



Lichenostomus keartlandi
(Grey-headed Honeyeater)

George Arthur Kearland

Naturalist and ornithologist

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George Arthur Kearland was born 11 June 1848 in Northamptonshire, England and arrived in Melbourne with his family in 1850. He attended the George Street Public School in Fitzroy, trained as a photographer, completed an apprenticeship to a printer and became a compositor, working at the Age newspaper for over fifty years. This steady employment allowed him to pursue his love of nature.

Despite being lame from a childhood accident, Kearland served as the ornithologist and collector on the Horn Scientific Expedition from Oodnadatta to the MacDonnell Ranges in 1894 and again on the ill-fated Calvert Expedition to north-west Australia from 1896 to 1897. It was on these expeditions that he began to build an outstanding bird collection that was regarded as one of the best in the country. It is now housed jointly in the South Australian Museum and the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.

Kearland's contribution to the scientific knowledge and understanding of Australian ornithology resulted in two bird species being named after him: the Kearland (Grey-headed) Honeyeater and the Orange Chat, generic name Kearnlandia. The Kearland Hills in Western Australia are also named after him.

In 1900 Kearland co-founded the (Royal) Australasian Ornithologists' Union. He also served as President of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria between 1907 and 1909. He was also a skilled taxidermist, professional photographer and writer, a number of articles being published in nature magazines. He is still quoted in books on Australian birds.

On 11 June 1873, Kearland married Margaret Jane Nicol and settled in Collingwood before moving to Cramer Street, Preston in 1914. He died of cancer on 21 May 1926 aged 76 and is buried here with his wife Margaret and children Bertha, Ada and George.

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