

NOTES ON THE DISAPPEARANCE—TOTAL OR PARTIAL—  
OF CERTAIN SPECIES OF BIRDS IN THE LOWER  
LACHLAN DISTRICT.

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WHILE collecting for the Australian Museum some years ago, I was asked by the Curator to make a few notes on the migration of birds, their arrival and disappearance, shortly after my notes were mislaid, but recently on their turning up again, I thought perhaps a few remarks on the rarer forms would prove interesting to Ornithologists.

It is a noticeable fact, and one that must strike an observer, that great changes have taken place in the avifauna of this part of the Colony during the last eighteen or twenty years. Species that were formerly numerous, have for many years past entirely disappeared: others that were numerous, during certain portions of each year are now represented at long and uncertain intervals by a few stragglers. Whilst on the other hand species that were at that time few in numbers have now become plentiful and permanent. Amongst those that have entirely vanished may be mentioned *Phaps histrionica*, *Geophaps scripta*, *Pedionomus torquatus* and *Oreoica cristata*. Whilst amongst the now occasional visitants (once plentiful) are *Falco subniger*, *Milvus affinis*, *Coturnix pectoralis*, *Turnix velox*, and *Synoicus australis*. There can, I think, be little doubt, but that in most cases this disappearance is due to the occupation and stocking of the country with sheep, whilst the prevalence of the domestic cat (gone wild) has doubtless in some cases proved another factor. In former years the whole of these vast plains were covered with a dense mass of vegetation in the shape of dwarf saltbush, herbaceous plants and grass, affording at the same time a safe cover, and a plentiful supply of food in the large quantities of their various seeds. For many years past, this state of things has been entirely changed by stocking with sheep, and as a rule the country is bare, or at best affording but a scanty covering and an equally scanty supply of food. The disappearance of *Pedionomus torquatus*, I think, is due to other causes, for this bird (never very numerous) had disappeared long before the country became bare or thinly clothed with herbage. It is from the shortness of its wings a very poor flier, and always reluctantly takes flight during the day time, instinct teaching it that it would become an easy prey to any predatory feathered foe. Its journeys on the wing, as I am assured by the natives, and which my own observations tend to confirm, are for