

flew rapidly toward the position where the quail had landed. One falcon landed almost on the same position, forcing the quail into the air whereupon the second falcon, which had been closely following the first, snatched it from the air.

The timing and the method used by the falcons to secure their prey seemed to be far too exact to have been a coincidental catch and it was presumed to be a case of co-operative feeding. This is further supported by the fact that Mooney (1981) has recorded nine occasions on which Brown Falcon pairs took avian prey co-operatively.

Reference

Mooney, N. (1981), 'Some notes on the Brown Falcon in Tasmania', *A'sian Raptor Assoc. News* 2(4), 10.

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The Olive-backed Oriole in Sunraysia

The Olive-backed Oriole *Oriolus sagittatus* is a bird of neat, slim appearance some 250 mm-280 mm in length and of not unattractive plumage. Confusion with other species occurring in the Sunraysia District is unlikely. However on 20 June 1983, while in company with Jeff Campbell and watching birds near the Mildura Water Ski Clubrooms, an Oriole appeared in a tall slender Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. I noted then how similar it was, albeit superficially, to an immature Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus* as it fed 'cuckoo-fashion' in dense foliage, and especially when viewed from a distance.

Olive-backed Oriole observations usually result from the bird revealing its presence by its pleasant musical rolling 'oriole' note. This typical 'oriole' call may be to maintain or make contact since the bird's plumage coloration renders it difficult to detect in thick foliage when feeding.

Records indicated it to be a rare visitor to Sunraysia with a surprising gap of about 17 years between recorded observations. My attempts to obtain from the literature records prior to 1965-66 concerning Olive-backed Orioles in the Mildura area have so far been unsuccessful. In view of the paucity of records it appears that the species was either a rare vagrant or simply went unnoticed and unrecorded. None of the Annual Bird Reports of the New South Wales Field Ornithologists Club (to date) indicates any record of the Olive-backed Oriole for south-western New South Wales; however it is mentioned as reaching Wentworth (Morris et al. 1981).

The lapse of some 17 years between records is more likely attributable to the failure of inexperienced local bird observers to recognise the calls of this species or perhaps taking for granted previously published records or comments. Such is clearly demonstrated in the review of the Olive-backed Oriole in South Australia (Crouch 1970), while Hobbs (1961) stated it to be a summer visitor to a limited part of the area viz. Tocumwal.

Recent records

The following records summarise sight observations of the Olive-backed Oriole in Sunraysia.

18 July 1965 (or 1966, year uncertain): three Olive-backed Orioles were seen on the property of P. Thatcher, Red Cliffs (Vic.), while N. J. Favaloro stated that '... three weeks or so earlier one was noted in his garden in Mildura' (Hobbs 1966).

29 June 1982: Alec Hawtin informed the writer that he had both heard and observed an Olive-backed Oriole in the Red Cliffs township. His attention was drawn to it by a squabbling Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*. Hawtin had experience with the Orioles whilst they were present on the Thatcher property (Hobbs 1966).

9 August 1982: several school teachers observed a solitary Olive-backed Oriole as it called persistently while moving amid the foliage of various eucalypts at Lake Cullulleraine (Vic.). The teachers were attending an 'In-Service' day conducted by the Gould League of Victoria and were accompanied by experienced bird-watchers who identified the bird.

11 August 1982: during a day of environmental education studies arranged for school children at Chaffey Landing, Merbein (Vic.), an Olive-backed Oriole was heard calling and later observed by Noel Shaw, Alan Reid and the writer. It was seen feeding in the Red Gums on the bank of the Murray River.

15 August 1982: a further visit to Chaffey Landing revealed an Oriole at the landing. It is not known whether the bird was the same one as appeared four days earlier; however it was viewed at close range for 35 min as it fed, called, and later preened itself in full sun following a sudden but brief rain shower.

19 May 1983: a bird was observed in a Jacaranda tree *Jacaranda mimosifolia* in Quondong Park, Red Cliffs, by Alec Hawtin whose attention was drawn to the bird's presence by the 'oriole' call notes.

23 May 1983: Hawtin located an Olive-backed Oriole at about midday in the native tree plantation experimental plot of the Mildara Winery near the Chaffey Landing. Later on the same day, at 1500 hours, he again heard and observed an Oriole while it sat on the top of a tall tree in the residential part of Merbein township.

20 June 1983: while watching birds near the Mildura Water Ski Club-rooms an Olive-backed Oriole was observed as it fed amongst the dense outer foliage of Red Gums. Neither the writer nor his companion, Jeff Campbell, heard the Oriole call. It appeared to be methodically selecting trees as it fed and thus subsequently moved out of our range of vision.

24 June 1983: an Olive-backed Oriole was observed by Alec Hawtin in the same trees in which he had previously observed one at Merbein on the afternoon of 23 May 1983.

Discussion

In summarising the above records it would appear that the Olive-backed Oriole is a winter visitor to Sunraysia where it favours the taller

dense-foliaged timber of the Murray River and nearby urbanised parklands. The writer has no knowledge of records taken during late spring, summer or early autumn. The lack of records prior to 1965 and those intervening years to 1982 could indicate that bird-watchers or ornithologists may sometimes be misled by inaccurate statements in the literature or that there may be a gradual shift in the migratory and feeding pattern shown by the Olive-backed Oriole.

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