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**The Display at the Nesting-hole and the Vocabulary  
of the Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus substriatus*)**

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During the V.O.R.G. Mallee-Hen mound survey trip from Hattah to Peebinga, an enforced camp at the Mopoke Tank, in the Sunset Country of north-western Victoria, from July 16 to July 18, 1962, enabled the following observations on the pre-nesting behaviour of the Striated Pardalote (*Pardalotus substriatus*) to be made.

Mopoke Tank is situated on a large saltbush flat. Saltbush (*Atriplex spp.*) and Rounded Pigface (*Mesembryanthemum australe*) form the ground cover of the flat, together with bull mallee of the species *Eucalyptus gracilis*, *E. oleosa*, *E. leptophylla*, and *E. incrassata*. There are a few scattered trees of other types, *Exocarpus aphylla*, *Heterodendron oleifolium*, and *Hakea leucopetra*, but the mallees are the dominant trees. These are much piped, providing holes for bats and nesting sites for birds which use tree-hollows.

The camp was situated about 100 yards from the tank, in a small fenced enclosure containing a number of trees of *E. gracilis*. In two trunks of the tree behind the tent were two knot-holes — one at 6 feet from the ground, and the other at 11 feet. These holes were of great interest to two pairs of Pardalotes.

The following is a transcription of the notes that were made on the spot. The times for the first day are approximate only, but for the other days they are accurate.

July 16, 1962.

9 a.m. Two pairs of Pardalotes (red spot on wing, more than four primaries edged white) alighted in the tree behind the tent and sat on branchlets close together. One bird displayed, spreading the tail wide and half-opening and drooping the wings. A slow quivering of the wings was noticed.

Two birds flew down, almost simultaneously, one to each knot-hole, and clung to the entrance. Each inspected its hole, putting the head well in several times, and then displayed, spreading the tail and wings very wide and holding the pose for some little time without movement. All four birds left the tree together.

11 a.m. Four Pardalotes flew into the tree. Two perched on a branchlet sprouting from the trunk just above and to one side of the lower hole. The other pair perched on a branchlet of the neighbouring tree, which came close to the upper hole and slightly

above it. One bird of each pair displayed with tail widely spread and wings half-open and drooped, but no quivering was seen.

One bird of the lower pair flew down and clung to the edge of the lower hole and inspected it, with head and shoulders entering the hole several times, for some moments. Then it entered the hole, staying in for two to three minutes. While it was in the hole the other bird of the pair came to the hole, clung to the entrance and gave the widespread tail and half-opened wings display. It looked into the hole several times and then gave the same display again.

One bird of the upper pair displayed at the upper hole, but no entry into the hole was made.

1.15 p.m. One bird came into the tree, calling "Pee-you" loudly and persistently, but no other birds entered the tree, and at 1.18 p.m. it left.

July 17, 1962.

9.45 a.m. Three birds entered the tree. One bird perched on the lower branchlet and gave the "Chip chip" call several times. It displayed briefly, in the wings half-opened and drooped and tail widespread fashion, and then it preened the left wing, scratching down the under-surface of the primaries with the claws of the left foot, twice. All three birds left the tree at 9.47 a.m.

10 a.m. One bird entered the tree and gave the long trilling call several times. It then perched on the entrance to the upper hole and looked in with the head and shoulders entering the hole several times. This lasted for one and a half minutes but no full entry was made. It then flew down but checked in front of a knot 18 inches below the hole, almost hovering. It then flew away, leaving the tree at 10.2 a.m.

10.7 a.m. Two birds entered the tree. One gave the "Chip chip" call repeatedly. The other took insects (probably scale-insects) from a twig and then they perched on the lower branchlet. Both left together at 10.8 a.m.

10.22 a.m. Five birds entered the tree together. Two went to the upper hollow and branchlet. One perched at the entrance and displayed with the wings and tail widely spread, and it then joined the other bird on the upper branchlet. The two sat side by side and one gave the "Chip chip" call repeatedly, stretching up while doing so, and causing the feathers on its crown to rise in a rough crest.

Three birds alighted on the lower branchlet, two perching close together and one further away. The odd bird spread its tail. One of the pair gave the full display with the wings and tail widespread, facing the odd bird which then flew away. The bird which had displayed then began to call "Chip chip" repeatedly. Between each repetition of "Chip chip" the other bird interposed a fainter "Cheeo" call. The four birds left the tree almost simultaneously at 10.26 a.m.

10.32 a.m. Four birds came into the tree, two going to the branchlet at the upper hole, and two to that near the lower hole.

One bird of each pair gave the "Chip chip" call repeatedly, but there were no answering calls of "Cheeoo". One bird on the lower branchlet displayed twice, with widespread tail and half-open and drooped wings, and then spread the tail only three times. Three birds left the tree at 10.34. The remaining bird, on the lower branchlet, called "Pee-you" repeatedly and seemed to be looking about in various directions. It left the tree at 10.35 a.m.

10.57 a.m. Five birds came to the tree. One alighted on the upper branchlet and gave the widespread wing and tail display. Another bird came to the branchlet and perched beside it. One flew down to the hole, then the other. Both gave the full display at the entrance and then returned to the branchlet. During all this time the "Chip chip" call was continually given.

Three birds alighted on the lower branchlet, two close together and one apart from them. The two sitting together both displayed at the odd bird. It displayed and then flew down to the lower hole. One of the pair flew down and drove it away before it could alight at the entrance. This bird rejoined its mate on the branchlet and gave the "Chip chip" call repeatedly. One bird left the tree, followed a moment later by the other.

One bird entered the tree, flew to the lower hole, perched at the entrance and gave the full display.

During this episode a large mixed party of Little Thornbills and Striated Pardalotes entered the higher branches of the tree, sought food, moved to other trees in the clump, and then departed between 11.6 and 11.7 a.m. At 11.5 a.m. a single bird investigated the upper hole, half-entering several times, and then left the tree. "Pee-you" and "Chip chip" calls were heard constantly in the tree from 10.57 until 11.7 a.m. when all the birds had left the clump.

11.22 a.m. One bird alighted on the lower branchlet and called "Pee-you" several times. There was another bird higher in the tree. The first bird flew down and entered the hole at 11.23, emerging at 11.31 a.m. No sound was heard from inside the nest during this time though the observer was only 5 feet from the entrance. The other bird flew to the branchlet, and then left the tree while the first bird was still in the nest.

12.5 p.m. A single bird came to the lower branchlet. At 12.7 p.m. it flew down and entered the hole. No sound was heard from within by the observer, who was again sitting at 5 feet from the entrance. The bird emerged from the hole at 12.15 p.m.

12.20 p.m. A single bird, perched at the entrance to the lower hole, was unnoticed until disturbed by the observer. It flew into another tree of the clump and called "Pee-you" constantly until 12.22, when it quitted the clump.

July 18, 1962.

9.50 a.m. A single bird visited the clump, feeding in the outer trees and calling "Pee-you" constantly.

10 a.m. Four birds entered the tree, one pair going to the lower branchlet, and the other pair going to the upper branchlet. One bird of the lower pair displayed and then flew away. The other bird called "Cheeo" many times before leaving.

The upper pair perched side by side, one bird calling "Chip chip" many times. Both left the tree at 10.3 a.m.

10.6 a.m. One bird in the clump around the camp called "Pee-you" several times.

10.7 a.m. No birds were in the camp-clump but a number were in a neighbouring clump from which came many "Pee-you", "Chip chip" and "Cheeo" calls until 10.22 a.m.

11 a.m. Six birds were seen in a neighbouring clump. One of these birds was seen to display.

The clump of trees in the camp was not watched as constantly in the afternoons as it was in the mornings, but during the three days all the afternoon hours were covered. No display was seen later than 1.18 p.m., nor was any bird seen at the hollows or on the significant branchlets after that time, though many birds visited the clump feeding.

Display at the nesting hollow had been seen once earlier in the trip, many miles from Mopoke, but the display in a tree, apparently not near a nesting hollow, seen at 11 a.m. on July 18, was the only occurrence noted by me, though birds were seen on many occasions during the trip.

The vocabulary consisted of six different calls.

(1) A long trilling call. This was heard many times, but only on the one occasion near the nesting hollow (see note for 10 a.m., July 17).

(2) "Pee-you" call. This always seemed to have an imperative tone. My interpretation is that this call was used to bring a mate in for display. However, there is the occurrence of this call from 10.57 to 11.7 a.m. on July 17 in the large flock which this interpretation does not seem to satisfy.

(3) "Chip chip" call. This was always a loud call, uttered while feeding and also before, during and after display, though it was heard during the display only in the case of the crest-raising type. It seemed to be louder during the periods connected with display, but possibly this was due to my closeness to the birds at those times.

(4) "Cheeo" call. This is a single syllable call, but this is the only satisfactory way I can transpose it. Soft and plaintive or enquiring in tone, it was used as a reply to the "Chip chip" call during the display periods, always being uttered by the bird being displayed to on the occasions it was used. In the one case it was given a number of times by a bird, which had been displayed to, after the displayer had left the tree.

(5) "Pretty Dick". This call was never heard at the camp-clump but was used frequently in trees near-by as a single call, or repeated in a series. The series varied in speed and spacing and I suspect that the long trilling call (1) may possibly be a series of

"Pretty Dick" calls run together into a continuous song, without any spacings.

(6) Occasionally four syllable calls, as if the bird were stuttering the "Pretty Dick" call, were heard. These could be written as "Pretty D'Dick". This was sometimes a single call, sometimes a pure series, and sometimes interspersed in a series of "Pretty Dick" calls.

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## Notes on the White-winged Triller

By HAROLD E. TARR, Nunawading, Victoria

The White-winged Triller, (*Lalage sueurii*), inhabits the open forest-lands of Australia and it has been recorded also in Tasmania, south-east New Guinea and Timor. It occurs as a migrant in southern Australia but in the northern part of the Continent appears to be a stationary species. It is an irregular migrant to Victoria, sometimes not paying a visit for a period of up to three years. They also appear during some years in vast numbers, but in other years appear to be very scarce with no set pattern that one can follow.

The sexes are totally different in colouration, although they are the same size, being 6 to 7 inches in total length. The male in breeding plumage is a resplendant figure in shining black and white. The head, mantle, flight feathers and tail are glossy black; the lower back is greyish; a wide patch on the shoulder, the edge of the secondary feathers and the under surface are white.

In the north of Australia many male birds with brown heads and backs are noticeable during the winter months, and this appears to be a form of eclipse plumage similar to the change made by the Wrens (*Malurus*) and the Grebes (*Podiceps*). The female Trillers appear in normal plumage during this period. The female is a brownish coloured bird with the wing feathers having paler edges which form a distinct pattern, plus a pale brown eyebrow. Juveniles, on leaving the nest, are coloured similar to the females. Both sexes have a black bill, dark eyes and dark slate coloured legs. The juveniles are the last to leave Victoria on migration, departing about a fortnight after the adults, which is generally about the end of February.

In the northern parts of Australia a closely allied species, the Varied Triller (*Lalage leucomela*), will be found. This species can be distinguished from the White-winged Triller by the biscuit coloured breast and the white eyebrow on the male, and the large white eyebrow on the female.

When the White-winged Triller arrives in Victoria during September its loud melodious call immediately draws attention to its presence. The call-notes may be uttered while the bird is in flight and also by the male while he is sitting on the nest.