro.au/nid/97.htm

Approach Taken

One approach considered for this series was to discuss articles in chronological order. While this is appealing, in that it lays out the development of knowledge over time, the discontinuities of visits to particular districts could cause important links to be overlooked.

Other possible approaches included considering records for different types of habitat or discussing the various guilds of birds separately. However, habitats were not always described, and many papers were quite broad in terms of the species they discussed.

Most of the articles from the overall 75 years were clearly connected with one of five main parts or districts of the Hunter Region: Upper and Lower Hunter, Gloucester/Comboyne, Great Lakes/Taree, and Port Stephens. The latter included reports for land and sea birds. There were also articles specifically about seabirds, mainly about visits to offshore islands. Therefore, the approach taken is to group the articles for each district, and to discuss all seabird records (including those in articles about Port Stephens) under "Offshore". The geographical limits for the districts are indicated in **Figure 1**. The boundaries are arbitrary but convenient. Parts of the Hunter Region lie outside these areas, but there seem to be no articles in *The Emu* appertaining to them.

Nomenclature

This paper uses the Christidis and Boles (2008) nomenclature, with appropriate amendment to the names used in the original articles. At times, it was quite difficult to decode those names. Australian ornithology has progressed substantially since the early 1900s and some names (scientific and common English) have changed considerably. **Appendix 1** illustrates some of the significant

changes that have occurred to the common English names of Hunter Region birds.

THE 1901-1925 LITERATURE

Upper Hunter

Although it did not take long for the first Hunter article to appear (White 1904), it was another four years before any substantial paper was published (Jackson 1908). It described a December 1907 trip from Scone to Belltrees/Ellerston, with visits to Segenhoe, Dartbrook, Yarrundi and Aberdeen *en route*. At Belltrees, Jackson stayed with the White family which led to a close collaboration with H.L. White, who was a prominent (and wealthy) ornithologist of the era. (His egg collection, covering around 800 species, was especially famous and is now housed in Museum Victoria).

John Gould had visited the same places in 1839-40. Jackson made interesting comparisons, for example about the rarity by then of Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis* and a decline in raptor numbers. He named 61 species (15 breeding) and implied that others were present (presumably, species he considered common). He noted the abundant woodswallows (discussed further below) with many nests at Belltrees, and the “plentiful” Banded Lapwings *Vanellus tricolor* which were nesting in the area.

Jackson (1909) reported a 20 acre (8 ha) survey at Belltrees in June 1909. The paper listed 35 species including 13 not mentioned in his first paper, notably Regent Honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia* and Southern Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*. The list included White-winged Triller *Lalage sueurii*, not recorded in the Hunter Region in winter now.

H.L. White himself did not write many major papers about birdlife of the Upper Hunter (nor of the Region more generally) but often reported interesting local records. Collectively these paint a picture of birdlife in the Upper Hunter in the period from around 1907 onwards. Amongst many short notes in *The Emu*, he mentions first-time or rare records for species such as Paradise Riflebird *Ptiloris paradiseus* at Stewarts Brook and Apostlebird *Struthidea cinerea* and Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* at Belltrees (the latter also recorded there by Jackson in 1907). His articles provide many breeding records; one listed 26 species breeding within 50 yards (45 metres) of his office (White 1915b).

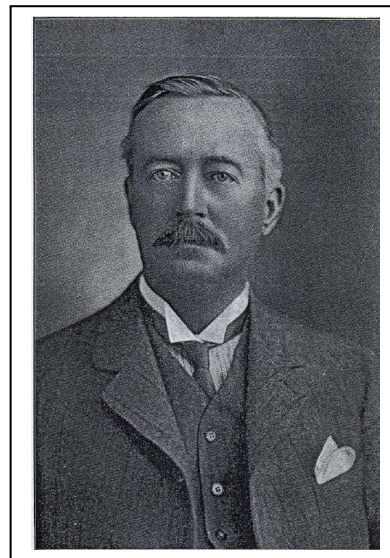


Plate 1. H.L. White, ornithologist of the early 1900s.

White (and also Jackson, shortly after) noted the presence of thousands of Masked (*Artamus personatus*) and White-browed (*A. superciliosus*) Woodswallows in 1907, with both species breeding (White 1908). In perhaps his most notable local record, given its present status as a Threatened Species, he described Regent Honeyeaters as being present “in thousands” at Belltrees in August 1909, with many pairs breeding (White 1909). He commented “one hears their peculiar notes all day long”.

In his one major paper, White (1916a) noted the northern race of Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius elecica* had displaced the southern race *P. e. eximius* in the Upper Hunter during his lifetime. Initially the southern limit of the range was Scone; he later found *elecica* some 100km further east, nearly at the coast (White 1916b). Nowadays, *eximius* is once again the race found throughout the Hunter Region.

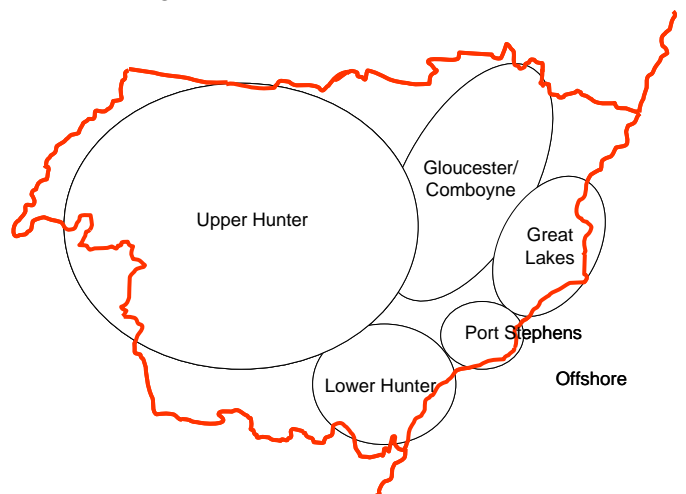


Figure 1. Nominal sub-areas of the Hunter Region

The Bettington family near Merriwa provided snippets about local birdlife in the 1920s, such as breeding records for Plum-headed Finch *Neochmia modesta*, miscellaneous raptors, and sightings of Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons* and Crimson Chat *Epthianura tricolor* (the latter breeding). Wedge-tailed Eagles *Aquila audax* were very successful because of the large rabbit population; the many pairs in the Merriwa area had more than 200 nests over a ten year period (Bettington 1924).

In 1925, RAOU members made an excursion to the Wallarobba area near Dungog as part of a push (eventually successful) by the RAOU to have the area preserved (Cayley 1926). *The Emu* article lacks a bird list but noted that they failed to find Plains-wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus*, a species recorded there previously (a surprising record, from a modern perspective).

Lower Hunter

This area was well settled by 1901 but there were few articles about it in *The Emu*³. In a 1914 train journey, H.L. White noted large numbers of White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* and Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis* near Singleton and “thousands” of Nankeen Night-Herons *Nycticorax caledonicus* east of Maitland in swamps alongside the railway lines (White 1915c). White was aware this record was exceptional. In response, W.J. Enright of West Maitland noted small numbers of Night-Herons were common in trees along the river locally and other “wading-birds”, including bitterns and herons, had increased in numbers in 1915 (Enright 1915).

Independently, S.A. Hanscombe of Seaham noted many Night-Herons resident between Maitland and Bulahdelah, and that good rains in 1914 had brought large numbers to nearby swamps (Hanscombe 1915a).

Hanscombe reported in detail his observations of Buff-rumped Thornbills *Acanthiza reguloides* raising a young Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chalcites lucidus* in the Seaham area in November 1914 (Hanscombe 1915b).

³ The report of a 1904 visit by RAOU members to Tuggerah Lakes (Mellor 1905) is quite useful as it provides insights that probably are relevant for the Lower Hunter. Birds seen at Tuggerah Lakes, which is immediately to the south of the Hunter Region, that were not mentioned in any Hunter Region *Emu* articles are contained in **Table 1** as Supplementary List 1.

Gloucester/Comboyne

In broad terms, the geographic spread for the Gloucester/Comboyne part of the Hunter Region is the area encompassing Gloucester and Barrington Tops and associated lower altitude forests, and countryside of similar longitude, extending to the northern boundary of the Hunter Region (**Figure 1**). The only relevant article for 1901-1925 described a visit to Barrington Tops in late December 1915 by the Maitland District Scientific and Historical Society (Anon. 1916). The list of 37 species included Satin Flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*, which seems plausible, and Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*, which is surprising⁴. Little Crow *Corvus bennetti* was the only corvid recorded, probably a misidentification (the Little Crow at the time was considered a bird of the inland (for example, see Leach 1926, p.188), as is still the case). Nowadays Little Raven *C. mellori* and Torresian Crow *C. orru* are the corvids present in Barrington Tops⁵.

Port Stephens

There were no specific articles about visits to Port Stephens over 1901-25. The notes discussed above from White, Enright and Hanscombe all mentioned a very large breeding colony of Nankeen Night-Herons in the Port Stephens area. Confusingly, they named the location as Cabbage Tree Island; nowadays this name is used solely for an offshore island. A.F. Basset Hull (1911b) clarified the actual location as on Schnapper (now Snapper) Island within Port Stephens ~12 miles (19 km) from the harbour entrance. At the time, this island was called Cabbage Tree by some locals.

Basset Hull visited the Night-Heron colony in December 1910 and saw hundreds of nests (Basset Hull 1911a). In a January 1911 return visit many young birds were present but unfortunately he also found evidence of damage by shooters (Basset Hull 1911b).

Basset Hull made several passages through Port Stephens but his focus was offshore island seabirds (see later). Importantly, he did note breeding pairs of a small tern on a sandspit near the harbour

⁴ McAllan (2001) noted that books of that era had a flawed illustration, such that Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops* and Singing Honeyeater misidentifications could occur.

⁵ Little Raven was not listed as a distinct species until 1969 (M. Cameron pers. comm.).

entrance and also breeding Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus* there (Basset Hull 1911a). The former is probably the first breeding record for the Hunter Region of the Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*, although he named the birds as Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis*. The two species were often confused by early ornithologists (Sharland 1938).

Great Lakes/Taree

The RAOU camped at Wallis Lake near Forster for 10 days in 1921 (S.A. White 1922) and recorded 116 species, and another two not able to be specified). Little Terns (correctly identified) were nesting near the lake's entrance and other gulls and terns were recorded but not the Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* or the Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*. Peaceful Doves *Geopelia striata* and Emerald Doves *Chalcophaps indica* were common, and several shorebirds were present including Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*. All three local scrubwrens were recorded, with Yellow-throated Scrubwren *Sericornis citreogularis* present in good numbers and several pairs nesting. The group also found Pale-yellow Robins *Tregellasia capito* ("not at all plentiful") in the area - this suggests a range contraction has occurred as there are no modern near-coastal records for the Hunter Region. Surprisingly, some families (for example, ducks) are missing from the list. Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* was reported; the modern range is restricted to northern Queensland (Higgins 1999). Most likely, this was a misidentification of the White-throated Nightjar *Eurostopodus mystacalis* for which there are no 1901-1925 records for the Hunter Region in *The Emu* but which was known to be at Gosford in summer (Jackson 1914).

Apart from the misidentified nightjar, two other records stand out in the 1921 Wallis Lake list:

- A party of Speckled Warblers *Chthonicola sagittata* ("very tame, hopping about on the ground on the bank of the lake"). It seems the sole observer therefore had good views. It is an unusual record, by modern expectations - the species is now found only in the central and western parts of the Hunter Region. It is difficult to suggest an alternative, except perhaps Chestnut-rumped Heathwren *Hylacola pyrrhopygia*, but such misidentification seems improbable.
- Confusingly, a gerygone named as "Brown Fly-eater *Gerygone fusca*", was reported present and breeding. In modern nomenclature *G. fusca* is

the Western Gerygone, a bird of the central and western parts of the Hunter Region. The evolution of the taxonomy of the gerygonas is convoluted⁶; the record is almost certainly the Brown Gerygone *G. mouki*.

The same year, H. Gogerley gave some breeding records from Cape Hawke, near Forster (Gogerley 1922a). His article is mainly on Eastern Whipbirds *Psophodes olivaceus* but he noted six other species breeding, including Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Australian Logrunner *Orthonyx temminckii* and Spotted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma punctatum*. The latter suggests a much drier area then. This might also explain the records for Speckled Warbler and Diamond Firetail *Stagonopleura guttata* at Wallis Lake.

In 1922, S.W. Jackson surveyed at Wootton and Wallis Lake. No formal record of his observations appeared until his diaries were reviewed after his death (Chisholm 1958). At Wootton, he recorded Paradise Riflebird, Varied Triller *Lalage leucomela*, Spectacled Monarch *Symposiarchus trivirgatus* and Eastern Bristlebird *Dasyornis brachypterus*. The latter does not appear on the modern Hunter Region checklist (Stuart 2008). At Wallis Lake he joined forces with Gogerley; the focus of their searching, intriguingly, was to find eggs of the Ground Parrot *Pezoporus wallicus*. This search was unsuccessful. It is unclear if there were any prior records for the area or if the searchers just decided that the habitat seemed prospective.

Associated with Jackson's visit, Gogerley found Striped Honeyeater *Plectorhyncha lanceolata* breeding in the Forster area. He described it as a regular summer visitor (Gogerley 1923) – whereas nowadays the species is considered to be resident.

In November 1923, Gogerley succeeded in finding Ground Parrots at a swamp at Cape Hawke, including two nests with eggs (Gogerley 1924d). His article also discussed the unsuccessful search with Jackson. In a recently burnt area they had found several remnant nests which they suspected were those of Ground Parrot but were unable to confirm this. (It seems Gogerley was certain, but Jackson was not). Gogerley also commented that several years before he had heard a Ground Parrot calling at Cape Hawke.

⁶ Gould used *fusca/fuscus* for two different birds at different times: for what is now Western Gerygone in 1838 and for what is now Brown Gerygone in 1846 (W. Boles pers. comm.)

Ground Parrot is not on the modern Hunter checklist but there are populations further north and in southern New South Wales (Higgins 1999). It seems plausible that they were in the Hunter Region 100 years ago.

Gogerley also reported the presence of thousands of Topknot Pigeons *Lopholaimus antarcticus* around Wallis Lake, and breeding, in June-October 1923 (Gogerley 1925). There are no modern records of this species breeding within the Hunter Region, but this is probably an oversight.

Offshore

In the early 1900s, knowledge about seabirds off the NSW coast was incomplete, and was heavily dependent on information collected at breeding grounds on the offshore islands and from beach-cast birds. A.F. Basset Hull, who later became President of the RAOU, was a leading light in such studies. Between 1907 and 1915 he made numerous visits to offshore islands, collecting specimens and eggs. The findings are summarised in a series of three articles about the avifauna of NSW islands and two earlier short articles. Of the major articles, Part 2 is mostly about Montague Island near Nowra and Part 3 mostly about the Sydney area, but both make brief mention of the Hunter Region's islands. Part 3 contains a seabird list for Sydney that presumably would closely reflect the situation for the Hunter Region. The seabirds that were not mentioned in any Hunter Region *Emu* articles are shown in **Table 1** as Supplementary List 2.

Basset Hull first visited islands off Port Stephens in October 1910 (Basset Hull 1910a). Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacificus* was breeding on all islands except Boondelbah (which had no seabirds). He "re-discovered" Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera* on Cabbage Tree Island and found Little Penguins *Eudyptula minor* breeding (at that time, the most northerly record). Broughton Island had "thousands" of White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* burrows. The breeding season was almost over; only a few young birds remained.

Locals had advised Basset Hull that Gould's Petrel and White-faced Storm-Petrel bred on Shark Island (situated just off Broughton Island). He did not find any (only Wedge-tailed Shearwater burrows) but located two nests of Eastern Reef Egret *Egretta sacra*, one with eggs; this species still occurs along the Hunter Region's coast but there are no recent breeding records.

On Cabbage Tree Island, Basset Hull collected a specimen he considered novel and named Solitary Petrel *Puffinus intermedius* (Basset Hull 1911a). On subsequent visits, no similar birds were found and no similarly named species appears in the modern Australian checklist. From the description, the bird may have been an unusual morph of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

Basset Hull made more visits in 1911, mainly finding Wedge-tailed Shearwater burrows and nestlings. In January 1911, he collected the first NSW land record for Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*, taken from a burrow on Broughton Island (Basset Hull 1911b). This is thought to have been a non-breeding bird due to the lateness in the season (Keast & McGill 1948). He did not find Sooty Shearwaters on subsequent visits; however, E.S. Rohu collected specimens and eggs on Broughton Island in December 1914 (Rohu 1914).

Occasionally, Basset Hull briefly mentioned non-seabird records. In 1911 at Cabbage Tree Island he collected a Barred Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina lineata* (Basset Hull 1911b) which now is considered an accidental visitor to the Hunter Region (and has only been recorded at Harrington).

F.C. Morse visited Cabbage Tree and another (unnamed) island in March 1918, and found adult and young birds "caught in the Pisonia seeds" (Morse 1918). This may be the first documentation of the serious impacts to Gould's Petrel from seeds of the Bird-lime Tree *Pisonia umbellifera*.

DISCUSSION

Changes in Distribution & Abundance

It is interesting to consider how the distribution and abundance of species have changed in the Hunter Region. It seems appropriate to link the two – the optical equipment of the early observers was of relatively low quality (by modern standards) and there were no field guides. It is easy to suppose that when they surveyed an area, they might have overlooked some less abundant species. A positive identification often required that the bird be shot and examined.

A striking feature of the 1901-1925 articles is the absence of records for introduced species. There was scarcely any mention of them even when a full species list was included with the paper. The exception is Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, noted present at Belltrees in 1909 and in very large

numbers between Muswellbrook and Quirindi in 1921 (Anon. 1922). By 1925 there were at least 11 introduced species in New South Wales (E.C. Chisholm 1926). Perhaps the other species were yet to penetrate far into the countryside of the Hunter Region, although this seems unlikely given that substantial clearing and development had occurred. Another hypothesis is that introduced species were ignored by the early ornithologists.

There were relatively few waterbird records; most notably an absence of egrets and many ducks that nowadays are common⁷ (in particular, no reports of Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*, for which the Region is presently a stronghold). Similarly, Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*, now common, is not mentioned in any article. The December 1904 (Mellor 1905) visit to Tuggerah Lakes (immediately south of the Hunter Region and hence informative) recorded Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*, Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* and Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*, all in abundance, but no other ducks, pelicans, ibis or grebes. Three cormorant species were recorded (no Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) and the Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* was the only egret species. White (1915c) noted large numbers of White-necked Heron in swamps near Maitland. Jackson (1908) reported Australian Wood Ducks *Chenonetta jubata* in the Upper Hunter and White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* and Straw-necked Ibis, but no other waterbirds excepting plovers and dotterels (including, surprisingly, Red-capped Plover near the river). H.L. White (1919) reported the drought they were experiencing had led to increased numbers of Eastern Great Egret and that the species normally was very uncommon in the Upper Hunter. Most telling is the 1921 RAOU visit to Wallis Lake - swans, pelicans and cormorants were recorded (Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus* “not in any great numbers”) but no ducks or any white egrets. The only grebe recorded was Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*. Conversely, there was “a fair number” of dark phase Eastern Reef Egrets, which now is uncommon.

The absence of records for many waterbirds that now are common is intriguing. The absence was not a widespread phenomenon, since many contemporaneous reports from regions outside the Hunter usually described such waterbirds as

⁷ John Gould found ducks to be plentiful in the Upper Hunter in 1839-40. Perhaps the widespread habit of shooting caused numbers to plummet as the Hunter Region became more populated?

common (see for example, S.A. White 1912, Stone 1913, Cheney 1915).

Changes to the distribution and abundance of parrots and their allies are apparent. Turquoise and Red-rumped Parrots (*Neophema pulchella*, *Psephotus haematonotus*) were common inland. Rainbow Lorikeet *Merops ornatus* was never mentioned. Musk, Little and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta concinna*, *G. pusilla*, *Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) were recorded, the latter not at Wallis Lake in 1921 where, now, sightings are the norm. Galah *Eolophus roseicapillus* was not reported in the Upper Hunter district (the only area where it might then have been expected). Nor were corellas (but, probably, inland habitats visited were unsuitable for Little Corella *Cacatua sanguinea*).

Of the finches, Red-browed Finch *Neochmia temporalis* and Diamond Firetail were commonly recorded; the latter distributed far more widely than nowadays (coastal records from Wallis Lake and Tuggerah Lakes). Neither Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata* nor Double-barred Finch *T. bichenovii* are mentioned in the 1901-1925 papers.

Nankeen Night-Heron was abundant in the eastern part of the Hunter Region in early 1900s, with a large breeding colony at Port Stephens and perhaps others in the Maitland area. Conversely, there were no records of White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* including surveys of coastal areas in summer, where sightings are now normal.

Regent Honeyeaters were abundant in the Upper Hunter. In contrast, there were no records of Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae*, which it seems was already rare in the Upper Hunter.

Many other species on the modern Hunter Region check list were not recorded in 1901-1925 (or at least, were not mentioned in *Emu* articles). There is not space to discuss every absence; readers are referred to **Table 1** for a complete list of species mentioned in *Emu* articles of the period.

Rare and Unusual Records

Some of the species listed below are considered rare or accidental visitors to the Hunter Region. The other species (indicated with #) do not appear on the modern Hunter Region checklist (Stuart 2008) because their validity is uncertain. Perhaps some day the doubtful species will be reported again and can become confirmed additions to the checklist:

- Large-tailed Nightjar[#]: a bird was reported from Wallis Lake in 1921.
- Australian Little Bittern *Ixobrychus dubius*: near West Maitland early 1915 (possibly, more than one sighting). There were also records for Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* at this location in 1915.
- Australian Bustard[#]: in 1908 was considered still present in the Upper Hunter, but rare. Cayley (1926) reported a bird near West Maitland (the year was not given).
- Ringed Plover[#] *Charadrius hiaticula*: Chisholm (1924b) mentions a specimen collected at Port Stephens. The year was not given; probably it was pre-1901.
- Plains-wanderer[#]: Reported as present in the Wallarobba area during the early 1920s (the record predated the 1925 visit by RAOU members).
- Little Curlew *Numenius minutus*: a pair was at Belltrees in October 1911 (and were “not at all timid”).
- Fairy Tern[#]: reported breeding in Port Stephens in 1911.
- Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*: present at Belltrees in 1908, and “in thousands” in 1918 (in both cases, linked with inland drought). Chisholm (1924a) noted it as a species whose numbers at Belltrees had increased substantially.
- Ground Parrot[#]: birds, and nests with eggs, were at Cape Hawke in 1924 and probably birds were recorded in the Wootton area prior to 1922.
- Eastern Bristlebird[#]: reported near Wootton in 1922.
- Southern Whiteface: reported at Belltrees in 1909 (and probably common 1901-1925) and at Wallarobba in 1925.
- Singing Honeyeater: reported at Barrington Tops in December 1915.
- Orange Chat[#]: a group of 5-6 birds including two males reported near Merriwa in November 1924.
- Crimson Chat[#]: reported breeding near Merriwa in November 1924 and to have been in the same general area in 1914.
- Barred Cuckoo-shrike: a specimen collected at Cabbage Tree Island in 1911.
- Little Crow[#]: reported at Barrington Tops in December 1915.
- Apostlebird[#]: a group of four birds reported at Belltrees in September 1920.

Species List

The main list in **Table 1** is a composite prepared from *Emu* articles relating to the Hunter Region in 1901-1925. For completeness, all cited species are listed, including some that perhaps were misidentifications. The first supplementary list to the Table shows additional species recorded at Tuggerah Lakes in 1904 which may reasonably be expected to have also been present in the Hunter Region. The second supplementary list contains some additional seabirds recorded off Sydney (between Broken Bay and Botany Bay) over 1910-15 and which may reasonably be expected to have also been present off the Hunter coastline.

CONCLUSIONS

By the early 1900s, ornithologists were surveying well beyond Newcastle and the Lower Hunter, at places less developed and thus with a greater abundance (and variety) of native bird life. In the period 1901-1925, there were expeditions to the Upper Hunter, Barrington Tops, Port Stephens and Great Lakes areas, and offshore islands, with accounts in *The Emu*. Many opportunistic sightings from the Hunter Region also were reported. From these articles, 204 species were reported as present in the Region (a small number of those being dubious) and a further 8-10 seabird species can additionally be assumed to have been offshore at times. There were documented breeding records for 81 species.

Not unexpectedly, there have been changes to the documented distribution and/or abundance of many species since 1901-1925. The families Ducks, Grebes and Egrets seem to have been uncommon then, and there were no reports of the modern summer visitors White-breasted Woodswallow and Common Tern, or of any introduced species except Common Starling. Other differences include that Nankeen Night-Herons

were present in large numbers in the Lower Hunter, and that Diamond Firetails, Peaceful Doves and Emerald Doves were much more widespread than nowadays.

The 1901-1925 list of 204 species for the Hunter Region is ~48% of the 424 species on the modern list. The latter includes 40-50 pelagic seabirds not expected near the coast. Allowing for this, barely half the species in the Hunter Region were recorded during 1901-1925. Reasons for the difference perhaps include better equipment now available, superior field guides and more highly developed field identification skills, more observers, more intensive data collection, greater access to “remote” areas, and changes to range. Probably a combination of all of these factors leads to the modern list being so much larger.

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Some of the articles listed below were specifically cited; the others helped to generate the overall impression of what the Hunter Region was like at the time and to compare it with other regions.

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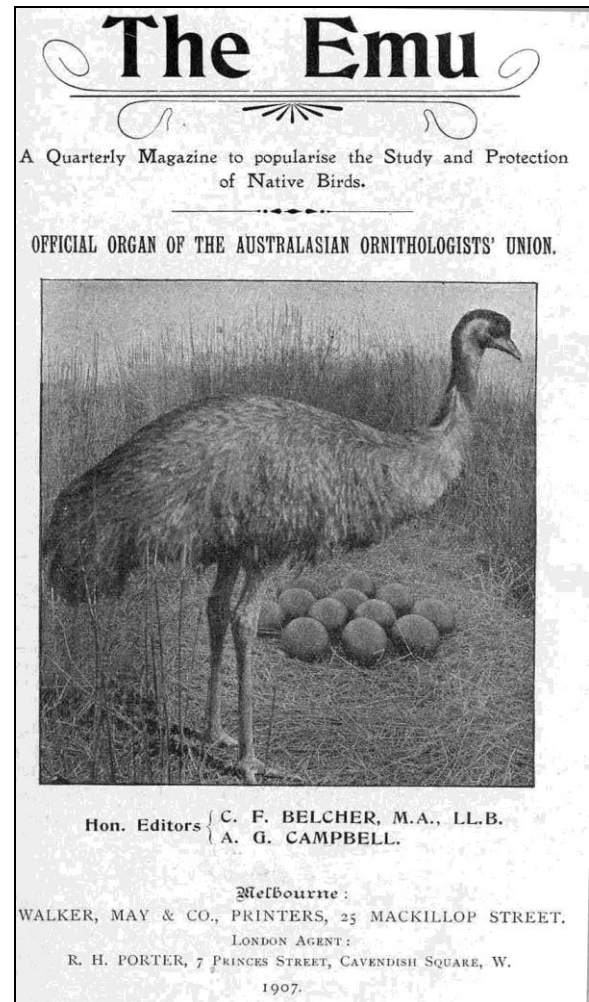


Plate 2. *The Emu*, journal of RAOU (Birds Australia)

Table 1. Birds Recorded in the Hunter Region 1901-1925 (*Species confirmed breeding are indicated in **Bold***)

Australian Brush-turkey <i>Alectura lathami</i>	Red-capped Plover <i>Charadrius ruficapillus</i>
Black Swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	Black-fronted Dotterel <i>Elsayornis melanops</i>
Australian Wood Duck <i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Banded Lapwing <i>Vanellus tricolor</i>
Pacific Black Duck <i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Masked Lapwing <i>Vanellus miles</i>
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Plains-wanderer <i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>
White-headed Pigeon <i>Columba leucomela</i>	Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>
Brown Cuckoo-Dove <i>Macropygia amboinensis</i>	Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Emerald Dove <i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Little Curlew <i>Numenius minutus</i>
Common Bronzewing <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>
Peaceful Dove <i>Geopelia striata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>Calidris acuminata</i>
Wonga Pigeon <i>Leucosarcia melanoleuca</i>	Brown Skua <i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove <i>Ptilinopus regina</i>	Arctic Jaeger <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Topknot Pigeon <i>Lopholaimus antarcticus</i>	Little Tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Tawny Frogmouth <i>Podargus strigoides</i>	Fairy Tern <i>Sternula nereis</i>
Large-tailed Nightjar <i>Eurostodopus macrurus</i>	Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
White-throated Needletail <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	Crested Tern <i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
White-faced Storm-Petrel <i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	Silver Gull <i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>
Wedge-tailed Shearwater <i>Ardenna pacificus</i>	Glossy Black-Cockatoo <i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>
Sooty Shearwater <i>Ardenna grisea</i>	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo <i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>
Solitary Petrel <i>Puffinus intermedium</i>	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo <i>Cacatua galerita</i>
Gould's Petrel <i>Pterodroma leucoptera</i>	Cockatiel <i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>
Little Penguin <i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet <i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>
Australasian Gannet <i>Morus serrator</i>	Musk Lorikeet <i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>
Little Pied Cormorant <i>Microcarbo melanoleucos</i>	Little Lorikeet <i>Glossopsitta pusilla</i>
Great Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Australian King-Parrot <i>Alisterus scapularis</i>
Little Black Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Crimson Rosella <i>Platycercus elegans</i>
Pied Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Eastern Rosella <i>Platycercus eximius</i>
Australian Pelican <i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	Red-rumped Parrot <i>Psephotus haematonotus</i>
Australasian Bittern <i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Budgerigar <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
Australian Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus dubius</i>	Turquoise Parrot <i>Neophema pulchella</i>
White-necked Heron <i>Ardea pacifica</i>	Ground Parrot <i>Pezoporus wallicus</i>
Eastern Great Egret <i>Ardea modesta</i>	Pheasant Coucal <i>Centropus phasianinus</i>
Striated Heron <i>Butorides striata</i>	Eastern Koel <i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>
White-faced Heron <i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	Channel-billed Cuckoo <i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>
Eastern Reef Egret <i>Egretta sacra</i>	Black-eared Cuckoo <i>Chalcites osculans</i>
Nankeen Night-Heron <i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo <i>Chalcites lucidus</i>
Straw-necked Ibis <i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	Pallid Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis pallidus</i>
Black-shouldered Kite <i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Fan-tailed Cuckoo <i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>
White-bellied Sea-Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	Powerful Owl <i>Ninox strenua</i>
Whistling Kite <i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	Southern Boobook <i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>
Brown Goshawk <i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	Laughing Kookaburra <i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>
Collared Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>	Sacred Kingfisher <i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>
Grey Goshawk <i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	Rainbow Bee-eater <i>Merops ornatus</i>
Spotted Harrier <i>Circus assimilis</i>	Dollarbird <i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Swamp Harrier <i>Circus approximans</i>	Superb Lyrebird <i>Menura novaehollandiae</i>
Wedge-tailed Eagle <i>Aquila audax</i>	White-throated Treecreeper <i>Cormobates leucophaea</i>
Nankeen Kestrel <i>Falco cenchroides</i>	Brown Treecreeper <i>Climacteris picumnus</i>
Brown Falcon <i>Falco berigora</i>	Green Catbird <i>Ailuroedus crassirostris</i>
Buff-banded Rail <i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>	Regent Bowerbird <i>Sericulus chrysocephalus</i>
Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	Satin Bowerbird <i>Ptilonorhynchus violaceus</i>
Australian Bustard <i>Ardeotis australis</i>	Superb Fairy-wren <i>Malurus cyaneus</i>
Australian Pied Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	Variegated Fairy-wren <i>Malurus lamberti</i>
Sooty Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Southern Emu-wren <i>Stipiturus malachurus</i>
Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Eastern Bristlebird <i>Dasyornis brachypterus</i>
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Yellow-throated Scrubwren <i>Sericornis citreogularis</i>

White-browed Scrubwren <i>Sericornis frontalis</i>
Large-billed Scrubwren <i>Sericornis magnirostra</i>
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren <i>Hylacola pyrrhopygia</i>
Speckled Warbler <i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>
Brown Gerygone <i>Gerygone mouki</i>
White-throated Gerygone <i>Gerygone albogularis</i>
Striated Thornbill <i>Acanthiza lineata</i>
Yellow Thornbill <i>Acanthiza nana</i>
Yellow-rumped Thornbill <i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>
Buff-rumped Thornbill <i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>
Brown Thornbill <i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>
Southern Whiteface <i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>
Spotted Pardalote <i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>
Striated Pardalote <i>Pardalotus striatus</i>
Eastern Spinebill <i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>
Lewin's Honeyeater <i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>
Yellow-faced Honeyeater <i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>
Singing Honeyeater <i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>
White-eared Honeyeater <i>Lichenostomus leucotis</i>
White-plumed Honeyeater <i>Lichenostomus penicillatus</i>
Noisy Miner <i>Manorina melanocephala</i>
Little Wattlebird <i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i>
Regent Honeyeater <i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>
Red Wattlebird <i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>
Orange Chat <i>Epthianura aurifrons</i>
Crimson Chat <i>Epthianura tricolor</i>
White-fronted Chat <i>Epthianura albifrons</i>
Scarlet Honeyeater <i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater <i>Glyciphila melanops</i>
New Holland Honeyeater <i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>
White-cheeked Honeyeater <i>Phylidonyris niger</i>
Brown-headed Honeyeater <i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>
White-naped Honeyeater <i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>
Blue-faced Honeyeater <i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i>
Noisy Friarbird <i>Philemon corniculatus</i>
Striped Honeyeater <i>Plectorhyncha lanceolata</i>
Grey-crowned Babbler <i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>
Australian Logrunner <i>Orthonyx temminckii</i>
Spotted Quail-thrush <i>Cinclosoma punctatum</i>
Eastern Whipbird <i>Psophodes olivaceus</i>
Varied Sittella <i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike <i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike <i>Coracina papuensis</i>
Barred Cuckoo-shrike <i>Coracina lineata</i>
Cicadabird <i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>
White-winged Triller <i>Lalage sueurii</i>
Varied Triller <i>Lalage leucomela</i>
Crested Shrike-tit <i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>
Golden Whistler <i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>
Rufous Whistler <i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>
Grey Shrike-thrush <i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>
Olive-backed Oriole <i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>
Masked Woodswallow <i>Artamus personatus</i>
White-browed Woodswallow <i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
Dusky Woodswallow <i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>
Grey Butcherbird <i>Cracticus torquatus</i>
Pied Butcherbird <i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>

Australian Magpie <i>Cracticus tibicen</i>
Pied Currawong <i>Strepera graculina</i>
Spangled Drongo <i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>
Rufous Fantail <i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>
Grey Fantail <i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>
Willie Wagtail <i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
Australian Raven <i>Corvus coronoides</i>
Little Crow <i>Corvus bennetti</i>
Leaden Flycatcher <i>Myiagra rubecula</i>
Satin Flycatcher <i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>
Restless Flycatcher <i>Myiagra inquieta</i>
Black-faced Monarch <i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>
Spectacled Monarch <i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>
Magpie-lark <i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>
White-winged Chough <i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>
Apostlebird <i>Struthidea cinerea</i>
Paradise Riflebird <i>Ptiloris paradiseus</i>
Jacky Winter <i>Microeca fasciata</i>
Scarlet Robin <i>Petroica boodang</i>
Flame Robin <i>Petroica phoenicea</i>
Rose Robin <i>Petroica rosea</i>
Hooded Robin <i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>
Pale-yellow Robin <i>Tregellasia capito</i>
Eastern Yellow Robin <i>Eopsaltria australis</i>
Horsfield's Bushlark <i>Mirafra javanica</i>
Australian Reed-Warbler <i>Acrocephalus australis</i>
Rufous Songlark <i>Cincloramphus mathewsi</i>
Silvereye <i>Zosterops lateralis</i>
Welcome Swallow <i>Hirundo neoxena</i>
Fairy Martin <i>Petrochelidon ariel</i>
Tree Martin <i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>
Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Mistletoebird <i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>
Plum-headed Finch <i>Neochmia modesta</i>
Red-browed Finch <i>Neochmia temporalis</i>
Diamond Firetail <i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>
Australasian Pipit <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>
SUPPLEMENTARY LIST 1 (BIRDS AT TUGGERAH LAKES)
Fork-tailed Swift <i>Apus pacificus</i>
Australasian Darter <i>Anhinga novaehollandiae</i>
Intermediate Egret <i>Ardea intermedia</i>
Spotted Harrier <i>Circus assimilis</i>
Eastern Curlew <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>
Painted Button-quail <i>Turnix varius</i>
Azure Kingfisher <i>Ceyx azurea</i>
Forest Kingfisher <i>Todiramphus macleayii</i>
Rockwarbler <i>Origma solitaria</i>
Bell Miner <i>Manorina melanophrys</i>
Little Raven <i>Corvus mellori</i>
SUPPLEMENTARY LIST 2 (SEABIRDS OFF SYDNEY)
Wilson's Storm-Petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
Wandering Albatross <i>Diomedea exulans</i>
Shy Albatross <i>Thalassarche cauta</i>
Yellow-nosed Albatross <i>Thalassarche chlororhynchos</i>
Southern Giant-Petrel <i>Macronectes giganteus</i>
Short-tailed Shearwater <i>Ardenna tenuirostris</i>
Little Shearwater <i>Puffinus assimilis</i>
White-fronted Tern <i>Sterna striata</i>

Appendix 1. Changes in common English bird names

Some early *Emu* articles are daunting, with references to species such as Blood-Birds and Grey Jumpers interspersed with names that are quite familiar to us now. Some name changes are minor, involving hyphens and/or capital letters inserted into names that we can still easily recognise (for example, Butcher-Bird). But, other names are distinctly different to modern usage and require translation. The list below illustrates some of the changes for birds of the Hunter Region, and may assist any reader choosing to tackle the early literature.

2008 name	Other name(s) used in 1901-25
Emerald Dove	Little Green Pigeon
Common Bronzewing	Bronze-winged Pigeon
Peaceful Dove	Ground-Dove
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	Red-crowned Fruit-Pigeon
White-throated Needletail	Spine-tailed Swift
Fork-tailed Swift	White-rumped Swift
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Wedge-tailed Petrel, Mutton-Bird
Sooty Shearwater	Sombre Petrel
Gould's Petrel	White-winged Petrel
Little Pied Cormorant	Little Cormorant
Great Cormorant	Cormorant, Black Cormorant
Intermediate Egret	Plumed Egret
Striated Heron	Little Mangrove-Bittern
White-faced Heron	White-fronted Heron
Whistling Kite	Whistling Eagle
Swamp Harrier	Swamp Hawk
Brown Falcon	Brown Hawk
Buff-banded Rail	Land Rail, Pectoral Rail
Red-capped Plover	Red-capped Dotterel
Banded Lapwing	Black-breasted Plover
Masked Lapwing	Spur-winged Plover
Little Curlew	Little Whimbrel
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Sharp-tailed Stint
Painted Button-quail	Painted Quail
Brown Skua	Sea-Hen, Sea-Hawk
Arctic Jaeger	Skua, Richardson's Skua
Little Tern	White-shafted Ternlet
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Leach Black Cockatoo
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White Cockatoo
Cockatiel	Cockatoo-Parrakeet
Crimson Rosella	Crimson Parrot
Eastern Rosella	Rosella Parrot, Rosella, Yellow-mantled Rosella
Red-rumped Parrot	Red-backed Parrot, Red-rumped Parrakeet
Turquoise Parrot	Red-shouldered Grass Parrot
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Bronze-Cuckoo
Azure Kingfisher	Blue Kingfisher
Laughing Kookaburra	Great Brown Kingfisher, Laughing Jackass
Rainbow Bee-eater	Rainbow-bird
Dollarbird	Roller
Noisy Pitta	Dragoon-Bird
Superb Fairy-wren	Blue Wren-Warbler, Blue Wren
Variiegated Fairy-wren	Variiegated Wren

2008 name	Other name(s) used in 1901-25
Speckled Warbler	Little Field-Wren
Brown Gerygone	Brown Fly-eater
Striated Thornbill	Striped Tit
Yellow Thornbill	Little Tit, Yellow-breasted Tit
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Yellow-rumped Tit, Yellow-tailed Tit-Warbler
Buff-rumped Thornbill	Buff-tailed Tit-Warbler
Brown Thornbill	Brown Tit
Striated Pardalote	Red-tipped Diamond-Bird
Lewin's Honeyeater	Yellow-eared Honey-eater
Little Wattlebird	Brush Wattle-Bird
Regent Honeyeater	Warty-faced Honey-eater
White-fronted Chat	White-fronted Bush-Chat
Scarlet Honeyeater	Blood-Bird
Noisy Friarbird	Leatherhead
Eastern Whipbird	Coachwhip-Bird
Cicadabird	Jardine's Caterpillar-Eater, Great Caterpillar-Eater
White-winged Triller	White-shouldered Caterpillar-Eater
Crested Shrike-tit	Yellow-bellied Shrike-Tit
Golden Whistler	White-throated Thickhead
Rufous Whistler	Rufous-breasted Thickhead
Grey Shrike-thrush	Harmonious Thrush
Pied Butcherbird	Black-throated Butcherbird
Australian Magpie	Black-backed Magpie
Pied Currawong	Pied Bell-Magpie, Northern Bell-Magpie, Pied Crow-Shrike
Rufous Fantail	Rufous-fronted Fantail
Grey Fantail	White-shafted Fantail
Willie Wagtail	Black and White Fantail, Shepherd's Companion
Little Crow	Short-billed Crow
Black-faced Monarch	Black-faced Flycatcher
Spectacled Monarch	Spectacled Flycatcher
Magpie-lark	Peewit, Pied Grallina
Apostlebird	Grey Jumper
Jacky Winter	Brown Flycatcher
Scarlet Robin	Scarlet-breasted Robin
Flame Robin	Flame-breasted Robin
Rose Robin	Rose-breasted Robin
Eastern Yellow Robin	Yellow-breasted Robin
Silvereve	White-eye
Bassian Thrush	Ground-Thrush
Diamond Firetail	Spotted-sided Finch
Australasian Pipit	Ground-Lark