

The Type Localities of the Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* (Temminck, 1822) and the Mallee Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius barnardi* (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827)

IAN A.W. McALLAN

46 Yeramba Street, Turrumurra, N.S.W. 2074

Summary

This paper investigates the background to the discovery and naming of the Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* and the Mallee Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius barnardi*. Examination of the contemporary events, publications, documents and paintings reveals fairly precise localities and dates for the collection of the first specimens of both these taxa.

Introduction

When many Australian birds were described in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the authors of the new scientific names often thought it sufficient to record that the specimen merely came from the broad localities of 'New Holland' or 'New South Wales'. No further detail was considered necessary: Australia was remote and the geography was often little-known by both the writers and their intended audience. Furthermore, specimens of these new species often took some time to reach Europe. A consequence is that it is often difficult to determine when and where these taxa were found.

This essay was initially an attempt to find the type locality at which the Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes* was collected. This species had a vague locality in its description, though there was sufficient information given to indicate that it could be narrowed down. In the process of examining the evidence, the type locality of the Mallee Ringneck *Barnardius zonarius barnardi* was also discovered. This latter taxon was described with an equally vague type locality.

The Crested Pigeon

Coenraad Temminck described the Crested Pigeon in 1822 and wrote that
la découverte de cette Colombe est due aux voyageurs Anglais qui sont parvenus à se frayer une route par les montagnes bleues dans l'intérieur des terres de la Nouvelle Hollande

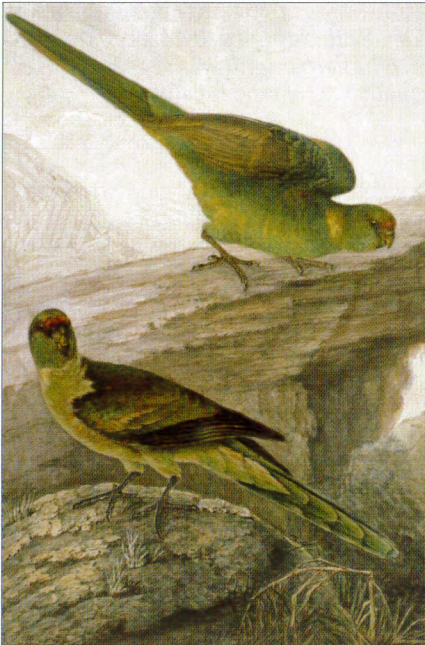
or 'the discovery of this pigeon is due to the English travellers who have succeeded in preparing a route through the Blue Mountains in the interior of the country of New Holland' (Temminck in Temminck & Laugier 1822). Mathews (1911) restricted this locality to the Blue Mountains, though Peters (1937) broadened it again to New South Wales (NSW). Schodde (in Schodde & Mason 1997) assumed Temminck intended 'NSW [New South Wales] immediately west of the Blue Mountains (= region of Bathurst)' [locality = 33°25'S, 149°35'E]. However, these views overlook the fact that the Crested Pigeon has been expanding its range eastwards for at least the last 90 years.

The earliest definite record of the Crested Pigeon for the Central Western Slopes region of NSW is a clutch of three eggs in the Australian Museum that was collected on 3 September 1868 by Edward P. Ramsay at Cardington, a property at 32°53'S, 148°54'E (Australian Museum specimen O.57303). Yet even at this



**Galah and Crested Pigeon. Panel of Dixon Collector's Chest (DG R4),
Dixon Library, State Library of NSW. Painter unknown, probably Joseph Lycett.
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Plate 22



**Mallee Ringnecks by John W. Lewin.
Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK 139/C
(an2970413). Reproduced with the
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of Australia.**

Plate 23

locality the species was probably then at the margins of its range. In October 1887 Ramsay travelled down the Macquarie River valley, past Cardington to Buddah Lake, at 32°03'S, 148°06'E (Ramsay diaries, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW = ML). He recorded over 100 species of birds, including common species such as the Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys* and Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*, but also species such as the Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* and Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta*, both now considered rare. Nevertheless Ramsay did not record the Crested Pigeon.

At the start of the 20th century, Thomas Austin reported that the Crested Pigeon had since become common at Narromine at 32°14'S, 148°14'E, but that it was unknown to the east at Cobborah, near 32°03'S, 149°15'E (Austin in North 1913). The next record for the Central Western Slopes was a sighting by Aubrey Elliott between Forbes and Canowindra (near 33°35'S, 148°25'E), on 26 December 1928 (A. Elliott card index, Illawarra Bird Observers Club). As late as 1934, the Crested Pigeon was evidently still only a visitor, or at best uncommon at Dripstone near Wellington (32°28'S, 148°59'E), as it was not found in all months (Althofer 1934). To the south-east, the earliest record for the city of Orange (33°15'S, 149°05'E) is from around 1968, though the species may have been present for some time, as it was considered a common resident by 1972 (Heron 1973). At Bathurst the oldest record is from the mid 1970s, and farther east again at Lithgow (33°29'S, 150°09'E), immediately west of the Blue Mountains, the oldest identified record is from the mid 1980s (NSW Bird Atlasers database). Given this obvious eastward movement of the species, and the fact that the first records for the Bathurst area were at least 140 years after the species' description, the problem remains as to where the type specimen was collected.

By 1822 there had been limited exploration within the apparent range of the species. The first crossing of the Blue Mountains to the Lithgow area was by Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Wentworth in May 1813 (Mackanness 1965). Later, in December 1813, George Evans surveyed the Bathurst area. In mid 1815, he travelled west to the confluence of Mandagery Creek with the Lachlan River, near 33°25'S, 148°15'E (Weatherburn 1966). However, given the late date of Elliott's record from nearby, Mandagery Creek was probably still well east of the range of the Crested Pigeon in 1815.

The first mention of the Crested Pigeon was on John Oxley's expedition down the Lachlan River in 1817. On 3 July 1817, Oxley was north-east of the present town of Booligal, near 33°45'S, 145°05'E, where he noted (Oxley 1820):

Several flocks of a new description of pigeon were seen for the first time; two were shot, and were beautiful and curious. Their heads were crowned with a black plume, their wings streaked with black, the short feathers of a golden colour edged with white; the back of their necks of a light flesh-colour, their breasts fawn-coloured, and their eyes red.

Allan Cunningham, the naturalist on the expedition, also referred to these Crested Pigeons in his diary, where he wrote that a 'brace' was shot (diary now held by State Records, NSW; see also Lee 1925, though quotes in Lee attributed to Cunningham often have errors). Further Crested Pigeons were collected soon after. On 7 July, Cunningham wrote in his diary that 'Our people shot several of the new Pigeons'. The locality where these birds were collected was somewhere near Booligal, which is at 33°52'S, 144°53'E.

Also seen on 3 July 1817 was a flock of Galahs *Cacatua roseicapilla*, the first record of the species from eastern Australia. Oxley wrote that 'A new species of cockatoo or paroquet, being between both, was also seen, with red necks and



**Crested Pigeons by John W. Lewin. Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK 139/E (an2970424).
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Plate 24

breasts, and grey backs' (Oxley 1820). Oxley continued 'I mention these birds particularly [i.e. the Crested Pigeons and Galahs], as they are the only ones we have yet seen which at all differ from those known on the east coast' (Oxley 1820). Cunningham also referred in his diary to the Galahs seen on 3 July. On 10 July, when they were close to the same locality, Cunningham observed 'Large flocks of new birds, (which we have shot and are a sp. of Cockatoo) and pigeons paß'd over us in their diurnal northern & southern flights' (Cunningham diary). Some more Galahs were shot the following day; however, these were evidently eaten, as Cunningham wrote that they 'found their flesh, hard and rancid'. The



**Galahs by John W. Lewin. Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK 139/F (an2970531).
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Plate 25

expedition continued to the north-east eventually discovering the Wellington area which was settled a few years later.

Cunningham probably preserved both the Crested Pigeon and Galah. He is known to have prepared other bird specimens; for example, he provided William Swainson with specimens collected on his expedition to northern NSW in 1827 (Swainson 1829–1833).

Both the Crested Pigeon and the Galah evidently created some interest when they were brought back to Sydney. Oxley signalled this by noting that they were

the first new species to be observed away from the east coast. The NSW Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, commissioned the artist naturalist John William Lewin to paint several of the natural-history subjects from Oxley's expedition down the Lachlan River (Historical Records of Australia 1917a, Mander Jones 1956). On 15 December 1817, Macquarie wrote to Earl Bathurst that

The Tourists having also Met with a New Description of Doves and Cockatoos nearly at the Termination of the River Lachlan, as beautiful in Appearance as rare, I do myself the Honor to send Your Lordship a Drawing of them also.

Two paintings by Lewin, one of two Crested Pigeons, and the other of two Galahs are now part of the Rex Nan Kivell collection in the National Library of Australia (= NLA; NK 139/E and NK 139/F; see Plates 24 and 25). Although both paintings are signed by Lewin, only the painting of the Galahs is dated 1817. Nan Kivell, an art dealer based in England, was an inveterate collector of early Australian art and manuscripts (Shortridge 1998). On this basis it is likely that Nan Kivell acquired the paintings from an English source.

Both species were also illustrated on panels of two collector's chests: the Strathallan and Dixon Chests, the former in private hands, and the latter in the Dixon Library, State Library of NSW (see Imashev 1991, McCormick 1991; also Plate 22). Collector's chests were a feature of the early 19th century, and involved the acquisition of natural-history specimens to keep in a decorated cabinet for show. The two collector's chests concerned were constructed in an almost identical format and are believed to have been made under the orders of Macquarie around 1818–1820 (McCormick 1991). The chests are believed to have been painted by Joseph Lycett who was based at Newcastle from 1815 to 1818 and later painted for Macquarie (McCormick 1991, Turner 1997). The paintings of the Galah and Crested Pigeon on the chests were evidently of the birds collected on Oxley's expeditions.

The Strathallan Chest still has its bird collection intact. However, neither the Galah nor the Crested Pigeon is in this collection. It is likely that any novelties collected on Oxley's expedition were destined for Cunningham's employer, Sir Joseph Banks (McMinn 1970). Banks and his collectors gave many specimens to the Linnean Society of London, and the collections in this Society were the source of some of the taxa named by Temminck (see Temminck 1821, Wheeler 1995). Given that they were the subject of four paintings by possibly two artists, there may have been some delays before the specimens were sent; certainly they were not received at the Linnean Society by the time Temminck read his paper in December 1819. However, specimens of both the Crested Pigeon and Galah did find their way to the Linnean Society's collection at about this time, as they were noted in this collection by Latham in his *General History of Birds*: the Galah in the second volume and the Crested Pigeon in the eighth (Latham 1822, 1823).

Oxley saw both species again on 23 June 1818, when just to the west of the present locality of Warren near 31°45'S, 147°45'E (Oxley 1820). However, in this instance it is not known if either was collected.

Given these links, the particular interest in the species by the colonists, and the limited number of expeditions into areas where the Crested Pigeon was found, it appears that the source of Temminck's type specimen of the Crested Pigeon was one of those collected on the first Oxley expedition. The type locality of the species is likely to be near Booligal, NSW.

The Mallee Ringneck

The Mallee Ringneck was scientifically described by Nicholas Vigors and Thomas Horsfield (Vigors & Horsfield 1827). These authors also based their description on a specimen then in the collection of the Linnean Society of London. The specimen concerned was donated by Edward Barnard of the Colonial Office, though no collection locality for the specimen was provided with the description (see also Whittell 1954). In their description of the form, Vigors and Horsfield noted that John Latham had earlier given a vernacular description in his *General History of Birds*, but did not give it a scientific name. Latham (1822) wrote that the species ‘Inhabits New-Holland; met with in the interior, but said to be very scarce — In the Museum of the Linnæan Society is a fine specimen, presented by — Barnard Esq.’.

Schodde (in Schodde & Mason 1997) suggested that this specimen may have been collected on one of John Oxley’s expeditions in either 1817 or 1818. His reasoning was on the basis that no other expeditions had come into the range of the Mallee Ringneck by the time Latham gave his description. Schodde also felt that his argument was strengthened by the fact that the next species described by Latham was a Superb Parrot *Polytelis swainsonii*, also based on a male specimen then in the collection of the Linnean Society. However, this does not in itself indicate that the specimen was collected at the same time as the Mallee Ringneck. Schodde himself noted that the first Superb Parrots could have been collected ‘from settlements and local explorations west from around Bathurst’. There is still a painting of a male Superb Parrot in the collection of the Linnean Society, again painted by Lewin (Wheeler & Thompson 1996). This painting is annotated ‘a [word missing] of Bathurst’s Plains. Shot by Mr. Oxley’. The Superb Parrot has since been recorded close to Bathurst (e.g. Morris 2002). Although Oxley started both his expeditions from Bathurst, he also visited the locality in 1815 when in company with both Macquarie and Lewin (Mackanness 1965). To suggest that the type of the Superb Parrot was collected on one of Oxley’s expeditions of 1817 and 1818 cannot be substantiated. Yet Schodde’s supposition that one of the Oxley expeditions was the source of the type of the Mallee Ringneck is probably correct. However, the Mallee Ringneck was not considered a novelty on Oxley’s first expedition, so logically it must have been collected on the second.

John Oxley’s second expedition left Bathurst on 28 May 1818. They headed northwards along the Macquarie River until it joined the Macquarie Marshes where they were stopped by rising floodwaters. They then continued east past the Warrumbungle Range, to the Peel River near Tamworth. Crossing over the New England Tableland near Apsley Falls, the expedition reached the coast at Port Macquarie, arriving at Newcastle on 5 November 1818.

Specimens of natural history on this expedition were collected by Charles Fraser who was the Government Botanist (Oxley 1820, Whittell 1954). That the Mallee Ringneck was collected on this expedition is corroborated by further paintings by Lewin. Upon the expedition’s return, Macquarie once again commissioned Lewin to illustrate some of the natural-history specimens (Historical Records of Australia 1917b). On 25 March 1819, Macquarie wrote to Earl Bathurst:

Herewith your Lordship will also receive a Case, addressed to your Lordship, containing Eight Drawings of animals, Birds, and Plants, collected by Mr. Charles Frazer [sic], the Acting Colonial Botanist, during the Progress of Mr. Oxley’s last Tour of Discovery in the Interior of Australia. They are Painted by Mr. Lewin, an eminent Artist here, and I

herewith do myself the honor to forward a List or Schedule of the Eight Drawings here in alluded to, and which I hope will prove acceptable to Your Lordship.

In the attached list were the details of three birds:

No. 5. *Psittacus* Species, generally seen in Pairs, feeds in Rhagodias, inhabits the Morasses of the Interior in Lat. $31^{\circ}18'0''$ S. Long. $147^{\circ}31'$ East.

No. 6. *Psittacus* Species, seen generally in Pairs, feeds in Rhagodias, inhabits the Morasses in the Interior in Lat. $31^{\circ}18'0''$ S. Long. $147^{\circ}31'0''$ East.

No. 7. *Columba* Species, a solitary Bird, inhabits the Hills in the Neighbourhood of the Arbuthnot Range, in Lat. $31^{\circ}13'0''$ S. Long. $148^{\circ}41'30''$ East.

In Oxley's published version, reference to the exact latitude and longitude given by Macquarie for the two parrot species is found in his account of Mount Harris (Oxley 1820). They were camped at this spot from 8 to 18 July while George Evans reconnoitred to the east, discovering the Castlereagh River. Oxley's co-ordinates for Mt Harris were incorrect; the actual locality is farther east at $31^{\circ}18'S$, $147^{\circ}39'E$. Reference to Oxley's map in the published account indicates that the pigeon was collected in the western foothills of 'Arbuthnot's Range' now known as the Warrumbungle Range. In this instance the co-ordinates would actually be near $31^{\circ}19'S$, $148^{\circ}54'E$ and the bird would have been collected on either 6 or 7 August 1818.

In the same series of watercolour paintings by Lewin in the Rex Nan Kivell collection in the NLA are three additional paintings of birds that correspond with those listed by Macquarie. They are of a Red-winged Parrot *Aprosmictus erythropterus* (NK 139/B), two Mallee Ringnecks (NK 139/C; see Plate 23) and two Squatter Pigeons (NK 139/D; reproduced in Pearce 1989). The Mallee Ringnecks are incorrectly catalogued in the NLA collection as Musk Lorikeets *Glossopsitta concinna*, and were so labelled when this painting was reproduced in Pearce (1989). This painting is signed by Lewin and dated 1819 and so was evidently painted in the three months before Macquarie's letter was written. The paintings of the Red-winged Parrot and the Squatter Pigeon are the first records of these species for the State of NSW as it is known today. One of the other paintings in this series in the NLA is of two Red Kangaroos *Macropus rufus*, dated 1819. It was also listed in Macquarie's schedule and was also given co-ordinates close to those of the parrots. This painting has a distant view of the Warrumbungle Range as a background.

These facts indicate that all the paintings catalogued under the NK 139 number in the Rex Nan Kivell collection are those sent by Macquarie to Earl Bathurst. Both the Red-winged Parrot and the Mallee Ringneck were collected at Mt Harris. This location should therefore be taken as the probable type locality of the Mallee Ringneck.

Type specimens of both the Crested Pigeon and Mallee Ringneck are still in existence: the former at the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, the Netherlands, and the latter at The Natural History Museum, Tring, U.K. (see Schodde & Mason 1997).

Acknowledgements

Walter Boles, Murray Bruce, Richard Schodde, Ron Johnstone and an anonymous referee kindly commented on drafts of this note. Much help was received from the staff of the Mitchell and General Reference Libraries, State Library of NSW, State Records NSW and the National Library of Australia. Brian Curtis and Richard Cooper provided access to records held by the NSW Bird Atlasers.

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