

Submission to Bird Australia Rarities Committee

Species: Rosy Starlings *Pastor roseus*
Location: West Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Indian Ocean
Observation Dates: 24 December 2018
Submission number: 1136
Submitted by: Geof Christie, Pam Jones & David James

Circumstances

On 24 December 2018 GC found and photographed a Rosy Starling in a house yard in the township on West Island in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The bird was seen in the same Japanese Cherry tree *Muntingia calabura* for 3 days only.

Description and Identification

Refer to the photograph in Figure 1. This was a young (first cycle) bird in the early stages of the complete moult from juvenile to first formative plumage (Howell 2010) or first adult plumage (Cramp & Perrins 1994). The remnant juvenile plumage was pale, plain, milky-tea coloured overall without dark lores, which is distinctive. The bicoloured bill is inconsistent with Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. The incoming black plumage on the neck and head and the wings heralds the coming bold pink-and-black pattern of formative plumage (e.g. Menkhorst et al. 2017; Rasmussen & Anderton 2005; Beaman & Madge 1998; see BARC Submission 1134).

Status

BARC has accepted five records of Rosy Starling from Australia: from WA (case 437), NSW (cases 520 and 1077), NT (case 979) and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (case 474) in November to December 2005. This would be the fifth record from the CKI. We are concurrently submitting five records from the CKI including this one (Table 2).

Table 2. Records we are now submitting to BARC for Rosy Starling from CKI

Location(s)	Date(s)	Submission No.
West Island town	9 November 2011	1133
West Island airstrip Home Island tip	November to December 2016 24 January 2017	1134
West I Quarantine Station	14 April 2018	1135
West Island town	24 to 26 December 2018	1136
West I Quarantine Station	11 September 2019	1137

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Contributions and Acknowledgments

GC and PJ saw and photographed the birds, and documented them in their monthly bird report newsletters. DJ compiled the submission. Thanks to Ian McAllan for comments on this submission and information about the status of birds on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

References

- Beaman, M. & Madge, S. (1998). *The Handbook of Bird Identification for Europe and the Western Palearctic*. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.
- Cramp, S. & Perrins, C.M. (eds) (1994). *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa: The Birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol. VIII, Crows to Finches*. Oxford University Press, Oxford UK.
- Howell, S.N.G. (2010). *Peterson Reference Guide to Molt in North American Birds*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York.
- Menkhorst, P. Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. & Franklin, K. (2017). *The Australian Bird Guide*. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.
- Rasmussen, P. & Anderton, J.C. (2005). *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.



Figure 1. Rosy Starling moulting from juvenile plumage to formative plumage at West Island township, on 24 December 2018. Photo by Geof Christie.