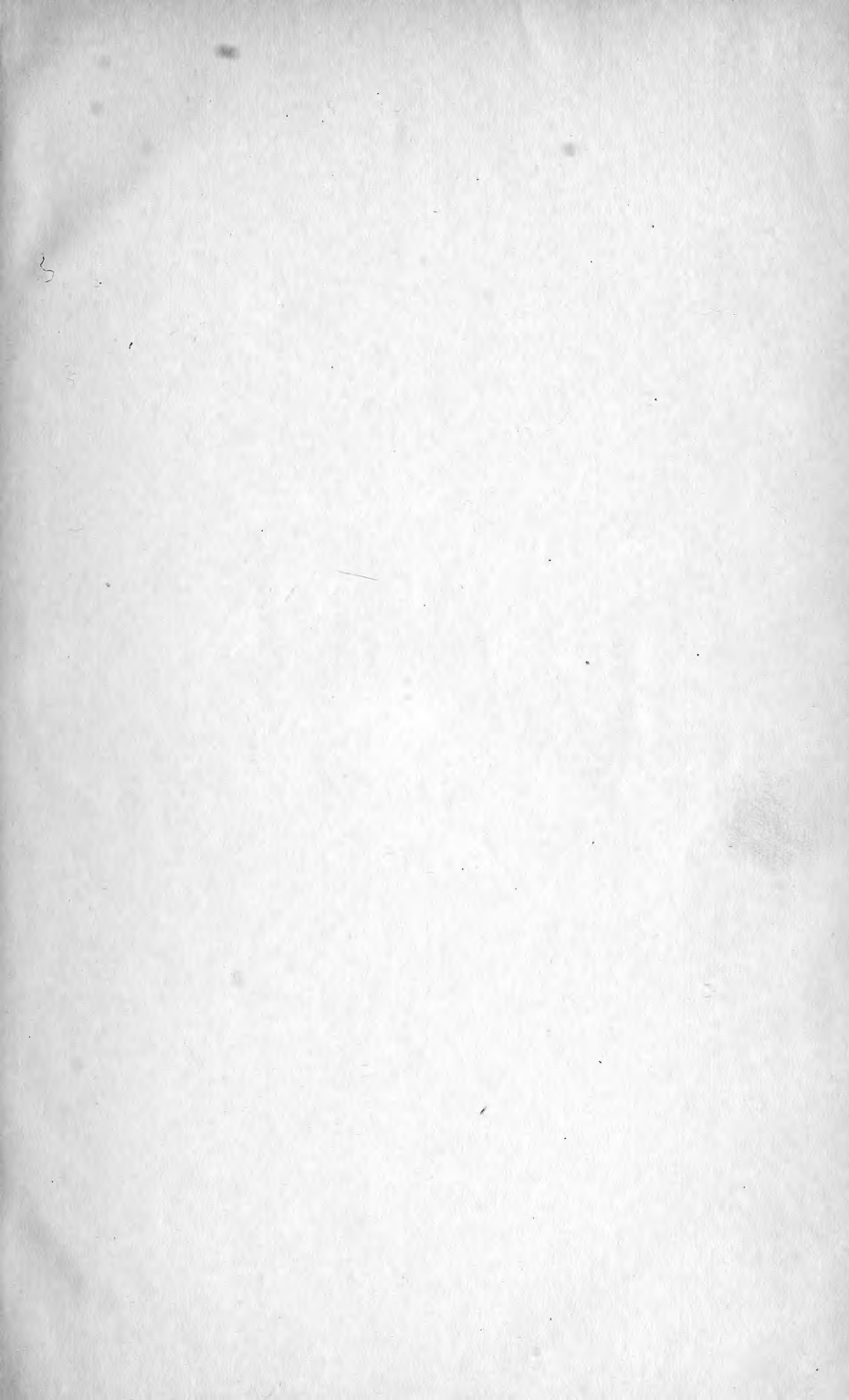


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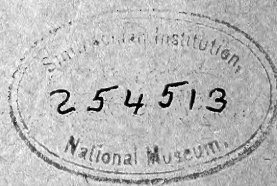
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JANUARY, 1914.



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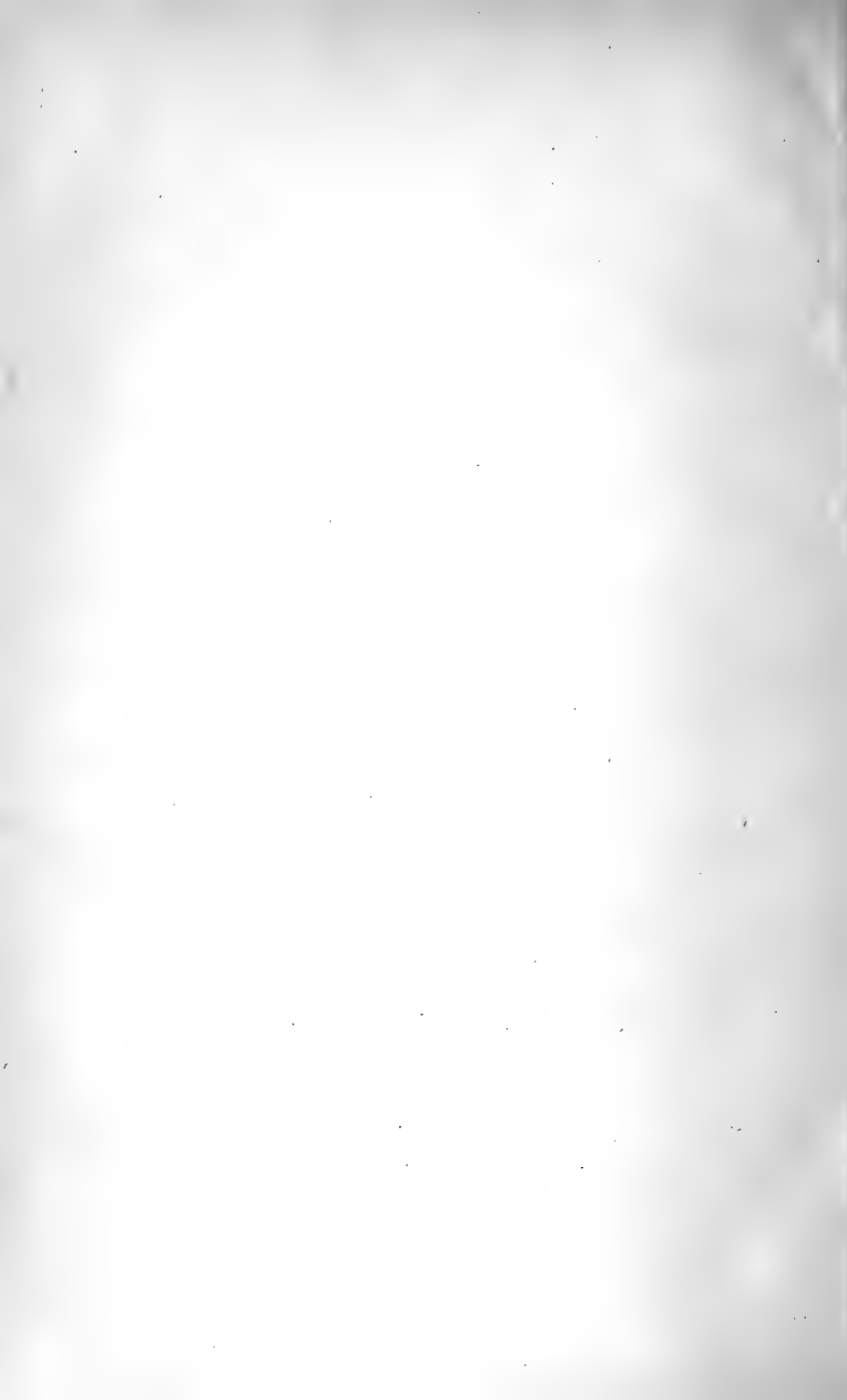
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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. I.]

JANUARY, 1914.

[PART I.

History of Ornithology in South Australia.

BY R. CROMPTON.

Before the year 1855, there were a few ornithologists and collectors of birds in this colony. These men knew our birds, studied their habits, noticed strangers, and some of them collected skins. But in that year an Act was passed incorporating the South Australian Institute and Museum. Mr. F. G. Waterhouse, C.M.Z.S., H.M.R.S., F.L.S., was appointed curator. Mr. Waterhouse did much good work in collecting type specimens of birds. Mr. Samuel White was another enthusiast; he found among other birds *Artamus melanops*, and *Malurus callainus* in the interior, and in many ways assisted Mr. John Gould in his book on Australian birds.

In 1861, Mr. Waterhouse accompanied John McDouall Stuart and his party on his memorable exploration trip across the continent, as naturalist, collecting much valuable material. On his return however, space at the old Institute soon became totally inadequate, and the specimens had to be packed away in the cellar where they got into a very bad state.

In 1882, Mr. Waterhouse retired and most of his birds were ordered to be burned by his successor, as they were said to be ruined by insufficient attention. On December 18th, 1884, the Public Library and Museum was opened and Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S., who had been appointed preparator about six months previously, enthusiastically set to work to gather together another reference collection. As the cabinets gradually became filled several ornithologists, notably Dr. A. M. Morgan, Captain S. A. White, who follows in his father's

footsteps, Messrs. J. W. Mellor, Edwin Ashby, and M. Symonds Clark began using the growing museum collection, they discussed ornithological matters with Mr. Zietz, and from time to time gave to, and exchanged specimens with him. About the year 1898, Mr. Zietz proposed the formation of a bird club in Adelaide and with this idea in view, spoke to several of his friends. The scheme was cordially supported and a meeting was held to consider the advisability of forming an association. It was at first suggested to form a branch of the Royal Society, but on second consideration this was thought to be inadvisable, as this science was of no interest to most of its members, and to be of any use the members must be trained systematic ornithologists.

The inaugural meeting was held at Dr. A. M. Morgan's residence, 27 Angas Street, Adelaide, on March 17th, 1899. Those present were Dr. Morgan, Messrs. A. H. C. Zietz, J. W. Mellor, F. R. Zietz, E. Ashby, M. S. Clark. Dr. Morgan was voted to the chair. It was resolved that a Society to be called the South Australian Ornithological Association be formed. It was also resolved that Dr. Morgan and Messrs. Zietz and Mellor act as a committee to frame and draft rules for this association.

The meeting was then adjourned till March 27th, when Dr. Morgan was elected the first President and Mr. J. W. Mellor, was elected Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, which office he continued to hold for 14 years with the exception of one year when he occupied the presidential chair.

The following rules were then adopted.

1. That this Association be called the "South Australian Ornithological Association."
2. The objects of this Association shall be the study, and recording of the habits, and economy, and identification and protection of Australian birds.
3. This Association shall be controlled by a Committee, called the Committee of Management, which shall consist of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary of the Association.
4. This Association shall meet on the first Friday of each alternate month.
5. The Committee of Management may arrange other meetings or excursions, due notice of which must be given to the members.

6. The election of officers shall take place at the annual general meeting to be held in March of each year.
*All nominations shall be in the hands of the Secretary at least ten days previous to such meeting, or adjourned meeting.
 7. New members may be proposed and seconded by two members of the Association at any meeting and must be balloted for at the next evening meeting; one black ball in five to exclude.
 8. The entrance fee shall be five shillings and the annual subscription two shillings and sixpence.
*The entrance fee shall be five shillings and the annual subscription fifteen shillings to begin from March, 1914.
 9. A record book shall be kept in charge of the Secretary, to which all members shall at convenient times have access, and in which they may record any ornithological observations of interest they may make.
 10. The business at general meetings shall be the election of officers and new members, the reading of papers, and the exhibition of specimens, and general discussion of ornithological matters.
 11. At general meetings three shall form a quorum, at committee meetings two shall form a quorum.
 12. These rules may not be altered, added to, or rescinded, except on a written motion presented and signed by two members at an evening meeting, and confirmed on the next subsequent evening meeting by a two-thirds majority of those present.
- * Subsequent additions to rules.

Some of the more important work done during the fourteen years' life of the South Australian Ornithological Association may not be without interest.

This Association has since its inception stood:—Firstly, for the protection of our native birds, a most important work, as many of them are insectivorous, making their principal if not their only food of pests, which, if not checked would seriously injure if not ruin our forests and greatly diminish our crops. Others are seed eaters and consume enormous quantities of the seeds of thistles and other weeds, thus preventing their spreading so rapidly. Others again are scavengers, eating dead animals, thereby arresting the spread of disease among our stock. Again others are the enemies of snakes, snails, etc., and lastly

the cormorants feed on the enemies of our fish although fishermen do not all recognize it.

We have watched the close season for our game birds, made suggestions for its improvement, encouraged and assisted the police in prosecutions against offenders taking or destroying these birds while breeding. We have noticed the export of cage birds, which is a large business. It is obvious that were it not for an enthusiastic body of men constantly watching over these matters, it would be very few years before there would be no game birds for our sportsmen and no finches or parrots available for export. This Association has also been a formidable enemy to the plume hunters, men who would shoot the egret on her nest, exterminate our robins, wrens, and bee eaters for the decoration of women's hats, and when they find that public opinion is against them, roused by the work of bird protection associations, would try and dispose of their spoils as artificial.

Secondly the study of our avifauna. Much information has been gained regarding the habits, food, etc., of our birds, which without systematic endeavour would have been impossible, e.g. it was recorded by Mr. J. W. Mellor that under a tree at the Reedbeds, frequented by a pair of the delicate owl *strix delicatula*, were to be found large numbers of the quids ejected by these birds, on examination of which he had found them to contain a great number of sparrow, and mouse heads, also the remains of several rats. In all over 200 of these quids were examined and not one contained the remains of any native bird.

The first work of note the association engaged in was the protection of the birds on our forest reserves. These reserves were really waste land leased for grazing purposes, and no particular care was taken of the timber thereon. Anyone could come along, get a permit from the lessee, who was called caretaker, and for a nominal fee, cut any timber that suited his purpose. The birds were not protected, and as a rule these reserves formed happy hunting grounds for anybody who had a gun.

The forest reserves are now under the control of the conservator of forests, many hundred thousand trees have been planted, timber is cut systematically under the management of a permanent caretaker, and they have all been gazetted bird sanctuaries under The Birds Protection Act of 1900.

Then closely followed the Birds Protection Act of 1900. The members were not only largely instrumental in getting the

comprehensive list of birds put into the first schedule, but had to fight and fight hard for the inclusion of almost every species. The second schedule was still more difficult, quite a number of these birds are apt to damage crops at times when their natural food is scarce and members of Parliament representing country interests, saw only the harm they did, and could only be apprised of the good they do, by a body of ornithologists. Finally the section relating to bird sanctuaries was considered by a certain section of the House to be a copy of the British Game Laws which they hoped would never be introduced into Australia. However, the early members of the Association, much to their credit, got it passed.

At the meeting of this Association on September 11th, 1899, Mr. A. J. Campbell, F.L.S., was present as a visitor. A conference was held with this gentleman regarding the formation of an Australasian Ornithological Union to hold annual meetings in the capitals of the various colonies.

The idea was warmly supported, but the members thought it advisable that the local Associations should still continue their work, thereby keeping up local interest; and that these societies should appoint delegates to attend the inter-colonial congresses. Mr. Campbell thanked the South Australian Association for its suggestion, and congratulated South Australia on having such a society, more especially as it was the first of its kind in Australia.

The following year a representative of this Association went to Melbourne to attend the preliminary meeting, to consider the formation of this proposed inter-colonial union. At this meeting the "Australasian Ornithologists' Union," since rechristened "The Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union," by Royal command, was formed and a committee appointed to draw up rules, to be presented to the various colonies for approval.

At the annual meeting of the R.A.O.U. at Hobart in 1906, Mr. J. W. Mellor and Captain S. A. White advocated the introduction of the lyre bird into Tasmania and the mallee fowl into Kangaroo Island, as they felt that ere long the foxes would have depleted these beautiful birds, nearly if not quite, to extinction. It seemed to them that these birds were admirably suited to these localities; where they would be free from the ravages of this rapidly increasing pest. This suggestion was taken up by the South Australian Association as far as Kangaroo Island is concerned. The introduction of the lyre bird

into Tasmania unfortunately, so far, has been neglected. The first thing to be done was to get the lighthouse reserve at Cape Borda gazetted a bird sanctuary. This was successfully accomplished. (It has since been considerably enlarged). Then the more difficult task of securing the birds, taking them to the spot, and liberating them had to be faced. At the instigation of members several gentlemen willingly gave subscriptions, the society voted most of its surplus funds for the purpose and the Government gave £10. It was ascertained that Mr. Bellchambers of the Humbug Scrub, north-east of Adelaide, had been successful in trapping the mallee fowl during breeding season, a permit was secured to allow him to obtain some, and in the spring of 1910 he was able to trap six birds. These were bought by the Association and forwarded to Mr. Mellor, who kept them at the Reedbeds till the Marine Board was sending a steamer to the lighthouse at Cape Borda with stores, when the President kindly consented to allow them to be taken down free of charge, under the care of Mr. J. W. Mellor and liberated. The lighthouse keepers also interested themselves in the work, and gave every possible assistance. The following year Mr. Mellor heard that some farmers, Messrs. Perry Bros. of the Cleve Ranges, Eyre's Peninsula, had some mallee fowl so tame, that they regularly came to feed with their poultry; he immediately wrote to them asking if he might catch some to be liberated on Kangaroo Island, and joyfully received the reply that he might do so. He accordingly journeyed to the spot and succeeded in netting seven birds. These were brought to Adelaide, housed for a month at his home at the Reedbeds, and safely liberated near Cape Borda by him personally through the courtesy of the President of the Marine Board. It is very difficult to find out how these birds are taking to their new home, but fairly recently their tracks were observed about seven miles from where they were set free. In April 1910, Mr. A. G. Edquist, a member of the Association, and head of the nature study in State schools brought forward a scheme for training the children with a view to make them observant bird lovers. A league was formed called "The Gould League for the Protection of Birds," school clubs were formed (these clubs were optional among the scholars); and the Association gave a silver challenge cup for competition in essays on bird life. The cup to be held by the winning school for the ensuing twelve months. This league is doing incalculable good as the desire to kill birds and rob their nests is gradually becoming eliminated. This movement has already become an important fac-

tor for bird protection and as time goes on will become more so. There are now in the State 346 school clubs, with about 11,000 members.

In conclusion it may be interesting to give a list of the sanctuaries gazetted under the Birds Protection Act of 1900, although it may be incomplete.

These I think are all owing to recommendations from this Association.

All forest reserves, the principal of which are Wirrabara, Kuitpo, Narracoorte, Warunda, etc., Explosives magazine reserve, Dangerous Reef, Page's Islands off Kangaroo Island, Islands in the upper Coorong, Islands in Coffins, Mount Dutton, and Kellidie Bays, Cape Borda reserve, Waterfall Gully, Lake Bonney, Kensington Gardens.

The Avifauna of Melville Island, Northern Territory.

BY F. R. ZIETZ.

The following is a list with short descriptions of nine new subspecies of birds known to occur on Melville Island. This list has been compiled from those recorded by Mr. Gregory M. Mathews in "The Austral Avian Record," which were collected for him by Mr. J. P. Rogers. Mr. Mathews records 67 subspecies, to which I am now able to add 30, making a total of 97. These additional ones are in the South Australian Museum collection and were recently collected by Mr. W. D. Dodd, who was engaged to collect natural history specimens in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland. Mr. Dodd did exceedingly well in regard to birds for the short time that he spent on the island, as he had to attend to other branches of zoology besides ornithology. He landed on the island on the 7th of July and left again on the 30th August and collected altogether 85 species, the eggs of about 20, and several nests. After leaving Melville Island, Mr. Dodd visited Bathurst Island, where he also obtained several birds, which have not yet come to hand. He has now commenced to collect on the mainland. Specimens from the latter locality will be very welcome as they will prove valuable for compari-

son with insular forms. It will be noticed in this paper that several birds have been queried; this is due to not yet having their mainland representatives or sufficient material for comparison. In some instances no difference could be found, but others again showed a decidedly constant darker shade in plumage, and others were either larger or smaller than their mainland representatives. Those species prefixed by an asterisk had not been previously recorded, and those prefixed by an "O" were not contained in Mr. Dodd's collection.

All measurements are given in millimeters.

- 5a. *Megapodius duperreyi melvillensis*—Melville Island Scrub-Fowl.
- 16a. *Coturnix australis melvillensis*—Melville Island Brown Quail.
- 27a. *Turnix castanota melvillensis*—Melville Island Chestnut-backed Quail.
- 39a. *Ptilinopus regina melvillensis*—Melville Island Rose-crowned Pigeon.
- 43a. *Myristicivora bicolor melvillensis*—Melville Island Nutmeg Pigeon.
- 50a. *Geopelia humeralis apsleyi*—Melville Island Barred-shouldered Dove.
- 51a. *Geopelia placida melvillensis*—Melville Island Ground Dove.
- 57a. *Chalcophaps chrysochlora melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Green Pigeon.
 Crown of head and nape paler and wings longer than specimens from the Northern Territory, Cape York and Richmond River, New South Wales, length of wing 161, Northern Territory 150 and 151, Cape York 147, Richmond River 158.
- 59a. *Phaps chalcoptera riordani*—Melville Island Bronze-winged Pigeon.
- 69b. *Geophaps smithii cicilac*—Melville Island Naked-eyed Partridge Pigeon.
- 84a. *Eulabeornis castaneiventris melvilli*—Melville Island Rail.
- *212 *Hypsibates leucocephalus* subsp.? (immature)—White-headed Stilt.
- 240a. *Drediparra gallinacea melvillensis*—Northern Jacana.
- *241 *Stiltia isabella* subsp.? (immature)—Australian Pratincole.

- *246 *Burhinus magirostris* subsp.?—Stone Plover.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).
- o247a. *Esacus magirostris melvillensis*—Allied Long-billed Stone-plover.
- *282a. *Butorides javanica* subsp.?—Mangrove Bittern.
(No Northern Territory specimen for comparison).
- o287a. *Ardeiralla flavicollis melvillensis*—Melville Island Bittern.
- *291 *Anseranas semipalmata*—Pied Goose.
- o315a. *Carbo melanoleucus melvillensis*—Northern Little Cormorant.
- *333a. *Astur clarus robustus* subsp. n.—The Greater Northern Grey Goshawk.
This a much stronger-built bird than *Astur radiatus* from North Queensland, it has a stouter bill, longer and stouter legs and claws. The whole of the upper surface greyish brown, under surface white with greyish-brown markings; the throat is streaked; upper breast heavily blotched, lower breast sides of body and abdomen heavily barred, some of these bars washed with rufous; thighs with narrow and fainter cross-bars, undertailcoverts white, secondaries and tail feathers with faint blackish cross-bars. Iris and feet yellow, sex female, wing 288, tarsus 81. A female of *A. radiatus* from North Queensland measures wing 266 tarsus 74.
- 337a. *Astur fasciatus didimus*—Melville Island Goshawk.
- *353a. *Haliastur sphenurus territori*?—Northern Whistling Eagle.
Differs from South Australian and Victorian specimens in being much smaller and darker in the whole of the plumage. Sex, male, wing 377. Males from South Australia 402 and 416, Victoria 428.
- o369a. *Falco longipennis apseyi*—Northern Little Falcon.
- 371a. *Iracidea berrigora melvillensis*—Northern Brown Hawk.
- o375a. *Pandion haliaetus melvillensis*—Northern White-headed Osprey.
- 381a. *Ninox boobook melvillensis*—Red Boobook Owl.
- 394a. *Trichoglossus rubritorquis melvillensis*—Northern Red-collared Lorikeet.
- *407a. *Trichoglossus versicolour mellori*?—Varied Lorikeet.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

Much darker green throughout the whole of the plumage, the red of the crown of the head is not so vivid, and also a smaller bird in comparison to specimens from the Fitzroy River, N.W. Australia. Wing 114, N.W.A. specimens av. 125.

- *421b. *Calyptorhynchus banksii macrorhynchus?*—Great-billed Cockatoo.

These birds have a much stronger bill than specimens from N.W. Australia and may prove to be identical with the above.

(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- 428a. *Cacatoes galerita melvillensis*—Northern White Cockatoo.

- 433a. *Cacatoes sanguinea apsleyi*—Melville Island Bare-eyed Cockatoo.

- *451a. *Aprosmictus erythropterus melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Red-winged Parrot.

Much darker green and longer in the wing than specimens from the Northern Territory; crown of head and nape strongly washed with blue. Wing 185, N.T. specimens 175 and 180.

- o468a. *Platyercus venustus melvillensis*—Melville Island Smutty Parrot.

- 524a. *Podargus strigoides melvillensis*—Melville Island Frogmouth.

- *540b. *Acyone pusilla ramsayi?*—Northern Little Kingfisher
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- 548a. *Dacelo leachi nana*—Dwarf Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.

- 553a. *Halcyon macleayii publa*—Melville Island Forest Kingfisher.

- *556. *Halcyon sanctus* subsp.? (immature)—Sacred Kingfisher.

- 560a. *Halcyon sordidus melvillensis*—Northern Mangrove Kingfisher.

- *564a. *Merops ornatus* subsp.?—Bee-eater.

(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- 569a. *Caprimulgus macrurus* subsp.?—Large-tailed Nightjar.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- *581a. *Cuculus pyrrhophamus dumetorum?*—Fan-tailed Cuckoo.
(No Northern Territory specimens for comparison).

- *591. *Chrysococcyx minutillus melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Bronze Cuckoo.

Differs from *C. minutillus* in having the crown of head dark green, also the darker colouration of the

whole of the upper surface and tail, the latter showing very little rufous, and the black subterminal band being visible on the central tailfeathers. Wing 96.

*600a. *Centropus phasianus macrourus?*—Northern Coucal.
Two males, wing 230 and 241, male from Bellinger District, New South Wales, wing 210.

628a. *Microeca flavigaster melvillensis*—Melville Island
Lemon-breasted Flycatcher.

*645a. *Petroica cucullata melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Hooded Robin.

Differs from *P. cucullata subpicata* in its smaller size and in having its black markings as rich as those of Victorian and South Australian specimens of *P. cucullata vigorsi*. Wing 85, av., wing of *P. c. subpicata* 97.

653a. *Smicrornis brevirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island
Yellow-tinted Tree-Tit.

664a. *Gerygone magnirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island
Large-billed Fly-eater.

673b. *Gerygone chloronta apseyi*—Melville Island
Green-backed Fly-eater.

680a. *Pachycephala leucura greda*—Melville Island
White-tailed Shrike-Robin.

*687a. *Pachycephala gutturalis longirostris* subsp. n.—Long-billed Thickhead.

Tail black at base, slightly tipped with grey, wing 83, bill 17, specimen from Barron River, Queensland, has wing 88, bill 13.

*697a. *Pachycephala rufiventris minor* subsp. n.—Lesser Rufous-breasted Thickhead.

Similar in colouration of upper and lower surface to that of *P. r. inornata* from South Australia, but has less black on sides of head; tailfeathers black at their base instead of grey. Wing 89, wing of *P. r. inornata* 99.

704a. *Pachycephala grisola riordani*—Melville Island
Brown Thickhead.

*727 *Rhipidura rufifrons dryas*—Wood Fantail.

Apparently no difference between the insular and mainland specimens.

729a. *Rhipidura setosa melvillensis*—Melville Island
Fantail.

736a. *Myiagra rupecula melvillensis*—Melville Island
Blue Flycatcher.

- 739a. *Mniotilta latifrons cooperi*—Melville Island Broad-billed Flycatcher.
- 748a. *Monarcha allecto melvillensis*—Melville Island Shining Flycatcher.
- 761a. *Coracina novae-hollandiae didimus*—Melville Island Cuckoo-Shrike.
- 763a. *Coracina hypoleuca apseyi*—White-billed Cuckoo-Shrike.
- o769a. *Coracina tenuirostris melvillensis*—Melville Island Caterpillar-catcher.
- *774a. *Lalage leucomela gouldi*—Banded Caterpillar-eater. Apparently no difference between the insular and mainland specimens.
- 810a. *Pomatorhinus temporalis bamba*—Melville Island Red-breasted Babbler.
- o855a. *Acrocephalus australis melvillensis*—Northern Reed-wren.
- 858a. *Cisticola exilis melvillensis*—Allied Grass-Warbler.
- 865a. *Megalurus alisteri melvillensis*—Melville Island Grass Bird.
- 967a. *Malurus melanocephalus melvillensis*—Melville Island Red-backed Wren.
- 991a. *Artamus leucorhynchus melvillensis*—Melville Island White-rumped Wood Swallow.
- + *1011a. *Colluricincla brunnea melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Red-bellied Shrike Thrush. Upper and lower surface darker and bill thinner than in specimens from N.W. Australia. Wing 125.
- + *1015a. *Colluricincla parvula melvillensis* subsp. n.—Melville Island Little Shrike-Thrush. Upper surface much darker and bill longer than mainland specimens. Wing 95-101, bill 22-23, mainland specimen, wing 93, bill 20.
- 1031a. *Cracticus quoyi* subsp.?—Allied Butcher Bird. (No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1037. *Cracticus nigrogularis picatus*—Pied Butcher Bird. Apparently no difference between insular and mainland specimens.
- 1073b. *Neositta pileata melvillensis*—Melville Island White-winged Tree-runner.
- *1111 *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* subsp.?—Mistletoe Bird. Only one female collected.

- 1131a. *Pardalotus melanocephalus melvillensis*—Melville Island Orange-rumped Pardalote.
- 1141a. *Melithreptus lunulatus gradus*—Melville Island White-naped Honey-eater.
- 1162a. *Myzomela erythrocephala melvillensis*—Melville Island Red-headed Honey-eater.
- 1169a. *Myzomela obscura apsleyi*—Melville Island Dusky Honey-eater.
- 1185b. *Gliciphila fasciata apsleyi*—Melville Island White-breasted Honey-eater.
- 1200a. *Stigmatops indistincta melvillensis*—Melville Island Least Honey-eater.
- 1218a. *Ptilotis sonora cooperi*—Melville Island Singing Honey-eater.
1253. *Ptilotis flavescens melvillensis*—Melville Island Yellow-tinted Honey-eater.
- 1265a. *Ptilotis unicolor brenda*—Melville Island White-gaped Honey-eater.
- o1293a. *Myzantha flavigula melvillensis*—Melville Island Yellow Minah.
- 1312a. *Entomyzon cyanotis apsleyi*—Melville Island White-quilled Honey-eater.
- 1315a. *Philemon argenticeps melvillensis*—Melville Island Friar-Bird.
- 1316b. *Philemon buceroides gordonii*—Melville Island Helmeted Friar-Bird.
- 1323a. *Philemon orientalis brenda*—Melville Island Little Friar-Bird.
- o1331. *Anthus australis rogersi*—Melville Island Pipit.
- o1339. *Mirafra javanica melvillensis*—Northern Bush Lark.
- o1357. *Munia castancothorax apsleyi*—Melville Island Dark-breasted Finch.
- *1387 *Oriolus sagittatus affinis?*—Oriole.
(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1389 *Oriolus flavocinctus flavocinctus?*—Yellow Oriole.
(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).
- *1398 *Dicrurus bracteatus subsp.?*—Spangled Drongo.
According to Mathews in "Novitates Zoologicae" Vol. 18, p. 437 *D. bracteatus baileyi* of the Northern Territory differs from *D. b. bracteatus* in its larger wing—161. Only one Northern Territory specimen

at present in the South Australian Museum collection, wing 144, three specimens from the Clarence River N.S.W., 157, 158 and 170, one from the Tweed River N.S.W., 161; one male from Melville 152. More material required for comparison.

1414a. *Chlamydera nuchalis melvillensis*—Melville Island Bower-Bird.

*1423 *Corvus coronoides* subsp.?—Crow.

(No Northern Territory mainland specimens for comparison).

[It is the intention of this paper to accurately and completely describe one South Australian bird in every issue, beginning with the commoner.]

Order Passeriformes, Family Muscicapidae.

Rhipidura tricolor—The Black and White Fantail.

Adult.—All the upper surface black, over each eye a conspicuous line of white narrowing to a point posteriorly. Chin, throat, and upper part of breast black, the feathers of the chin and throat minutely tipped with white, the rest of the under surface white. Wing—Lesser upper coverts black, median and greater coverts brownish black the five outermost tipped with dull white, spurian wing dull black, primaries and secondaries blackish brown, the outer web of each feather darker than the inner, the last two secondaries black. Under wing coverts black, the outermost tipped with white. Thighs, black with an indistinct edging of white at the knee. Tail, black, the feathers showing indistinct transverse barring in certain lights. Bill iris and feet black.

Total length 210 m.m., culmen 11.5 m.m., Wing 96 m.m., Tail 106 m.m., Tarsus 25 m.m.

The sexes are alike in colour. Young birds have the white stippling under the jaw more marked than in adults. The white line over the eye varies much, in some specimens it is almost absent.

The black and white flycatcher or fantail is more generally known as the wagtail or shepherds companion. It is distri-

buted throughout Australia and is found upon some of the neighbouring islands. They are still common even in the city of Adelaide, nearly every garden of any size having its resident pair of birds which drive away all others of their own species, even their own young are chased away as soon as they are able to look after themselves, for this reason there is seldom more than one pair in each garden. They are familiar birds and if not interfered with soon become tame enough to come into verandahs and even rooms. They spend much of their time upon the ground and may often be seen on lawns and grassy places making short runs with wings half spread, lightning-like twists and turns and short leaps into the air as they capture some insect on the wing. They are forever on the move, the long tail now shut now open like a fan and wagged from side to side or revolved as though upon a pivot, never moved up and down as with the true wagtails. A favourite haunt is near the head of feeding horses, cattle, and sheep, to catch the harvest of flying insects disturbed by the browsing animals.

They are pugnacious birds; they will attack cats, dogs, hawks, or anything which meet with their disapproval. A pair has been known to line their nest with the fur stolen from a live cat, and Mr. C. F. Rischbieth has a pair in his garden at Glenelg, which have the house cats in complete subjection. Directly a cat appears on the lawn the wagtails attack and drive him off again, the birds will even light on the cat's back. On one occasion at Seaton golf links a pair kept a nankeen kestrel on a tree afraid to move for a quarter of an hour or more, they kept hovering over him and directly he opened his wings they darted furiously at his head. Occasionally a cat secures one, but not often.

Their song is not unpleasant but monotonous, it has been compared to the words "Sweet pretty creature," and also to "Willie split his breeches." On moonlight nights they sing all night and if near a bedroom window they become an intolerable nuisance. The alarm note is a harsh chatter.

Nest building begins in September and goes on until the end of December and sometimes later. The nest is usually placed within a few feet of the ground but is sometimes as much as 30 feet up. It is built on a horizontal limb or fork, dead wood for preference, when near a creek it is usually placed on a branch overhanging water. When semi-domesticated they will build in almost any situation such as the rafters of a shed or veran-

dab, the bight of a loop of rope (specimen in the Adelaide Museum), or the leaves of a prickly pear. A pair have been known to build on a beam over the stampers of a quartz crushing mill.

The nest is cup-shaped and built of strips of bark and dried grasses bound together with cobweb; it is lined with fine grasses and sometimes a little sheep's wool, rabbit fur, or horse hair. When the young are hatched the old birds will attack anything or anybody that comes near their nest. They are at first careful to carry off all droppings and let them fall at some distance from the nest but as the young grow older they become less particular and the nest and vicinity become much fouled. When flushed from the nest the parent bird runs or flutters along the ground as though on broken legs. Two and occasionally three broods are reared in a season, sometimes the same nest is repaired and used for all the broods and sometimes a new one is built. Sometimes it is rebuilt, on an adjacent branch of material from the old nest. There is a specimen in the Adelaide Museum of four successive nests built on top of each other. Three or four eggs are laid for a setting; the eggs are of a creamy white ground colour, with a zone of black, dark brown, and purplish brown spots at the larger end, the purplish spots look as if beneath the surface of the shell. The zone is sometimes about the middle of the egg and sometimes at the smaller end. They are sometimes hosts to the pallid cuckoo and narrow-billed bronze cuckoo. The average measurements of 18 eggs is 19.5 m.m. x 14.3 m.m., largest egg, 21 m.m. x 15 m.m., smallest egg, 18 m.m. x 14 m.m.

+ *Halcyon macleayii cœruleus* subsp. n.—The Northern Forest Kingfisher.

By EDWIN ASHBY, R.A.O.U.

The specimen described hereunder was obtained at Anson Bay, Northern Territory, in 1911, by my friend Mr. C. E. May, a gentleman to whom our State museum and myself have been indebted for many interesting ornithological specimens.

In the South Australian Museum is an immature specimen of the same species collected by Mr. May at Port Keats in the Northern Territory.

This immature specimen shows the same distinctive colouration as is present in the adult form except that it is speckled with pale rufous spots in the manner that is common to immature forms of other species belonging to the genus *Halcyon*.

DESCRIPTION.

Head, primaries and tail as in *Halcyon macleayii* (J. and S.) Greater, median and lesser wing coverts and mantle, brilliant azure to shot blue. Upper and lower back brilliant shot blue. Rump and uppertail coverts are an intense brilliant blue. Some of the deeper shades of blue in the wing coverts of *Pitta iris gl'd* most nearly approach this shade of blue of any bird I am familiar with. Total length, 7.8 inches; culmen, 1.6 inches; tarsus, .5 inch; wing, 3.6 inches; bill, more slender than in *H. macleayii*; feet black.

Remarks.—This subspecies is easily distinguished from its congener *H. macleayii* by its much more intense and brilliant blue colouration, the green shades of the latter are entirely absent and the white collar of the hind-neck is more marked in the species under review. The specimen being a formalined one is unsexed though no doubt it is a male.

Further investigation may show this bird to be identical with *Halcyon macleayii distinguendus*—Matthews.

Novitates Zoologicae, Vol. 18, p. 288, 1911 eds.

A Note on *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* and the *Loranthus* seed.

BY A. M. MORGAN.

I have on two occasions witnessed a *Dicaeum* deposit the seed of the *Loranthus*. The first occasion was near Black Hill in October, 1900. I was watching a male *Dicaeum* when I suddenly noticed that something was adhering to the feathers of the vent. The bird flew to a neighbouring branch (which happened to be that of a mistletoe) applied the object to it, and then fluttering away left it adherent to the branch. I examined the object and found it to be a *Loranthus* seed with its sticky covering undigested. The second occasion was at Blackwood on October 7, 1908. I was watching a female *Dicaeum* building a nest in a wattle tree, the male took no part in the nest build-

ing but kept guard in a small dead tree nearby and fiercely attacked and chased away any other birds coming near the nest. Among others a new Holland Honey-eater and a Lunulated Honey-eater, birds both much larger than itself. At one time the male sat on a branch within 6 feet of me, I then saw a seed passed and transferred to the branch exactly as on the first occasion. Later on examining the small dead tree, on which the bird was perched most of the time, I found hundreds of seeds sticking to the branches, sometimes three or four in a row, they evidently having been passed together. I examined the first seed on several later dates, and although it germinated it did not take root, probably because it was upon old bark and the seed requires young and succulent bark to get a footing.

Loranthus seed will germinate anywhere. I have twice found it germinating upon bare granite in the Gawler Ranges and once upon the dead branch of a myall, on each of these occasions the seeds were mixed with droppings. The green shoot which springs from the seed is the radicle, this grows upwards, develops an expanded sucker like end, and then turns downwards and applies itself to the substance upon which it is deposited if this should be tender young bark. I presume that rootlets penetrate the bark of the host if it be succulent enough, but I have not myself observed this. From these observations I conclude that the seed is not regurgitated but is passed in the usual manner, and that the sticky covering is indigestible and serves not only to retain the seed upon the branch but also makes the seed adhere to the feathers of the birds vent and thus gives it a good chance of being deposited in a favourable situation and not dropped haphazard as would otherwise be the case.

Current Observations.

Fantailed Cuckoo Breeding near Adelaide.

BY J. W. MELLOR.

The fantailed cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) of Gould and (*Cuculus rubricalus*) of Mathews is a well-known visitor to the Adelaide plains and the surrounding hills during the winter months, but generally departs as the warmer weather of spring

approaches, and some doubt existed amongst ornithologists as to whether it bred here or not, but all doubts have been dispelled this season when I was successful in finding the egg of this bird in the nest of *Acanthiza pusilla*, it being discovered at Mount Lofty, S.A., on the 10th October, 1913, there being three eggs of the tit, which was sitting on the nest; this was built in a prickly furze bush, about 3 feet from the ground, being domed, and roughly constructed of grass and shreaded bark from the stringy bark, gums, roughly woven, and little pieces of moss stuck outside, lined with a few small feathers, and a little animal's fur, being partly suspended. Measuring outside 4 inches wide, by 7 inches deep, and inside 2 inches wide, by 2½ inches deep, the entrance was somewhat large for the size of the little bird, being 1½ inches in diameter, and may have been enlarged by the cuckoo in depositing the egg.

FROM H. E. LAFFER, ROSEWORTHY AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The Black-tailed native hen is making its appearance here once again after an interval of several years, and quite a number of them are to be seen in small flocks.

In September I obtained a specimen of the Marsh Tern, a bird most unusual in these parts. Also about the same time I obtained a Brush Wattle Bird (*Annelobia chrysoptera*) the only one of its kind I have ever noted here.

The Bee Eater (*Merops ornatus*) is now appearing and may be found on the sandy pine ridges.

There are several pairs of the Rufous-breasted thickhead in one portion of the pine scrub raising their young broods and making the bush ring with their beautiful notes. Another unusual bird for this district I noted several times recently and that was a Bronze Wing Pigeon.

Observation of Laughing Jackass (*Dacelo gigas*).

BY C. L. CROMPTON.

On Monday 1st September, my sister and I were sitting in the front verandah at Stonyfell, in the early afternoon, our attention was attracted to a large leafless tree close by, by a tapping, which we at once saw was made by a laughing jackass


breaking the head of a snake against one of the branches nearest to us, not more than 30 or 40 feet away. We were much excited and at first did not move lest he should fly away. After watching him some minutes my sister went in doors to call the other members of the household—all four came and enjoyed the wonderful sight of the jackass quietly and steadily breaking every bone in the snake beginning at the head. He snapped his beak right along to the tail moving the creature from left to right and then from right to left back to the head again. This he did three times, sitting quite still apparently, so intent that he neither saw nor cared if we were watching him. The first time the snake passed through the beak we could hear the crushing of bones, and the snake was in contracted curves, and each time as it was passed between the bill it hung in a straighter line till finally it hung like a piece of tape, we thought between eighteen inches and two feet long.

This done he dextrously turned the head into his beak and swallowed rapidly, till about six inches of the tail was left hanging down on the right side of the beak, he having his back turned towards us. For some minutes he sat quite still, then a few vigorous chuckles and it was swallowed, he carefully wiping his bill against the branch of the tree to right and left. We laughed and talked and after a minute or two more, he flew to a tree about 35 or 40 yards away looking very heavy and slow in his flight. There he settled to comfortably enjoy his very hearty meal.

Afterwards we learned that the gardener saw the bird pick up his prize in the vineyard where they were ploughing. He took it to be a large frog, so it must have been coiled up. This contradicts the theory that the laughing jackass kills its prey by dropping it on the ground from a height.







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J. H. Riley

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Corrections for Vol. I., No. 1.

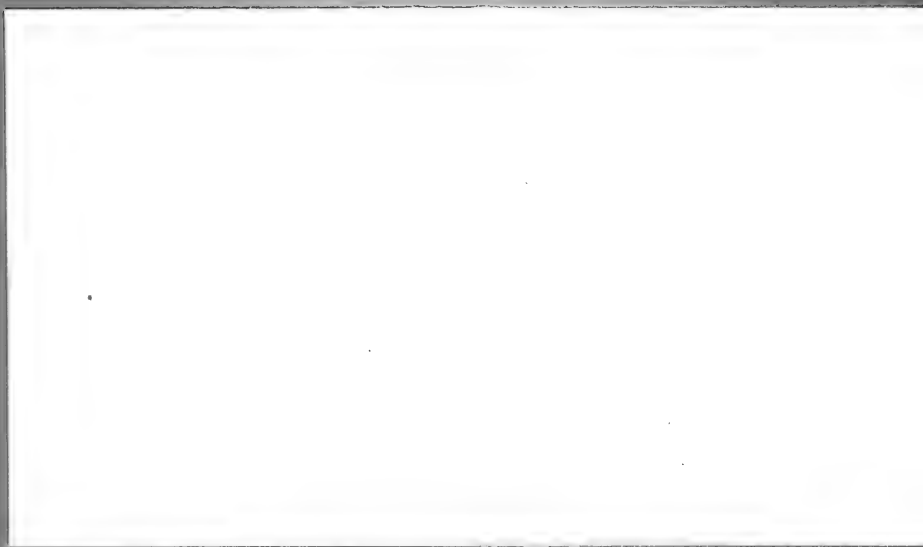
Page 12, 10th line, read millimeters instead of millemeters.

Page 13, 15th line, read *clarus* instead of *radiatus*

Page 13, 25th line, read *clarus clarus* instead of *radiatus radiatus*

Page 15, 5th line, read *phasianinus* instead of *phasianus*

Page 17, 3rd line, read *lunatus* instead of *lunulatus*

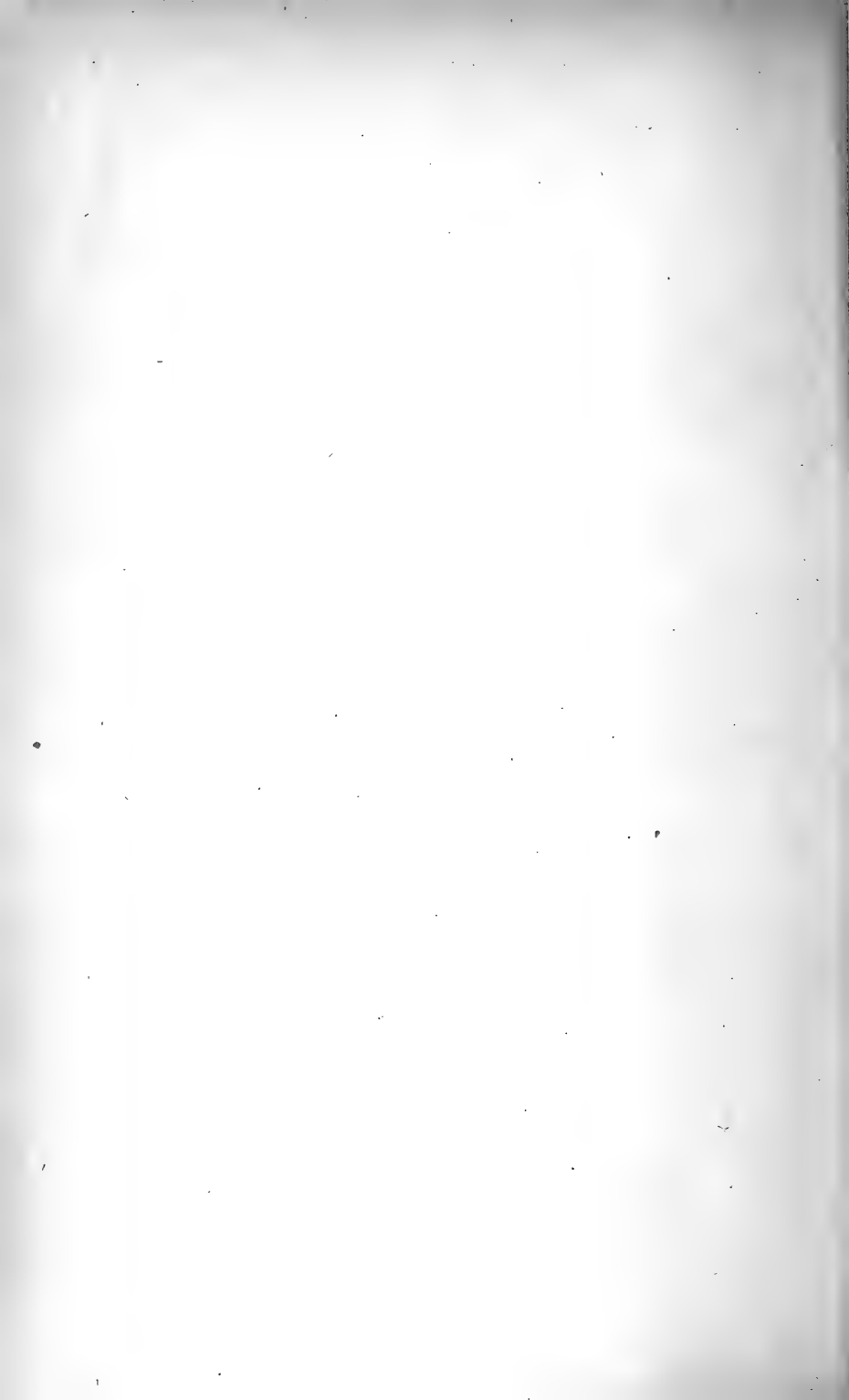


THE
South Australian
ORNITHOLOGIST.



Editorial Committee :

Messrs. F. R. ZIETZ (President)
A. M. MORGAN
S. A. WHITE
R. CROMPTON



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South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. I.]

APRIL, 1914.

[PART 2.

Order Picariae, Sub-order Halcyones, Family Alcedinidae, Genus Dacelo, Species Dacelo gigas.

THE LAUGHING JACKASS.

UPPER SURFACE.

Forehead.—Light brown, each feather barred with dark brown.

Crown.—Dark brown, barred and tipped with black in the centre, dull white at the sides, feathers elongated to form an erectile crest.

Occiput.—Dull white, stippled with black.

Hind Neck.—A line of dull white feathers, largely tipped with dull black.

Lores.—Dull white, line of feathers under the eye and over its upper two-thirds dull black.

Ear Coverts.—Dull black.

Lower Neck and Upper Back.—Dull white, forming a broad collar.

Back.—Between the shoulders dull black; lower back greyish white, finely barred with black.

Upper Tail Coverts.—Bright brown barred with black, with a faint wash of metallic blue in old birds.

UNDER SURFACE.

Chin and Neck.—White.

Breast and Abdomen.—White, faintly barred with black.

Flanks.—White, finely barred with black.

Under Tail Coverts.—White, the bases faintly barred with black.

Wing.—Bases of first seven primaries white, the white more extensive on the inner webs, extremities black, the outer webs washed with metallic blue. Secondaries, dull brown, slightly tipped with white, the inner webs broadly edged with white, outer webs washed with metallic blue.

Lesser Coverts.—Dull brown.

Median and Greater Coverts.—Dark brown, largely tipped with light metallic blue.

Tail.—Two central feathers reddish brown, strongly barred with black, and slightly tipped with white. The other feathers the same, except that the white tips become progressively larger to the outermost.

Bill.—Upper mandible black, lower yellowish white.

Legs and Feet.—Brown.

Iris.—Brown.

The female resembles the male.

MEASUREMENTS.—

Total Length.—450 m.m.

Wing.—202 m.m.

Tail.—166 m.m.

Culmen.—74 m.m.

Tarsus.—21 m.m.

Young birds resemble the parents, except that in them the cross barring of the breast feathers is more marked. The white at the sides of the head and back of neck is brownish.

Distribution.—South Australia, as far north as Port Augusta, Victoria, New South Wales, and Southern Queensland. They are not found in Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, or Western Australia.

Although a very common bird in the big timber country, it is seldom found on scrub or pine lands, and never far away from the big gumtrees. They seem to prefer hilly country. They are very local birds, one pair living all their lives on quite a small area. This is well illustrated at the Reedbeds, near Adelaide, where these birds were once exterminated, and years afterwards Messrs. William White and J. W. Mellor reintroduced a few pairs, where they have taken up their abode in the old red gumtrees along the river and are slowly increasing in numbers. Capt. White estimates that there are now about twenty birds.

They live in small companies or probably in families, separating during the day to feed, and congregating just after sunset to roost. As they meet they render their part song, which has been compared to a loud, hoarse, coarse laugh, but which to the settler is a merry good-night; one bird beginning, followed by another, and then they all join in the chorus. This is continued till it is quite dark, or even later. The jackass is also the first bird to awake in the morning, its merry note pealing out before one recognizes that the dawn is breaking. It is usually about a quarter of an hour before the next bird awakes.

Food.—Beetles, spiders, grubs, mice, lizards, small birds, especially the young taken from the nest and the fresh water crayfish or yabbies (*Astacopsis bicarinatus*), for which it dives, catching them in water up to two feet in depth. Capt. White mentions that he has seen a jackass, after an hour's hard work, beat a full-grown rat to pulp and swallow it. It has been noted that he does not eat his food except on the ground or on a large flat horizontal branch of a tree. This bird will sit motionless on the low branch of a tree for hours watching intently. Suddenly he will fly to the ground, give two or three vigorous pecks at the ground, shaking his head after each, to detach the earth from his bill, then throwing his body back on his tail he will extract a large earthworm, with which he will return to his branch, pound it to pulp, and swallow it.

They swallow their pounded food whole, ejecting the indigestible portions (bones, hair, &c.) in quids.

If unmolested they become very tame, and if food be placed out for them they readily learn to come for it. They can easily be taught to come regularly, almost at the same time each day.

Flight.—Very straight, not undulating, long, even, slow-wing movement. On alighting they throw the head back a little and elevate the tail, and usually utter a few gurgles. The tail is kept slowly moving up and down like a pump handle for a few minutes after settling. It is not jerked like that of a rail, but moves with slow, regular beats.

Nesting Place.—A hollow spout in a gumtree, usually high up. Sometimes they hollow out a hole for themselves in a rotten tree. They make no nest, but lay on the wood dust in the bottom of the hollow. The eggs are two or three in

number, almost round, and white in colour, becoming creamy white as incubation proceeds. They are laid in September, October, and November. Before the eggs are hatched these birds are very shy, quietly leaving the nest on the approach of danger. When their young are hatched they become fierce and plucky, attacking any intruder, whether it be bird, beast, or man.

When the young are taken from the nest they are easily reared and tamed. A pair owned by Dr. Morgan for two years were never seen to drink, although they liked to bathe in the summer. When angry, or on defence against the cat, they elevate the feathers on the scalp, like a crest, and open the beak widely. This tame pair used to catch sparrows by pretending to sleep near the watering place and pouncing on their prey when they came to drink.

They are totally protected under the Birds Protection Act of 1900, as they kill large numbers of young snakes, caterpillars, and grubs. The only harm they have ever been known to do is taking young birds.

Melithreptus gularis loftyi—Southern Black-chinned Honey Eater.

BY S. A. WHITE.

This large melithreptus is a resident at the Reedbeds, where it breeds. Although they as a rule only call in the nesting season or about the time the early rains fall, still they are to be met with silently hunting amongst the gum tops at almost any time of the year. The call is a very loud one, and very distinctive of the species. It is a very pleasing one to me, because it is associated with my early childhood. When quite a child I remember my father telling me "to listen to the call of the melithreptus." The call is invariably made when upon the wing. As a rule these birds fly high and become very active, and calling loudly after rain. A small party of five or six will congregate in the top of a high gum, then fly high in the air, fluttering their wings and warbling together. At times they are almost all touching one another, some of them, presumably the males, calling loudly all the time. The nest is very difficult to find. It is generally

situated in the overhanging topmost branches of a very high gum, and strange to say the hair used in the construction of the nest is always white. I have repeatedly watched these birds procuring the material for their nests. They will fly on to a cow and cling to the belly or the sides (always on to a white patch) and pull vigorously at the coat till a bill full of white hair is secured, then they fly away with great speed, making it almost impossible to tell in which direction their nest is situated. Last nesting season a bird came into the stockyard two or three times within an hour and took hair from a black cow which had a white streak right under the belly, and to this white line the bird hung back downwards while it plucked out the white hairs. During the last nesting season these birds for the first time to my knowledge had the audacity to procure their nesting material from a partly white cat. They persecuted the cat so severely that it often cried out with rage, and may be pain.

They seem of a gregarious habit, and very often a party of eight or ten are seen moving from one treetop to another.*

Field Notes on Three Species of *Malurus* (Blue Wrens).

BY A. M. MORGAN.

Malurus lamberti assimilis (*Blue-breasted Wren*)—This bird inhabits the drier parts of the State. It is fairly common in the Murray scrub, on both sides of the Flinders Range, and on Yorke's Peninsula. A nearly allied sub-species inhabits the Gawler Ranges.

Dry water courses and scrubby sandhills are its favourite homes. They are never to be seen on the open plains. They are rather shy, and consequently not easy to observe. The song is a kind of trill-like "chicity, chicity, chicity, &c.," uttered very rapidly seven or eight times. Both sexes sing, the notes being alike.

When the male is courting his mate he erects the feathers of the head, puffs out the breast feathers, half spreads the

*After writing the above Dr. Morgan reminded me of a strange trait in this birds' character which I had often noticed but had forgotten, namely, the habit of clinging on to the stems of gumtrees and pulling off the bark in search of insects after the manner of *Climacteris* (Tree creepers).—S. A. W.

wings, and depresses the tail. At these times the song is a subdued churring noise.

Both sexes assist in building the nest, but the female does most of the work, the share of the male being confined to bringing a piece of material now and then.

The nest is built either on or close to the ground between the stems of some thick bush or in the small twigs of a fallen shrub. Externally it is composed of old dried grass stems, and the lining is rabbit fur, with a few horsehairs. A nest found at Kallioota, Lake Torrens, measured—height, 6 inches; egg cavity, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, hole of entrance 2 inches x $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The hole of entrance is placed near the top, and the eggs or setting bird can just be seen without enlarging it. Three nests found building at Kallioota were all deserted, and the material carried away, although none of them was touched or even closely examined. I found in all five nests at Kallioota between August 2nd and August 21, 1912. The eggs are two to four in number. Their food consists largely of ants, though they will eat any kind of small insect.

Malurus cyanotus (*White-winged Wren*)—This is a bird of the saltbush plains. I believe they are to be found in all parts of South Australia where these plains exist. Sapphire or blue bush flats are also favourite haunts. The male can often be seen perched on the summit of a bush uttering his song and then diving down again out of sight. The female is more retiring. The song which is uttered by both sexes is like a very miniature spring rattle.

The nest is placed in a salt or blue bush six to eight inches from the ground, and occasionally in the thin twigs of a fallen shrub at the edge of the plain. It is made of fresh dried grasses and thin saltbush twigs and lined with rabbits' fur and an occasional feather. In one I found a feather of the narrow billed bronze cuckoo. The nest is completely domed, and the hole of entrance near the top is small and round, so that the setting bird or eggs are completely hidden.

The eggs are three or four in number. In one nest I found an egg of the narrow billed bronze cuckoo, together with three of the host. I found eight nests at Kallioota between August 10 and August 25, 1912. In one case the male was not in full plumage, having no blue feathers and only

a few white ones upon the wings. They are not at all shy about their nests. Two I found building and put my finger into, subsequently had eggs laid in them. Their food consists of ants and other small insects.

Malurus melanotus callainus (*Turquoise Wren*)—This bird likes the scrub-covered sandhills or thick, low scrub of any kind. They rarely wander on to the plains. The brilliant male is a very conspicuous object, and not at all shy. The male when courting the female ruffs out the feathers of the head and breast and spreads the wings in the same way as *M. lamberti assimilis* and utters the same kind of churring note. The ordinary song of both sexes is like "chic, chic, chic, chicity, chicity, chicity," uttered very rapidly from the top of a small bush or dry branch of a shrub. They spend much of their time on the ground hunting for ants and other small insects.

The female does most of the nest building, the male occasionally contributing a piece of material. I found five nests at Kallioota between August 15 and August 25, 1912. They were all built upon the ground in the end twigs of fallen bushes. All these nests were largely built of sheep's wool mingled with a few pieces of dry grass and herbage. The lining was of rabbits' fur. The nest is only semi-domed. The eggs or sitting bird are plainly visible without disturbing the nest. Two nests which I found building were not deserted. A nest found building on August 15 contained three slightly incubated eggs on August 28, so I should think it took about ten days in the making. One nest contained an egg of the narrow billed bronze cuckoo, together with two of the host. The eggs are three or four in number. In all the nests of these three species which I found, the female was sitting.

Note on the Southern Black-headed Minah (*Myzantha melanocephala whitei*).

BY F. R. ZIETZ.

These birds are usually found in the hilly districts, and rarely met with on the Adelaide Plains. A flock of about a dozen visits our garden, which is in the suburb of Kingswood, a little over a mile as the crow flies from the foot of the Mount Lofty Ranges. They make their appearance in the winter

and remain with us till about the end of October, when they evidently leave for the hills to breed. As the summer approaches they become very pugnacious amongst themselves. You will often see five or six chasing one another from tree to tree whilst they utter their familiar cry. Noisy fights often take place, when several of them will ball together and fall to the ground. They will then rise one after the other and continue their pursuit. Their natural food consists of honey and insects, but to my surprise I found them to visit a refuse heap in an adjoining yard, where they greedily devoured soaked bread, boiled potatoes, and other table scraps.

Additions to "A List of the Birds of Australia."

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E.

P. 117.

Tyto galei, sp. n.

Upper surface freckled with dark brown and white, darker on the mantle. Tail white, crossed by five or six dark-brown bands, which become almost obsolete towards the outer pair. Primaries freckled and banded with dark brown, the innermost web white. Under surface of body and wings white, with a few indistinct specks of brown. The sty feathers of the disc white, tipped with brown. Face white, and spot in front of eye brown.

Total length measured in the flesh $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Type, a male collected on the Pascoe River, North Queensland, 16th July, 1913.

Named in honour of Capt. Gale.

Macgillivrayornis, gen. n.

Bill equal to the head in length. First primary half the length of second, which is two-thirds the length of the third; fourth, fifth, and sixth equal and longest.

Type *Macgillivrayornis claudi* (see below).

Named in honour of Dr. W. Macgillivray, of Broken Hill, New South Wales.

Macgillivrayornis claudi, sp. n.

General colour above greenish, including the wing coverts. Primaries brown, edged with green. Tail blackish brown.

Throat grey, remainder of under surface yellow. Under wing coverts lighter yellow. Narrow ring of feathers round eye whitish.

Total length (measurement taken in the flesh)—116 m.m.: wing 55: culmen 14: tarsus 18: middle toe and claw 12 m.m.

Type collected on the Claudie River, North Queensland.

P. 301.

Aegintha temporalis macgillivrayi, subsp. n.

Black-tailed Red-browed Finch. +

Differs from *A. t. temporalis* in having a black tail and under tail coverts and the yellow upper surface more pronounced. Bill crimson, lower basal half of lower mandible brown, legs pale straw. Wing 47 m.m.

Type from Claudie River, North Queensland, 17th January, 1914.

P. 304.

Neochmia phaeton albiventer, subsp. n.

White-bellied Crimson Finch. +

Differs from *N. p. phaeton* in having a white belly and a grey head.

Type from Claudie River, North Queensland, 19th January, 1914.

Some Birds Occurring at the Reedbeds, on the Adelaide Plains, this Summer.

BY S. A. WHITE.

For the first time in my recollection five White-browed Babblers (*Morganornis [pomatorhinus] superciliosus*) put in their appearance at "Wetunga" in January. Their harsh cry is heard every day, and they spend much time amongst the fruit trees, where they are doing much good in searching out the codlin moth grubs.

Every year we have the Brush Wattle Bird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia*) with us, and very often they nest and remain with us through the year. It is not uncommon for these birds to rear two broods, and in one instance they brought out the third batch.

In company with the above we have the Red Wattle Bird (*Anthochaera carunculata tregellasi*) with us this season. Their strange note is often heard in the pear trees, where they certainly eat a little fruit, but nothing to warrant their destruction.

During the month of January attention was called by their strange gurgling note of the Spring-checked Honey Eater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis cygnus*). These birds come down upon the plains some summers but not regularly, and I have never known them to nest here.

The Southern White-bearded Honey Eater (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae subassimilis*) is plentiful at times in the garden, where they occasionally build their nests, then for two or three seasons they will almost disappear. It is during the dry seasons that these birds are most numerous on the plains. The *meliornis* are much persecuted by *Ptilotis pinicillata*. In the summer evenings they are very fond of hawking for insects when many of their aerial movements are very neat and graceful.

The graceful little Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris loftyi*) visits the plains nearly every summer. One or two remain in the gardens for a few months, then return to the ranges. They spend the day visiting one flowering plant after another, thrusting their slender bills into each blossom in search of nectar and insects. They become very quiet and trustful after a time. I have never known these birds to nest here.

Wood Swallow (*Artamus cyanopterus*).—These birds (which we have known up to lately in Gould's works as *A. sordidus*) visit the Adelaide Plains nearly every year in the late autumn. A pair (presumably the same) have remained in the well-timbered grounds near the house all through the year, and have nested for three years running. Two seasons they brought out a second clutch, and the nest has been placed almost in the same spot each year. They have become very quiet and trustful, and will often fly down for insects from their nesting place right to the pathway and in front of our feet and pick up crickets and other insects. It is not at all uncommon to see them perched upon the chimney tops or towers. They are often seen hanging to the water taps, catching the drips. Their first broods were three in number and second two birds were hatched. The young re-

mained all the summer and up to the following spring with the parent birds, but when the nesting season approached they were missed. More than likely the parent birds drove them off prior to their preparing for nesting themselves.

Note on *Platycercus* (*haematogaster*), Gould.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E.

The recent acquisition of the second part of "The Birds of Australia and the Adjacent Islands" drew my attention to the inaccurate determination of *Platycercus haematogaster* (Gould). On the seventh plate this species is figured and there described. The bird has no red on the wing coverts and has the under tail coverts yellow. In the letterpress Gould states that he had only seen three specimens, two being collected by Major Mitchell on the Darling River. These he diagnosed as males, and his own bird, on account of its duller coloration, he considered a female. He states also that Major Mitchell has presented his specimens to the Linnean Society of London and the British Museum. He also mentions that Major Mitchell has given birds to the Australian Museum at Sydney, New South Wales. These, of course, Gould had not seen, and are only referred to as confirmatory evidence. In Mitchell's "Three Expeditions into the Interior of Australia, Vol. I., P. 236." we find the following account:—"June 20th, 1835. On the low hills which we crossed a new species of parrot was shot, having scarlet feathers on the breast, the head and wings being tinged with a beautiful blue, the back, &c., being of a dark brownish green. A footnote reads:—"This bird has since been named by Mr. Gould *Platycercus haematogaster*." At this date Mitchell was at a place about 31.18 S. by 144.15 E.

Through the negligence of this figure and description it is obvious that name has been misapplied.

In the Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.) 1837, P. 89, Gould described *Platycercus haematogaster*, and there included some remarks which seem applicable to the bird commonly called *P. haematogaster*, but he noted "*lateribus tectricibus inferioribus pallide flavis*." When Stone drew up his "List of . . . Australian Birds," described by John Gould &c. (Austral.

Av. Rec. Vol. I. pp. 129-180, 1913). On P. 149 he wrote, "*Platycercus haematogaster*, Gould Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1837, P. 89, 1838.

"22907 (254). New South Wales—*Type*.

"Gould's original description applies as well to the red-vented form as to the yellow, and by figuring the former he fixed the name definitely upon it, notwithstanding his later remarks in the handbook. All the specimens are the red-vented bird."

The figure Stone alluded to is the one in "The Birds of Australia," Vol. V., pl. 33, 1845, where a bird is given with red on the wing and red under tail coverts. Accepting this figure as depicting *Platycercus haematogaster* Gould, Bonaparte (Comptes Rendus Sci (Paris), Vol. XXX., P. 133, 1850) separated the bird with the under tail coverts yellow, under the name *xanthorrhoea*. This erroneous identification has been accepted up to the present time, but it must now be corrected. I have therefore given to the red-vented bird the name

NORTHIELLA HAEMATOGASTER ZANDA

in the Austral Av. Rec., Vol. II., P. 75, 1913, and

NORTHIELLA HAEMATOGASTER HAEMATOGASTER

must be used for the yellow-vented form, of which *P. xanthorrhoea* Bonaparte becomes an absolute synonym.

Stone recorded that no yellow-vented bird was included by Gould in the Philadelphia collection. It may be that the bird Gould considered a female was the one from which the partial description of the red-vented bird was made up. The specimens Gould records as being presented to the Linnean Society of London and the British Museum are the basis of the original plate, and I have searched for these. The former has apparently fallen into decay, as when the Linnean Society's birds passed into the British Museum many not regarded as types were rejected. The other bird, however, is still preserved in the British Museum, and was catalogued by Salvadori as a specimen of *P. xanthorrhoea*. This must now be regarded as type of *Platycercus haematogaster* Gould, and it agrees very well with Gould's figure.

It should be noted that the Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.) 1837, P. 89, was not published until February 13th, 1838, while the second part of "The Birds of Australia and the Adjacent

Islands bears the date February, 1838. In the latter place Gould refers to the former description, but as he gave the pagination wrong (P. 88, not 89) he probably wrote from paged proof. In any case the figure and details of his specimens given by Gould settle the matter in an uncontradictable manner.

Regarding the distribution of these forms I have not sufficient data to delimit their ranges. My specimens show that 33 deg. S. by 147 deg. E. is the furthest south attained by the red-vented bird, but specimens must be continually collected to fix such ranges. Flight observations are quite valueless.

At this time I would note that the **Type** of *Euphema bourkii* Gould Birds Austr., Vol. V., pl. 43, 1841, is in the Australian Museum, Sydney, and not at Philadelphia, as recorded by Stone (C.c. P. 150). This is noted in the letterpress accompanying the plate.

Melville Island Birds.

BY F. R. ZIETZ.

In the recent issue of "The Ibis" (tenth series, Vol. II., No. 1, January, 1914, pp. 91-132) Mr. Gregory M. Mathews has published a list of the birds of Melville Island, Northern Territory of South Australia. In this list are included those recorded by me in the previous number of this publication, with the exception of two species, viz., *Astur clarus robustus* and *Stiltia isabella*. As Mr. Mathews includes the Bathurst Island birds in this list I am able to add *Astur radiatus rufotibia* (Campbell), the type of which came from Napier, Broome Bay, north-west Australia. This bird was collected by Mr. W. D. Dodd, collector for the South Australian Museum, on Bathurst Island. It is a male, and agrees fairly well in colour and markings with Campbell's description,* with the exception of being more rufous on the abdomen, and smaller. The following are the measurements of the type specimen, which is a female, converted from inches into millimeters so as to compare with those of the Bathurst Island specimen.

*Emu. Vol. X., p. 249, 1911.

	Adult Female, Napier, Broome Bay.	Adult Male, Bathurst Island,
Total length	537	458 dry skin.
Wing	417	336
Tail	254	218
Tarsus	76	76
Culmen	38	33
Middle toe, with claw	84	76

This brings the total number of the Melville Island birds up to 170.

Notes from Roseworthy.

H. E. LAFFER.

Albino Starling (Sturnus vulgaris).—This specimen was shot during December, and is a true albino type. It associated with the normal type with no apparent interference from them. This skin is the probably first authentic specimen of its kind recorded in South Australia, and is now in the reference collection of the South Australian Museum.

Late Nesting of Black and White Fantail.—On February 2nd I noticed a young bird of this species (*Rhipidura tricolor*) which had apparently but very recently left the nest. This appears much later than the usual breeding time for the bird.

Peaceful Dove (Geopelia tranquilla).—A solitary bird has been about my garden for some days.

Parakeets. — Numbers of Purple Crowned Parakeets (*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*), together with small numbers of *G. concinna*, have been of late devouring honey from the Eucalypts.

Quail.—In the two previous years, which were particularly dry, it was almost impossible to find a quail in these parts after the end of the close season, December 21st. This year not only was there a fair number here at the end of the close season, but I have seen specimens within the past few days, that is, the latter end of February. Knowing somewhat of the habits of this bird and its dependence upon surface water,

might not this fact indicate that the coming season is to be a more favourable one as regards rainfall? Not only in this immediate locality but in other parts of the lower north country I know that quail are still about and show no inclination to migrate. There is a total absence of the small or button quail (*Turnix velox*), which in some seasons far exceeds the large species (*Coturnix pectoralis*) in numbers.

Note.

On the occasion of Mr. G. M. Mathews' visit to South Australia the S.A. Ornithological Association conferred an Hon. Membership upon him, this being the first Hon. Membership made by the oldest ornithological body in Australia. Mr. Mathews attended the monthly meeting of the Association on Friday evening, February 27, and on Friday, March 6 a special meeting was called to bid farewell to the distinguished ornithologist, also to discuss some most important notes in reference to Australian Teal, *Genus Virago*.

During Mr. G. M. Mathews' recent visit to South Australia he most kindly handed over for publication in this Journal the notes on *Platycercus*, which appear in this issue, also a number of valuable notes made by Capt. T. H. Bowyer-Bower in the Northern Territory in the early eighties, and in conjunction with these, notes by Mr. Mathews on bird skins collected between Cairns and Herberton in 1884-5 by the above brilliant young ornithologist, who died at Palmerston, N.T., at the early age of 24 years in December, 1886. The above notes will appear from time to time in this Journal.



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J. H. Riley

Vol. I.

Part 3.

THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
ORNITHOLOGIST,

A Magazine of Ornithology.

JULY, 1914.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

MESSRS. F. R. ZIETZ

(President)

A. M. MORGAN,

S. A. WHITE,

R. CROMPTON.

Price, 2/=



THE
South Australian
ORNITHOLOGIST.



Editorial Committee :

Messrs. F. R. ZIETZ (President)
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S. A. WHITE
R. CROMPTON

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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. I.]

JULY, 1914.

[PART 3.

Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of the S.A. Ornithological Association was held at the Royal Society's Room, North Terrace, Adelaide, on March 27, 1914.

This Association has again to record a most successful year's work. Nine new members have been elected during the year.

Rule VII. has been added to, empowering the Society to elect an honorary member, and Mr. Gregory M. Mathews has been elected to fill this position.

Several new sub-species have been discovered by members. A new *Geobasileus* was collected about 20 miles north of Adelaide by Capt. S. A. White, and called by Mathews *Geobasileus hedleyi rosinae*, the allied Buff-rumped Tit. The same observer also collected what is probably a new night jar in the interior. He also proved that the scarlet under surface of the tail of *Calyptorhynchus banksi stellatus* belongs only to the male, while the barred tail belongs only to the female, not to the young of both sexes.

The following office bearers were elected for the ensuing year:—

Mr. J. W. Mellor, President.

Mr. J. W. Hosking, Vice-President.

Mr. R. Crompton, Secretary.

Dr. A. M. Morgan, Capt. S. A. White, Mr. F. R. Zietz, and Mr. R. Crompton, Editorial Committee for the S.A. Ornithologist.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

I.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

Samuel White came to South Australia with his brother William when they were small boys in 1842; their father, John White, having arrived in the Colony some few years before them in the *Tam O'Shanter* in 1836, and taken up country at the Reedbeds. At that time much of the property was covered in a dense mass of reeds and flags, outside of which was a fringe of high dense rushes and luxuriant grasses. This, combined with belts along the river of fine timber, red gum (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) and sandhills not far off, covered with pines and banksia, and out beyond that open plains and marsh land, made a rich and diversified collecting ground, which has to-day practically passed away owing to the advance of civilization. The young Whites must have been naturally fond of nature, and ornithology began to work its charm over the elder brother's (Samuel) mind. Amidst this rich piece of country in its virgin state he had a great field for his abilities and tastes. Labour in those days was at a premium; in fact it could not be had, and the brothers, Samuel and William, were often sent to watch the cattle. This was a difficult job, for the country was covered with high rushes and reeds, and it was necessary for the watchers to climb into a tree or sit upon a stump to get a good view of the country around. During (what would be to some) long hours of watching the two boys became expert bird observers, and knew the habits of the birds by heart, for they were being taught from Nature's book. Now an employe of their father's had a great turn for natural history. His chief employment was that of a blacksmith; he could skin and stuff birds, and as can be imagined, the two lads were willing pupils. Whenever a chance offered they were round the blacksmith's shop. About this time the father began to notice the liking for nature developing in the two brothers, and he put a strong check on it, as he considered they wasted too much of their time, so the lads had to carry on their collecting and bird observing on the quiet. They had come into possession of a muzzle loading pistol, and this enabled them to procure more specimens, but the firearm

and the specimens had to be hidden far away from the house in a large hollow tree, a hiding place known only to themselves. The surviving brother, William, told me, that one day he was working by himself and had hung his coat on an old stump of a tree, and that a little Brown Flycatcher (*Microeca fascinans*), after his way, came making a great fuss at the unusual object of a coat, and soon this noise attracted a Flame-breasted Robin (*Littlera chrysoptera phoenicea*). William took up a stone or stick and knocked it over. The perpetrator of the deed, who is close on eighty years now, says he can remember as if it were yesterday how overcome by emotion he was at handling the first robin of the species, and said that day seemed as if it would never end, when he could take it to his brother, Samuel, that he might stuff it. At last this was accomplished, and the beautiful robin was added to their growing collection. This last addition had such a fascination for them that they could not help but look at it several times in the day. It may be this that roused the father's suspicions, and he at last detected the first museum in the hollow tree, and complete destruction followed. This was a sad blow, and on top of this their friend the blacksmith moved two or three miles nearer town. The lads were never daunted. The great love of so glorious a natural science had developed a brain power that could not be baulked, and on Sundays they slipped away, and cut across country to their old friend, who possessed a light gun, and after procuring a bird or two they would fetch them home, and skin them. The boys were growing up now, and their father having taken up country in the South-East, and stocked it with cattle and horses, the sons were kept busy at home or at station life. Samuel White became a very fine horseman: in fact all he undertook he mastered. During their station life the brothers had little time to indulge in their hobby. Still they managed to add here and there a specimen, and they were always observant, and the love of nature was gaining a greater and greater hold upon them. Birds that were seen every day of the week in those times are now wiped out for ever. Take for instance one bird, the Swamp Parrot (*Pezoporus terrestris*). These early ornithologists have seen the black boys dismount two or three times in a day while driving cattle to devour this bird's eggs—a bird which is for ever gone in South Australia.

(To be continued.)

Order Passeriformes, Family Meliphagidae, Genus Ptilotula.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei (Mathews)—Southern White-plumed Honey-Eater.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei.—Forehead yellowish green, becoming darker towards the crown, and fading into brownish grey on the back. Lores and ear coverts, light greenish yellow. Ear coverts bordered posteriorly by a narrow line of black, behind which is a conspicuous line of white silky feathers. Back, brownish grey. Upper tail coverts, grey, tinged with green.

Chin, throat, and breast, grey, each feather tipped with yellowish green. Abdomen, grey. Thighs and flanks, grey. Under tail coverts, very light yellow.

Wing—Primaries and secondaries, outer webbs bright yellow green, inner webbs black on the upper surface; under surface, grey. The lower portion of the outer webbs of the second to sixth primaries, white.

Wing coverts—Outer webbs, yellow green; inner webbs, black.

Tail—Upper surface, two central feathers dull green; lateral feathers, outer webbs yellow green; inner webbs black, the tips narrowly edged with white. Under surface, grey.

Bill, black. Legs and feet, dark brown. Iris, black.

Average measurements:—

Total length	15.25 c.m.
Wing	8.15 c.m.
Tail	7.85 c.m.
Tarsus	1.95 c.m.
Culmen	1.15 c.m.

An exceptionally large and very darkly coloured bird in the Adelaide Museum measures:—

Total length	17.50 c.m.
Wing	8.90 c.m.
Tail	8.90 c.m.
Tarsus	2.00 c.m.
Culmen	1.30 c.m.

The sexes are alike, and the young resemble the parents in colour.

This bird, familiarly known as the greenie, is very common in the gardens, park lands, and suburbs of Adelaide, and is represented by closely allied sub-species throughout the whole of South Australia. It is a bold, familiar bird, and a keen fighter, being well able to hold its own against the sparrow and other introduced birds. They are quarrelsome with each other, and persecute the other honey-eaters. If they discover an owl sleeping in a thick clump of leaves, or a night jar asleep on a horizontal limb, they gather round it chattering and darting upon it till they succeed in driving it away. When a hawk or any other large bird comes in sight they gather together, continuously uttering the warning note, fly after it, attacking it under the wings, and whichever way the bird turns they in turn fly at him from behind.

They are a great nuisance to the sportsman, following him in numbers, continuously giving forth the alarm call, which game, animals and birds alike, seem to understand.

Song.—A loud, clear, rather melodious whistle, considerably varied, like the words "Cheep a cheep," or sometimes, "Cheep a cheep a cheep." Flight fast, and most irregular, seldom flying more than a few yards in the same direction, having a quick, short wing movement.

They are not often noticed on the wing unless in pursuit of an enemy, when they appear by the dozen as if by magic. The gum trees afford them excellent protection, the grey and green matching their own colouring perfectly. They have a habit of flying nearly vertically upwards, singing all the while, and then half closing the wings glide to the top of a neighbouring tree.

Sometimes they collect a dozen or more on a small branch, some hanging head downwards, twittering in a low tone as if in conversation, then in a moment they will disperse, flying to different trees.

They are very fond of bathing if opportunity offers, often washing several times in a day. In hot weather they drink very frequently, and seem to feel intense heat greatly. After a few hot days they may be seen collected about any surface water, panting and looking nearly worn out.

Food is most varied. The honey from flowers, which they brush out with their brush tongues. If the flower is too deep for them to reach the honey they split the corolla at the base.

They also take the insects often to be found there. They also catch flying insects, being almost as expert as a fly-catcher at hawking flying ants and small moths.

At times they attack all soft fruits, probably because the supply of honey is short, and on looking for insects in bird-picked fruit, find that it is sweet and to their taste. They will also eat bread crumbs, but are not known to eat seeds at all. They also remove the loose bark from the gum trees in search of insects, collect them from the leaves and branches, and sometimes on the ground. They are seldom, if ever found in scrub country, always keeping in their natural haunt—the big gums (*Eucalyptus rostrata*).

Nest.—A small, neat, strong, delicate looking, cup-shaped structure, made of strong wiry grasses and horse hair woven together with cobwebs. If built near a house it may contain bits of string or darning wool. It is lined with fine grasses, and sometimes thistle down, but no fur or feathers. It is suspended by the rim to the terminal branches of a tree in a thick clump of leaves varying in height from 3 ft. to 50 or 60 ft. from the ground. They are usually built in a gum tree, but not always, one being found at Stonyfell in the top of a small dog rose about 3 ft. from the ground. A favourite nesting place in the neighbourhood of Blackwood is in a wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*). The building takes a long time: one observed from the beginning at Blackwood was finished in five weeks, and another at Kallioota was still unfinished at the end of three weeks, although apparently half finished when found. Another pair at Kallioota began three nests, pulling each one down in turn, and beginning in another place, and finally left the locality without finishing any. They are erratic breeders, being both early and late, as a rule rearing two broods in a year. It is not unusual to see young birds at any season of the year except early winter.

Eggs.—Ground colour, warm pink, sparingly spotted with dark red or red brown, the spots being more numerous towards the larger end, in some eggs forming an indistinct ring. The shell is fine grained, but not glossy.

Two or three broods are reared in the year. There are usually three eggs in the first clutch, and two or only one in the later ones. The eggs of the later clutches usually have a lighter ground colour, sometimes quite white.

Incubation lasts 10 days, and the young leave the nest about 12 days later, but are fed by the parents for a long time after leaving.

Average measurement of 15 eggs, 2.05 c.m. x 1.5 c.m. Largest egg, 2.30 c.m. x 1.55 c.m. Smallest egg, 1.90 c.m. x 1.45 c.m.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei comes under the second schedule of the Bird Protection Act of 1900, being protected from July 1 to December 20.

Field Notes on *Virago Castanea* (Eastern Teal), and *Virago Gibberifrons* (Grey Teal).

By S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

A discussion arose lately about these birds, and I was surprised to hear that some were still under the impression that they were but one species, and that the grey birds were the same as the Chestnut, only out of plumage, or immature. Furthermore I have been requested to express my opinion on the subject through the pages of this journal. I may state that there is not a shadow of doubt in my mind about their being two distinct species, and good ones at that. My remarks are those of a field ornithologist. I leave the osteology of these birds to more able minds. Firstly, the Eastern Teal, Mountain Teal, or Chestnut-breasted Teal, whatever you like to call it in the vernacular, known to science as *Virago castanea* (*Mareca castanea*, Eyton Monograph Anat. p. 119, 1838, N.S.W.), and described by John Gould as *Anas punctata*, Birds of Australia, Vol. VII., pt. II., 1845, is a heavier bird than the grey species, and not nearly so common. One could safely say, as far as South Australian waters are concerned, that for every one of the Chestnut species one would see a hundred or more of the grey birds. It is true a few birds may be seen mixed up with the vast flocks of Grey Teal, but this I have always put down to the fact of their having been driven off from their kind and their haunts by sportsmen and other factors, and for the time have attached themselves to the ranks of their grey cousins. This I think I can prove later on.

V. castanea is a beautiful bird in full plumage, especially the male bird. The bronzy green head and neck shining in

the bright sunlight with great brilliance. The female always shows the rufous tinge more or less on the breast. These birds do not move about in large flocks in South Australia; about a dozen is as many as I have seen in one locality. If they can get it they prefer a stony or gravelly beach to the soft muddy swamps. I have seen them swimming in deep water off a rocky shore, but have never seen them diving for their food, although I have an idea they do so. They have a great liking for resting on boulders and rocks, thus, I think, the origin of the name "Mountain Teal." About '16 years ago, during a big drought in the interior, thousands of ducks visited the Reedbeds, and amongst them was a fair sprinkling of the teal under notice. This is the only time I have known them to visit the swamps here. They seem to prefer the large open waters, and frequent the rocky shores if there be such. There is no doubt John Gould took these two species to be one, for he speaks of having met them in great numbers, Handbook, *Birds of Australia*, Vol. II., p. 365. He goes on to say that it is very rare that a male is killed in the nuptial dress, and he is induced to believe that it is not assumed until the bird is two or three years old. One can understand Gould must have been very puzzled seeing so few of the Chestnut coloured birds in comparison to the Grey birds.

Virago gibberifrons nests in great numbers in the interior during wet seasons; many hundreds nesting together amongst the salt bush and *Polygonum* swamps, but I have never heard of the Chestnut species nesting with them. Only a few nests of the latter have ever come under my notice, and they were placed in hollow limbs of trees. I have seen many nests of Grey Teal in trees, and here at the Reedbeds they once nested nearly every year, but never once did I see *V. castanea* nesting. In February, 1912, my wife and I made a trip to Lakes Alexandrina and Albert, and spent some little time on the waters there making very many useful observations. We were very fortunate in having the services of Mr. Fred Ayres, a man who has passed the better part of his life shooting game for the market, and he has a wonderful store of knowledge pertaining to the habits of the wild fowl. I was very pleased to find that my observations were confirmed in reference to these teal. While we were on the lakes and amongst the swamps along their shores we saw vast flocks of *V. gibberifrons*, but not one *V. castanea*, and when I mentioned this to our guide he at

once said, "If you want Mountain Teal we must steam over to the rocky shores at the other side of the lake." And I found this to be correct. Seeing that these birds have distinct habits and that both have been found breeding, the Grey Teal in vast numbers without a single Chestnut bird amongst them, surely this alone must dispel any doubt upon the subject.

Birds in a North Adelaide Garden.

BY A. M. MORGAN.

The following birds have visited my garden in Stanley Street, North Adelaide, during the past two and a half years:

Ducorpsius gymnopsis (Bare-eyed Cockatoo)—Evidently an escaped cage bird. It stayed a day or two, destroyed a rose bush, and was banished.

Dacelo gigas (Laughing Jackass)—A bird found sitting on the back rail of a chair in the nursery, having made an entrance down the chimney.

Pseudartamus cyanopterus (Dusky Wood-Swallow)—Often seen flying over; occasionally perch for a while.

Petroica multicolor frontalis (Scarlet-breasted Robin)—Comes early in the winter and leaves in early spring.

Leucocirca tricolor (The Black-and-white Fantail or Wag-tail)—Frequent visitors throughout the year.

Rhipideira flabellifera whitei (White Shafted Fantail)—An occasional bird seen towards the end of summer; does not stay long.

Hirundo neoxena (Welcome Swallow)—Always a few hawking for insects over the garden. They do not all leave in the winter.

Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi (Tree Martin)—Always present. There is nesting place under the roof of my neighbour's house, and opposite my dressing room window. This is occupied by several pairs of birds, and they may be seen going in and out at all times of the year.

Pachycephala rufiventris inornatus (Red-breasted Thick-head)—On two occasions a female of this species has visited the garden in the winter.

Malurus cyaneus leggei (Blue Wren)—Two pairs are constant residents, and breed annually. Each pair has its own end of the garden, and when the males meet they fight vigorously. One male has daily battles with his reflection in the dining room window.

Austrodiceaum hirundinaceum (Swallow Diceaum)—Sometimes a single bird settles for a time in a pomegranate tree.

Zosterops lateralis westernensis (The Silver Eye)—Always present in numbers. They eat fruit in the season, and at other times small insects, especially rose aphid. Bred once in a quince tree.

Ptilotula penincillata whitei (White-plumed Honey-eater or greenie)—Always a bird or two present.

Meliornis novea-hollandiae subassimilis (White-bearded Honey-eater)—Generally present. They come in numbers when the *Mina lobata* is in flower.

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris loftyi (Spinebill)—Come in fair numbers towards the end of summer, and leave in the early autumn. They are very fond of the red salvia flowers.

Grallina cyanoleuca (the Magpie Lark)—Many in the neighbourhood. One alighted in a plum tree.

ACCLIMATISED BIRDS.

Passer domesticus (the House Sparrow)—Always present in numbers. They eat large numbers of caterpillars, aphid, and other insects, and on the whole do more good than harm.

Carduelis elegans (the Goldfinch)—Always present; very fond of sunflower and cosmos seed. They breed in the fruit trees.

Sturnus vulgaris (the Starling)—Always present. They feed on worms, caterpillars and insects in the winter; mostly fruit in the summer.

Merula merula (Blackbird)—Always present. They breed in a trellised vine. They are an unmitigated nuisance in the garden from their habit of scratching newly planted ground.

The names are taken from G. M. Mathews's List of Birds of Australia, except that trinomials are not used for dominant species.

Current Observations.

By E. ASHBY, R.A.O.U.

During a short visit to Port Willunga at the end of April a young Mutton Bird (*Neonectris tenuirostris brevicandus*) was driven ashore by the storm and caught alive. It was in a most emaciated condition, and continually making a pitiful peeping cry. A small tuft of down was showing at the base of the neck either side. There was nothing in the stomach.

On the 30th April a large well-nourished specimen of the same species was washed up dead. Under the skin over most of the surface was a layer of fat fully half an inch thick. The whole of the abdominal organs were immersed in fat; every possible space being closely packed with fat. There was a little slimy green material in the stomach.

On the 29th April we found a Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*) lying on the jetty. Evidently it had only been dead a few hours, as the muscles were still stiff; the wings were spread out, and it had evidently settled on the jetty in a dying condition some time during the night or early morning, as we found it quite early. I could find no cause of death other than its extremely impoverished condition. There was no fat, in fact hardly any flesh at all on the bones; the stomach was empty.

During the month of April and the first two weeks of May Lorikeets have been very numerous around Blackwood. *Glossopsitta concinna* and *G. porphyrocephala* were in great numbers, and small flocks of *G. pusilla* and *Trichoglossus novæ hollandiæ*.

No doubt the heavy blooming of the Peppermints (*Eucalyptus odorata*) is the chief reason, and this may also account for their not having damaged the fruit in the Wittunga orchard this year.

The Adelaide Rosella (*Platycercus elegans adelaidæ*) has been rather numerous here; as a rule they are rarely seen this western side of the Coromandel Valley.

During April the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo (*Neochalites basilis mellori*) and the Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis rubricatus*) were both heard and seen several times at "Wittunga."

By A. M. MORGAN.

Zanthomiza phrygia (the warty-faced Honey-eater)—Is present in large numbers about Blackwood just now.

A Now Rare Bird.

By M. SYMONDS CLARK.

(Reprinted from the proceedings of the Field Naturalists' Sections of Royal Society, 1889.)

The Swift Lorikeet (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*) visits South Australia at rather rare intervals. I have one which I shot near Burnside in 1862, in which year they were rather numerous. It was then about seven years since I had observed them. Subsequently I have several times seen them in the neighbourhood, the last time noted by me being in 1882, when they were plentiful about the gum trees: one flock that I saw—a particularly large one—containing perhaps nearly 100 birds. The name of Swift Lorikeet, anyone who has observed a flock dash past within a few yards of him will agree, is very appropriate. Though not the most brilliant in colour, it is one of the most beautiful of the Lorikeets. They are very common in Tasmania. When I was at Hobart in 1878 the curator of the Museum there, told me that they came in great numbers when the blue gum trees were in blossom. One of these trees grew near the building, which had windows directly opposite one another, and the Lorikeets would sometimes dash against the clear glass and disable themselves. I have never seen this bird tamed here, though I saw some living specimens in the London Zoological Gardens in 1865. In the same year I went to Gould's place of business to inquire about the "Handbook" which I heard had just been published. In the office were hung a number of the original drawings of his birds and mammals, and among them I saw the representation of this species. Gould had not seen the bird in South Australia, nor was he aware that it visited our colony. The Swift Lorikeet, unlike most of the honey-eating parrots, has a smooth tongue. The upper surface is dark green, the under part pale green; top of head dark blue; forehead, cheeks, and throat, pink; shoulders maroon-red, passing into rich scarlet under wings; the tail, which is pointed, has a chocolate hue on the upper side. Total length $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the tail being 5 inches.

Swift Lorikeet in South Australia.

It is not generally known that the Swift Lorikeet (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*) was once a fairly regular visitor to South Australia, but such was the case. Mr. William White, of the Reedbeds, states that he saw them in 1863 on the Adelaide Plains at the Reedbeds, and on other occasions he also saw them at Aldinga. They were never common, usually coming here in the early spring; they always kept to the eucalypts that were in flower, from which they gathered their nectar food. Mr. White has a specimen in his collection that he shot at the Reedbeds in the early days.

Gang Gang Cockatoo.

The Gang Gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon galeatum*) now found in Victoria, in the early days extended its habitation to South Australia, and Mr. William White, of the Reedbeds, has a specimen that he shot in the ranges at Mosquito Plains, near Kalangadoo, in the south-east of South Australia, in 1858. Mr. White states that he occasionally saw these birds in the district while he was on the Tatiara^s Station, but they were at no time plentiful, and never stayed to nest.

The White-fronted Robin and the Flower-pecker.

BY F. R. ZIETZ.

The White-fronted Robin (*Littlera chrysoptera phænicea*)
—These handsome birds are regular visitors to this State during the wet season, making their appearance in April, and departing in July. Last year three males paid daily visits to our garden, but this year only one has been noticed. He was first seen during the latter part of March, which is rather earlier than previous records. They have never been found breeding in this State, and apparently come here so as to avoid the severe winter of Tasmania and South Gippsland.

The Flower-pecker or Mistletoe Bird (*Austrodiceaum hirundinaceum*)—We kept a male of this species in captivity for about three months. Its food during that period, with the exception of three of four days, when it was given berries of the mistletoe, consisted of the berries of the introduced Pepper Tree (*Schinus molle*) of South America. When a bunch of fresh berries was placed in the cage it picked one berry, peeled off the outer red skin by means of the sharp cutting edges of the basal part of the bill, and swallowed the seed. These seeds are surrounded by a sweet sticky substance from which nutriment is derived, and which evidently takes the place of the glutinous coating of the Mistletoe seed. When passing the Pepper Tree seeds they often adhered to the feathers of the vent, and to free itself of these the bird assumed a jerky motion; if not successful in thus removing them it rubbed them off on the perch. One morning we found it dead. Although it always appeared in the best of health it was in rather poor condition. (The Pepper Tree berries did not seem to have supplied sufficient nutriment.)

From G. M. Mathews, F.R.S.E.

The new birds described in the last issue of this journal, and the two parrots already described, go to show that Dr. MacGillivray and Mr. McLennan have done a lot to add new forms to the List of Australian Birds. Too much praise cannot be given to Dr. MacGillivray for his courtesy in allowing me to describe these birds, and to Mr. McLennan for the energy he displayed in collecting them.

The locality from which they came is an exceedingly difficult one to work in, and it is only those who have been in similar country who can appreciate the works of the above men. Lloyd's Bay and its surroundings have turned out an excellent collecting ground, and we must feel grateful to the men who have worked it so well.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE, *The S.A. Ornithologist*.

Sirs,

The following letter was written and sent to the Editors of *The Emu* by me to be published in the April number of that journal.

I did not receive any official answer to it, but a letter from a visiting ornithologist, stating the Council wished him to inform me that the Council did not intend publishing the letter. Later I received a letter from a member of the Council stating the correspondence on this subject was closed. Now, I cannot see any reason why the correspondence should be closed, unless it is that too much daylight is being let into the unprogressive state of ornithology as expounded by *The Emu*. I am taking these steps solely for the enlightenment of the young school of ornithology in Australia, that they may move along with our leaders, the scientific and progressive thinkers of the old world, for should they stand still like some conservative ornithologists seem determined to do, then in a short time they will have a mighty lot to pick up. As a renowned American ornithologist has written to me:—"Were there a gathering of American ornithologists to take place anywhere, and a discussion of a certain genus were to come up, it would be quite out of question for a binomialist in the group to make himself understood, at any rate he could not comfortably keep up with the conversation."

If all Australian ornithologists would study Mr. G. M. Mathews's "A List of the Birds of Australia, 1913," it will be seen that the author has dealt with the R.A.O.U. Check-list in a most masterly fashion.

I am, etc.,

S. A. WHITE.

TO THE EDITORS, *The Emu*.

Sirs,

Under "Further on the R.A.O.U. Check-list," in the last issue of *The Emu* Mr. Milligan says in his letter that he did not intend to pursue the correspondence further. Perhaps that would have been the wisest course, because every time

Mr. Ogilvie Grant's name is brought forward as rejecting trinomials, and every time it is stated that the American ornithologists are not in favour of trinomials, it must make those oversea ornithologists smile, when the ornithological world knows that they are of one accord in the support of trinomials.

Re Mr. Milligan's statement at the presentation of the Check-list, that the system would fall by its own weight (that is by using trinomials) and that leading British ornithologists were not using trinomials, it matters not who he was quoting, or who put the information into his hands at the last moment, it is enough that Mr. Milligan made good use of his brief, and laid great stress on the lines quoted to impress his audience with the necessity of accepting a list in binomials.

The quotation from *The Auk*, Vol. XXIX., pp. 561-5, written by Mr. Joseph Grimnell of California, seems to be misunderstood completely, as the works of that gentleman will plainly show.

I would like to refer to "Letters of Appreciation" in the last "Emu." The only one which carries weight, being that of Mr. Tom Carter. I am much surprised at the letter, and cannot believe now that Mr. Carter would take such a step backwards. Why not quote the last *Ibis*, tenth series, Vol. II., No. 1, p. 148. When speaking of the R.A.O.U. Check-list it says this is supposed to be based on the work of Gould, and on the catalogue of the birds in the British Museum, and its adoption could only lead to the most *hopeless confusion*.

The Auk, Vol. XXX., pp. 445-7, after a most scathing review of the R.A.O.U. Check-list, concludes with, "We regret exceedingly that we cannot endorse this Check-list for general use: aside from all questions of nomenclature, it would serve a valuable purpose as a conservative list of Australian species and sub-species, but here it fails in so much as the lack of synonymy makes it difficult or impossible to ascertain with which forms the many recently discovered races have been united.

If the reviews of the leading scientific journals of the world were published it would give Australian ornithologists a chance to weigh them with "Letters of Appreciation."

Since seeing Dr. Leach's letter in the last "Emu" I have been wondering if some of us are not looking at Australian

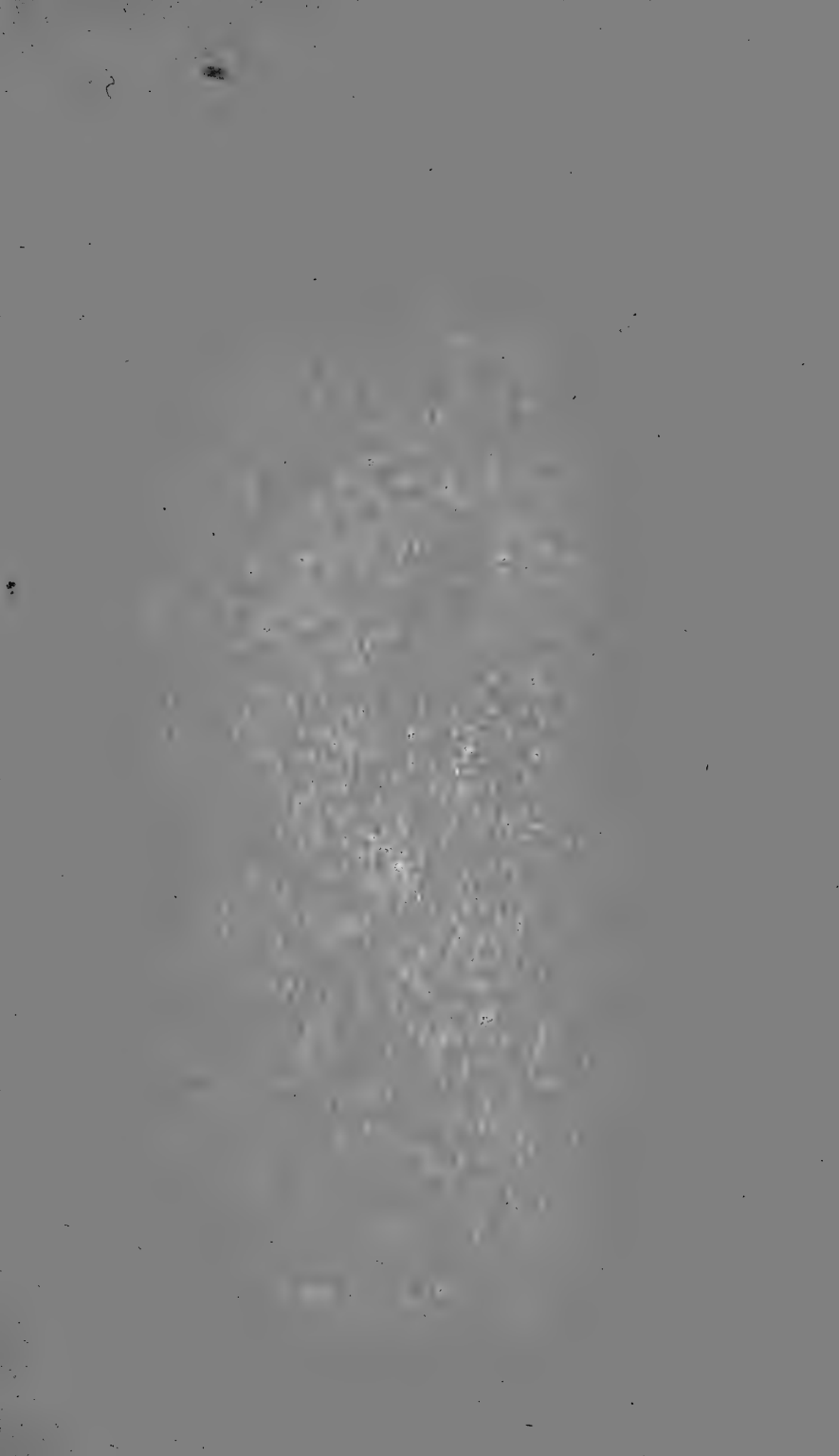
ornithology from two vastly different standpoints, because, if the R.A.O.U. Check-list was intended for 50,000 members of the Gould League of Bird Lovers, who are mostly children, and know as much about the list as the majority who attended the session when it was adopted (if this be the case, and it is not to be accepted as scientific), then it will answer the purpose.

Oversea ornithologists have killed the R.A.O.U. Check-list in one blow. South Australia has turned it down to a man, and many in the other States are doing likewise, so what use for more on the subject.

I am, etc.,

S. A. WHITE.







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J. A. Riley

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Part 4.

THE
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OCTOBER, 1914.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

MESSRS. F. R. ZIETZ

(President)

A. M. MORGAN,

S. A. WHITE,

R. CROMPTON.

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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. I.]

OCTOBER, 1914.

[PART 4.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

[II.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST.]

In December, 1860, John White, the father, met his death through an accident with horses, and this was the turning point in Samuel White's life, for he was then free to gratify his longing to put the whole of his time into the pursuit of ornithology and the collecting of other natural history specimens. In 1861 we find that in company with his brother William he made many short trips to such places as the Black Swamp in the south, and Wirrabara Forest in the north, and they were on a big collecting trip up the Murray River in the early part of 1863. During these trips valuable notes and observations were made, and many specimens collected. In the winter of 1863 Samuel White prepared for his first big expedition, and a great undertaking it must have been in those days. Three horses attached to a dray, with ten months' stores, constituted the outfit. The enterprising ornithologist, accompanied by his man, named Cottrell, set out from Adelaide to penetrate the vast interior, which was then unknown. By August 23rd, 1863, we know he was at St. a'Becket's Pool, lat., 28° 30', for it was here he collected the type specimen of *Artamus melanops*. Pushing on past Lake Hope, and away to the north of Lake Eyre, taking his position each day and marking it down on a blank map, beset by privations and hardships beyond description, and attacked by hos-

tile natives, but never daunted he and his companion were shaping their course for the centre of the continent. One disaster after another befel them, and when north of Lake Eyre the last horse died. That indomitable spirit of the explorer was forced back. The dray, with nearly all the valuable specimens, had to be abandoned in the desert, and the two men set out on the homeward journey on foot. The fearful privations and hardships this journey entailed would fill a book of fiction if told in detail, but it must suffice to say that Samuel White and his faithful servant reached his home at the Reedbeds after months of tramping. This intrepid ornithologist must have had a great constitution, for we know that he was on the Murray River again in 1865, this time accompanied by his brother William, when a good many specimens were collected, both birds and insects, the brother taking a keen interest in the study of insect life. In 1867 Samuel White made preparations to go further afield, and entertained the idea of proceeding high up on the Queensland coast and penetrating to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and from there down to South Australia. With this object in view, and accompanied by his brother William, he set out in a small boat bound for Sydney. There they changed into a still smaller one called the "Saxone," and during their progress up the coast to Brisbane they encountered one of those violent storms that often visit those latitudes, and were nearly wrecked. Reaching Brisbane at last they transhipped into another boat called the "Black Prince," a very small and leaky boat she was, not fit to go to sea, for large holes in her hull were stopped up by sacking dipped in tar and nailed over with pieces of packing cases. In this state she sailed up inside the Great Barrier Reef, and when a blow came on the captain had to seek shelter under one of the numerous islands till it had passed. After a very anxious time they landed at Cleveland Bay, where Townsville is now situated, but then there were only two habitations and three or four white men, one being a blacksmith who was induced to put together a pair of strong wheels, on which was constructed a body. While this was being done the White brothers were camped on the bank of a reedy creek, and had commenced their work amongst nature. The strange birds to be found in that part of Queensland interested them much. At this time the brother, William, became ill with scurvy owing to privations and want of proper food, and it affected his feet so badly that, being

unable to stand, he had to keep his bed for days. It was found that where they had formed their camp was the track used by many snakes on their way to the creek to water, and on many occasions the reptiles passed over the prostrate form of the invalid. Once when the elder brother was away a snake instead of passing through the boughs (on which the sufferer's bed was made) to the water, remained under the bed. William watched for some time, and at last saw the snake under him, and reaching for a gun (which was always left near him for his protection) shot the snake. Hearing the report his brother, Samuel, was soon on the scene wanting to know the trouble, and when the invalid explained his brother lectured him for wasting such a priceless commodity as ammunition. His brother having almost regained his health Samuel White purchased a roan mare to draw the rough cart, and he set out in August, 1868, to find his way to the Gulf of Carpentaria through a thick mass of tropical jungle and broken ranges, with his only guide, a map, which proved to be worse than useless.

(To be continued.)

Order Passeriformes, Family Laniidae, Genus *Gymnorhina*.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota.—The White-backed Magpie.

Upper Surface—Head, black; back, white; upper tail coverts, white.

Under Surface—From chin to vent, black; vent, white; under tail coverts, white; thighs, black, with more or less white upon the inner sides.

Wing—Spurious wing—outer feather, black; inner feathers, black, with a white base to the outer webbs; primaries, black; secondaries, black; scapularies, black. Major primary coverts—Outer webbs, black; inner webbs, white, tips, black. Secondary coverts, white, the outer ones tipped with black; rest of the wing coverts, white.

Tail—Outer webbs of two outer feathers, black; inner webbs, white; bases of the other feathers, white; the terminal third of all, black; quills, black.

Bill—Bluish white at base, black at tip.

Legs and Feet—Black.

Iris—Reddish brown.

The female resembles the male except that the back is light grey, and the average length of the bill is less.

The young have the back dark mottled grey, and the feather of the under surface and thighs margined with brown. The bill is black, and the irides dull black.

Measurements:—

Total length	37.00	c.m.
Wing	26.50	c.m.
Tail	15.50	c.m.
Tarsus	5.65	c.m.
Bill	5.60	c.m.

In old birds the notch near the point of the upper mandible becomes deeper, and the tip has a tendency to hook over the lower mandible.

Distribution—All the southern portions of South Australia and Victoria wherever there is a cleared or open country. They never frequent thick scrub. Up to about 150 miles north of Adelaide it is the only species, but at about this point a few individuals of *G. tibicen intermissa* begin to appear. At Port Augusta the two species are found in about equal numbers. At Mount Gunson, on the west side of Lake Torrens, only the black-backed birds occur, and at Kallioota, on the east side of the lake, there are only white backs. In the Gawler Ranges white backs are the only species.

Food—All their food is taken on the ground. It consists of insects, spiders, worms, seeds, frogs, mice, small reptiles, young birds, soft fruit, and any small birds it can catch. It may often be seen in hot pursuit of small birds, but rarely, if ever, catches one. In captivity they will eat cooked or raw meat, bread, almond kernels, grass, and other plants. They are also fond of fat or butter. At daybreak they fly from their roosting trees to a neighbouring field, where they turn over flat stones, pieces of bark or dung, in search of insects. They seem to detect the whereabouts of worms by their sense of hearing when they dig into the ground with their sharp beaks, and draw the worm out whole. It is always placed on the ground and inspected before being eaten. They remain in the field fairly late in search of nocturnal insects which come from their

hiding places with the dusk. Lizards, mice, and large beetles are always hammered on the ground or on a stone before being swallowed. When searching for food on the ground they always walk unless they are in a hurry, when they hop. They also give two or three short hops before rising in flight.

Flight—The flight is rather slow, but straight and powerful, with a strong, even, fairly fast wing movement, the swish of the wings can be heard for a considerable distance. When alighting on the ground they sail 20 or 30 yards close to the ground, usually taking a sharp turn as they settle. When alighting on a tree they fly along three or four feet below the proposed perch, sailing upward till they practically stop before settling.

Nest—This is usually placed in a fork near the top of a tree (40 to 60 feet from the ground), but in treeless country they will build in bushes. A nest at St. Kilda was only about three feet from the ground in the top of a boxthorn bush. The nest is built outwardly of small dry twigs, and is lined with strips of bark and grasses, with a final lining of wool, cow hair, fur, or other soft material; near homesteads scraps of fencing wire are often used in the foundation. About the end of May the old birds drive off the last season's young birds, and repair to the vicinity of last year's nests, each pair having a little territory of its own, which it never leaves, and drives all others from. The first pairs begin building about the end of June, and by the beginning of August they are all building. The eggs are three to five in number, the usual clutch being four; they vary very much in colour and disposition of marking. A common type has a ground colour of light bluish green, spotted and streaked with bright red brown, but some clutches are found to be light brown, spotted with darker brown; others again have a pale blue ground, spotted with black, almost like an English thrush's egg; some again are streaked all over with fine hairlike lines, but the eggs of any individual bird do not vary from year to year. Average measurement of 26 eggs:—4.07 c.m. x 2.90 c.m.

Largest egg, 4.35 c.m. x 3.05 c.m.

Smallest egg, 3.70 c.m. x 2.70 c.m.

Incubation occupies about three weeks, and the young leave the nest about three weeks later, returning to it for a week or so to sleep, the mother sitting on them, after which they perch on the sides of the nest for a week or two before

taking to roosting on the branches. If the pair are successful in rearing the first brood they do not rear a second, but if the young are taken they lay again in the same nest, or if the old nest is destroyed they build another near by, often in the same spot.

The young remain with the parents, being fed by them for several months, during which time they continue to make the baby cry; after this they live together, forming a small company, till April or May, when they are driven off by the old birds about to make preparation for the following nesting. As soon as the young birds are driven away they flock; some pick up mates and breed, but most of them remain in the flock, not breeding till the second year.

A tame pair in the Children's Hospital garden built a nest on a garden seat in August, 1911. The nest was built of pepper tree twigs, a piece of wire clothes line, several pieces of fine iron wire, and some string; it was lined with hair and wooly material, apparently from carpet sweepings. The first egg was laid on September 1, the second on September 3, the third on September 4. The female began to sit as soon as the first egg was laid, and did practically all the brooding; she was fed on the nest by the male. The first egg was hatched on September 21, and the other two upon the two following days, both birds fed the young and cleaned the nest by swallowing the droppings. In a quite wild state they do not defend the nest from men, but attack fiercely any other birds which come near the nesting tree, even wedge-tailed; and whistling eagles are driven off. When nesting near settlements they attack anyone who comes near them, and have been known to inflict serious scalp wounds.

When the intruder has been driven off they fly to a tree and pour forth a song to proclaim their victory.

Song—A gurgling flute-like note, which is decidedly musical. In the early spring they often begin shortly after midnight, continuing at intervals till morning; they also sing in the evening, but not frequently during the day. They also make a loud challenge or alarm call.

Magpies are very playful. Two may often be seen lying on the ground on their sides, wrestling with their claws, but if one of them gets hurt the game develops into a fight, each trying to grasp the other across the bill with his claws, while he punishes with his powerful beak, accompanied by the loud challenge cry.

Magpies are very commonly pinioned, and kept in captivity in gardens, making very useful, though mischievous, pets. They seldom get really tame and often become very vicious, and will always attack a stranger. When planting bulbs or seedlings the tame magpie is always carefully watching proceedings, and as soon as the back is turned they are all speedily uprooted.

They get very expert at catching in their beaks worms, small stones, or grubs when thrown to them. If taken young they can be taught to whistle and talk, but the enunciation is never very distinct. In recent years they have greatly increased in numbers, owing to more land being cleared for the plough, and to their being totally protected. Several pairs have nested in the Park Lands surrounding Adelaide.

The Birds of Kallioota.

BY A. M. MORGAN.

Kallioota is a cattle depot belonging to the estate of the late Mr. W. T. Mortlock. By the courtesy of Mr. R. Smith, the general manager, my wife and myself were enabled to spend the month of August, 1912, in observing the birds there. The station is upon the alluvial plain situated between the Flinders Range and the south end of Lake Torrens. It is crossed from east to west by the Willochra Creek, a dry or salt watercourse in the summer, but at the time of our visit a flowing stream of fresh water. The plain is crossed at intervals by sandhills running roughly east and west; between the sandhills are saltbush and samphire flats. Along the creek and neighbouring flats, which are subject to floods, are many fine old red gums; elsewhere the sandhills are covered with wattle bush, myall, bullock bush, mulga (all species of acacia), and here and there pines and black oaks. 1912 was a splendid season, grass, annual saltbush, and wild spinach were growing luxuriantly, and the sandhills and flats were covered with flowers, mostly white and yellow everlastings. We were hospitably entertained at the head station by the manager and assistant manager, Messrs. Gilbert Smith and J. M. Merryfield, who did everything in their power to assist us in our pursuits.

The birds observed were:—

1. *Dromiceius nova hollandia* (Emu). Fairly common in sandhill and scrubby country. One nest was found on August 17th. It was made of small dry sticks with which some of the emus' own feathers were mixed; it was situated within a ring formed by fallen trees. The eggs were seven in number, and varied in weight from $1\frac{3}{4}$ lb. to 1 lb. They were slightly incubated. The sitting bird was judged to be the male; the mate was feeding in the vicinity.

2. *Geopelia placida tranquila* (Peaceful Dove). A single pair seen feeding on the ground.

3. *Ocyphaps lophotes* (Crested Bronzewing). Common. At the beginning of August they were in small flocks four to seven in number. About the middle of the month they began to separate into pairs. Four nests were found between August 25th and August 31st. The nests were all in thick bushes from seven feet to 3 feet 6 inches from the ground. They were very loosely constructed of a few small twigs, through which the eggs could be seen. They each contained two eggs.

4. *Microtribonyx ventralis whitei* (Eastern Black-tailed Native Hen). A single bird seen swimming in the creek. Not nesting.

5. *Poliocephalus poliocephalus* (Hoary-headed Grebe). A few birds seen on dams. Not nesting.

6. *Lobibyx nova hollandia* (Spur-winged Plover). A single pair seen. They behaved as though breeding, but the eggs were not found.

7. *Zonifer tricolor* (Black-breasted Plover). Fairly common on flats; probably breeding, but no eggs found.

8. *Elseya melanops* (Black-fronted Dottrel). A few pairs were running in the mud banks in the creek. Not yet breeding.

9. *Burhinus magirostris* (Stone Plover). Heard at night; not seen.

10. *Notophox nova hollandia* (White-fronted Heron). Several pairs seen. A nest found in September by Mr. Merryfield in a large gum tree containing young birds.

11. *Anas superciliosi rogersi* (Black Duck). Small numbers on dams and waterholes; not nesting.

12. *Virago gibberifrons* (Grey Teal). Same as last species.
13. *Spatula rhynchotis* (Australian Shoveller). Same as above.
14. *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* (Pink-eared Duck). Same as above.
15. *Mesocarbo ater* (Little Black Cormorant). A few solitary birds seen flying up and down the creek.
16. *Circus assimilis* (Spotted Harrier). Fairly common. Generally hawking over the sandhills, sometimes in pairs, more often singly. A nest was found by Mr. Merryfield in a tall gum tree after our departure. It contained three white eggs.
17. *Circus approximaus gouldi* (Swamp Hawk). A single individual seen on a saltbush plain.
18. *Uroæetus audax* (Wedge-tailed Eagle). Fairly common. A nest found by a musterer on August 21st contained two half-grown young birds.
19. *Haliastur sphenurus* (Whistling Eagle). Common everywhere; many nests seen, mostly in inaccessible gums; five nests examined varied in height from 60 to 30 feet from the ground; each nest contained two fresh or slightly incubated eggs. The principal food of these birds is rabbits, skeletons of which and casts of their fur were found about every nest.
20. *Milvus korschun affinis* (Allied Kite). One or a pair were constantly hovering about the station house; not nesting.
21. *Falco hypoleucus* (Grey Falcon). A single bird seen in the pine scrub. Mr. Merryfield obtained a clutch of two eggs from a nest in a red gum after our departure.
22. *Rhynchodon perigrinus macropus* (Black-cheeked Falcon). A single bird seen.
23. *Hieracidea berigora* (Striped Brown Hawk). Common. All the birds seen were the light coloured form, except one, which, from its tameness, I took to be a young bird. Several birds were seen to leave nests, but no eggs were found. Mr. Merryfield found eggs in September.
24. *Cerchneis cenchroides* (Nankeen Kestrel). Common. Birds were seen to leave two hollows, but the birds had not laid by the end of August. Mr. Merryfield found several clutches later, both in hollow gums and in old crows' nests.

25. *Spiloglaux boobook marmorata* (Boobook Owl). Only one bird seen; often heard at night.

26. *Tyto alba delicatula* (Delicate Owl). Heard at night; not seen.

27. *Ducorpsius gymnopsis* (Bare-eyed Cockatoo). Common in the Eucalypti, where they were nesting. Nests all inaccessible.

* 28. *Eolophus roseicapillus* (Galah). Common. Nesting in the tall gums along the creek; three nests examined on September 1st. All contained young birds.

29. *Leptolophus auricomis* (Cockatoo Parrot). The first bird arrived on August 26th, and they soon became numerous. On September 1st they were busy cleaning out hollows, but had not yet laid.

30. *Barnardius barnardi* (Ring-neck Parrot). Very numerous in gums about the creek; not seen elsewhere. They bred freely in the hollow gums; all the clutches seen were five in number except one of four slightly incubated eggs. They were very tame, and fed close up to the house. Their principal food was the seeds of the "prickly Jack." On September 1st many of the nests contained young, and some pairs were still cleaning out hollows.

31. *Northelia haematogaster xanthorrhoea* (Yellow-vented Parrot). Common in the scrub, not seen in the gum country. Many nests, mostly in hollow pines, all contained young birds except one, which contained nine eggs, eight of them incubating and one infertile. All the nests were in the trunks of the trees, and the entrance within reach of the hand.

32. *Psephotus varius rosinae* (Many-coloured Parrot). Not common; a few pairs only were seen in the gum country. One clutch of five eggs was taken from a spout of a dead gum tree about 20 feet from the ground.

33. *Pardaliparus strigoides rossi* (Mallee Frogmouth). A single bird seen sitting upon two slightly incubated eggs on August 30th. The nest was in a black oak about 20 feet from the ground.

34. *Aegotheles cristata* (Owlet Night Jar). Two birds were seen, each sitting upon three slightly incubated eggs. The first bird had to be taken from the nest by the hand; the second flew off as we approached the tree. In each case the nest was roughly built of Acacia leaves, and in the second case with a few pieces of grass added.

35. *Cyanalcyon pyrrhopygius* (Red-backed Kingfisher). The first bird arrived on August 28th, and began calling close to the house. The note is a mournful "chow" repeated about 24 times a minute. A few more arrived each day and were calling in the gum trees about the creek. Mr. Merryfield found a nest in the bank of the creek after we had left.

36. *Heteroscenes pallidus* (Pallid Cuckoo). First bird seen on August 13th, and they soon became numerous. No eggs found.

37. *Neochalcites basalis* (Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo). Common. Three eggs found, one each in nest of *Hallornis cyanotus*, *Ephthianura albifrons*, and *Malurus melanotus callainus*. The Cuckoo's egg was upon the side of the *Ephthianura* nest, and not with the other eggs. The egg found in the nest of *M. callainus* was not blown for 24 hours after taking; it proved to be unblowable, the embryo was still alive, though those in the *Malurus* eggs were quite dead. The zygodactylate foot of the young Cuckoo easily distinguished it from any other bird. This may be used as a means of identifying Cuckoo's eggs when they closely resemble those of their hosts.

38. *Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi* (Tree Swallow). Not common. A few pairs nesting in hollow gums near the creek.

39. *Hirundo neoxena* (Welcome Swallow). Common. Nesting in sheds and down wells

40. *Lagenoplastes ariel* (Bottle Swallow). A colony of about 40 nests building on an overhanging bank of the creek. Mr. R. Smith informed me that these birds always build close to water in a dry season because the mud dries before they can get to the nests. For the same reason on bright days they build only in the morning and evening.

41. *Cheramæca leucosternum stonei* (Eastern Black-and-White Swallow). Common. Many old nests in the bank of the creek. Two were dug out on August 28th; one contained two fresh eggs, and the other three fresh eggs. No full clutches were taken. The first hole was one foot deep, and the second $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. In each case the nesting chamber took a turn to the right. The nests were made of dry grass and narrow gum leaves.

42. *Whiteornis goodenovi* (Red-capped Robin). The only Robin seen. They were very common, and were nesting freely. Thirteen nests were examined; 11 contained three eggs or three young birds each, one contained two nearly fresh

eggs, and one two half-grown young. The nest is built low down in the fork of a bush. It is made of dried grasses decorated outwardly with bits of lichen, and lined with rabbit fur, cow hair, and old cocoons. One nest measured, outside diameter, three inches; inside diameter, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches; depth, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The male keeps away from the nest while the female is sitting unless danger threatens, when he shows as much anxiety as the female. The female does all the nest building, all the sitting, and probably all the feeding of the young. The note of the male is a mixture of creak and croaks; the creak seems continuous with two croaks interpolated. The note of the female is a faint "chet." The male of one nesting pair had only a faint blush of red on the breast and none on the forehead when the nest started, but by the time the eggs were laid he had become sensibly redder without moulting.

43. *Smicrornis brevirostris viridescens*. A flock of four seen in a gum creek at the foot of the ranges.

44. *Rhipidura flabellifera whitei* (White-shafted Fantail). Saw only one flock of these birds. It occurred to me when too late to secure a specimen that they may have been *R. f. albicauda*, but they looked through the field glasses like the common species.

45. *Leucocirca tricolor* (Wagtail). Several pairs and single birds seen. They had not nested by September 1st.

46. *Coracina nova hollandiae melanops* (Black-faced Graucalus). Several small flocks seen up to seven in number; not nesting.

47. *Lalage tricolor* (White-shouldered Caterpillar Bird). Appeared on August 26th, and soon became numerous. They kept to the more thickly wooded country. Had not nested by September 1st.

48. *Morganornis superciliosus* (White-browed Babbler). Very common, nesting everywhere. Some pairs were feeding young on August 4th, and some were still building nests on September 1st. A pair built a nest in a low prickly shrub about 10 feet from the front door, and in spite of being tumbled over in the dark and having a basin of water thrown over them they hatched out three young, and were feeding them on September 1st. The young were fed upon caterpillars. All clutches examined were either three or four in number, mostly three.

49. *Calamanthus campestris* (Field Wren). Only a single pair seen. A bird shot for identification proved to be a young male. They were very shy.

50. *Cinclorhamphus cruralis* (Brown Song-lark). Very Common, nesting freely on the grass and saltbush flats. The first nest was found on August 24th. The nests were built in natural depressions in the ground. They were outwardly built of annual saltbush twigs, and were lined with green grass. The female does all the nest building and sitting. The male was not seen near a nest. Clutch, three or four.

51. *Ptenædus matheusi vigorsi* (Rufous Song-lark). Very common, kept to the thinly timbered country. A nest found by Mr. G. Smith on August 24th contained four fresh eggs.

52. *Ephthianura albifrons* (White-fronted Tin-tac). Very common both in saltbush and thinly timbered country. Breeding freely. The nests were made of thin saltbush twigs or grass, and lined with horsehair. One nest measured $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. Clutch, three or four, mostly four.

53. *Parephthianura tricolor* (Red-fronted Tin-tac). Only two pairs seen in the saltbush. A nest found on August 30th contained three hard-set eggs. The nest was built in a saltbush, about six inches from the ground, of withered flower stems, lined with horsehair and a few pieces of rabbit fur. The opening measured $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches x 2 inches, and was $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep.

54. *Aurephthianura aurifrons* (Orange-tinted Tin-tac). Common in the saltbush, not seen elsewhere. All nests found were in saltbush from six to eight inches from the ground. Nest like that of *E. albifrons*. Clutch, three. These birds bob the tail up and down like a pipit while walking.

55. *Acanthiza uropygialis augusta* (Chestnut-rumped Tit). Common in the scrub country. Seventeen nests were found, all built in hollows from a few inches to five feet from the ground. In each case the entrance of the nest was built up flush with the opening of the hollow; if the opening be too large it is filled up with nesting material. Both birds assist in the building. Clutch, three or four, mostly four.

56. *Geobasiliscus chrysorrhous addendus* (Yellow-rumped Tit—Tomtit). Not common; several nests seen all built under hawks' or crows' nests. One examined on August 30th was built under a crow's nest containing five half-grown young.

The clutch was three slightly incubated eggs. There was no top story to this nest.

57. *Malurus melanotus callainus* (Turquoise Wren). Common in sandhill country. Five nests were found, one of which contained an egg of the Narrow-billed Cuckoo.

58. *Hallornis cyanotis* (White-winged Wren). Very common in the saltbush. Eight nests were found either in salt or blue bushes. Clutch, three or four.

59. *Leggeornis lamberti assimilis* (Purple-backed Wren). Fairly common on sandhills and thick scrubby country. All nests found were built on the ground, in thick bushes, or tops of fallen trees. Clutch, two, three, or four.

60. *Austrartamus melanops* (Black-faced Wood Swallow). On August 4th these birds were in small flocks of five to eight, but towards the end of the month they had separated into pairs, and had commenced building. A great many nests were found, the first on August 23rd, and daily afterwards. A favourite site was the centre of a mistletoe, but nests were also found in hollow stumps and in the tops of low shrubs. The nest is built of fine twigs and lined with fine rootlets and grasses. Only one egg was seen on August 30th.

61. *Colluricincla rufiventris whitei* (Buff-bellied Shrike-thrush). A few pairs seen along the creek and in the timber; not nesting.

62. *Grallina cyanoleuca* (Murray Magpie). Common along the creek. Breeding in the big gums overhanging the stream.

63. *Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota*. Common in the gum country where they were nesting.

64. *Bulestes torquatus ethelæ* (Butcher Bird). Not common. Only two pairs seen, but others were heard. A nest was found on August 30th in a black oak about 25 feet from the ground. It contained four slightly incubated eggs. The male betrayed the situation of this nest by flying out and fiercely attacking a *Pardaliparus* which we had driven from its nest.

65. *Lewinornis rufiventris inornatus* (Rufous-breasted Thick-head). A solitary male collected.

66. *Gilbertornis rufogularis gilberti* (Red-throated Thick-head). A solitary female collected.

67. *Oreoica cristata clelandi* (Crested Bell-bird). Not common. More often heard than seen. One nest found contain-

ing two fresh eggs. The nest was, as usual, ornamented with live caterpillars.

68. *Aphelocephala leucopsis* (White Face). The commonest bird in the district. They were breeding everywhere. Three pairs were building under the ridge capping of the house, and two pairs in the thatch of a shed. Other breeding places were thorn bushes, old babblers' nests, and between a gatepost and the hanging style of the gate; but the great majority of the nests were in hollow trees. The nests are made of dried grasses and herbage, and are lined with feathers and rabbits' fur. One nest was lined entirely with emu feathers. Clutches, three or four. I watched one pair feeding their young; they brought only green caterpillars at the rate of one each every five minutes.

69. *Sphenostoma cristatum pallidum* (Pale Wedgebill). I was surprised to find this bird so far south. I believe Leigh's Creek is the previously recorded southern limit. They were in pairs, and fairly numerous where there were clumps of thorn bush (a prickly shrub like African boxthorn, very difficult and painful to penetrate). The male sits out on a dry twig in the open and utters his song, which is like "chip cheer chiroo," the first two notes subdued and audible for about 40 or 50 yards, the final note very loud and shrill, and audible for a quarter of a mile or more. The female answers from the bushes with an occasional "chirrup." When the eggs are all laid the male becomes much more silent, only uttering his note occasionally. They are very local. A pair near the house never strayed more than 200 yards from the clump of thorn bushes where they eventually nested. The first nest was found by Mr. Merryfield in an "old man" saltbush. It contained three fresh eggs. One nest was built in the knob of a mistletoe about nine feet from the ground, and three other nests were in thorn bushes, all within reach of the hand. Clutch, two or three. The nest is built of fine dry twigs and smoothly lined with fine dried grasses. The opening measures five inches in diameter, and is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep.

70. *Neositta pileata tenuirostris* (Slender-billed Tree Runner). A flock of four birds seen; not nesting.

71. *Climacteris erythroptis superciliosa* (White-browed Tree Creeper). Not common; only four pairs seen. An uncompleted nest was found on August 9th at the bottom of a hollow branch.

72. *Austrodicæum hirundinaccum* (Mistletoe Bird). A few pairs and solitary birds seen.

73. *Pardalotinus striatus subaffinis* (Striped Diamond Bird). Common in gum country; not seen elsewhere. Most of the nests were placed in very small holes in thick limbs of gum trees. A pair was found digging out a hole in the bank of the creek on August 11th; three slightly incubated eggs were taken from it on August 22nd. The tunnel was 18 inches long and the nest chamber five inches in diameter. The cup-shaped nest completely filled the chamber; the nest measured 3 inches x $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter x $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. It was built of dry grasses and a few shreds of bark. The bird was captured on the nest, identified and released.

74. *Pardalotus punctatus xanthopygus* (Yellow-rumped Diamond Bird). Heard in gums, but no specimen secured.

75. *Glyciphila albifrons incerta* (White-fronted Honey-eater). Very common at the beginning of August, when they were feeding on the flowers of the thorn bush. About the middle of the month they all left without nesting.

76. *Meliphaga sonora* (Singing Honey-eater). Very common in scrub and thorn bush; not seen in gum trees. Nests were found in thorn bush, in myall, and in mistletoe. One nest found building was constructed entirely of green convolvulus runners.

77. *Ptilotula penicillata rosinæ* (White-plumed Honey-eater—Greenie). Common in the gums. An albino specimen was secured.

78. *Coleia carunculata tregellasi* (Wattle Bird). A single pair seen at foot of the ranges.

79. *Acanthagenys rufogularis cygnus* (Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater). Fairly common in scrub country; no nests found.

80. *Anthus australis adelaidensis* (Pipit—Ground Lark). Very common; nests found daily. Clutch, three or four, usually three.

81. *Taniopygia castanotis* (Zebra Finch). A few small flocks seen; not breeding, but were using old nests as roosting places.

82. *Corvus coronoides perplexus* (Raven). Very common; many nests found. Clutch, three to five.

83. *Phaps chalcoptera* (Bronze-wing Pigeon). Uncommon. A nest was found in a myall at the foot of the ranges containing two fresh eggs.

(After our departure Mr. Merryfield identified two other birds.)

84. *Cosmaerops ornatus* (The Bee-eater). Found breeding in the side of a sandhill.

85. *Campbellornis personatus munnia* (Masked Wood-Swallow). A nest found on top of a dog-proof fence.

The scientific names are from Mr. G. M. Mathews' latest list of Australian birds for the sake of convenience, although the writer does not agree with many of his subspecific and generic separations.

Re-appearance in South Australia of the Swift Lorikeet (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*, Mathews).

BY EDWIN ASHBY.

The following are a few notes on the appearance of *Lathamus discolor* this year in our neighbourhood. The occurrence is particularly interesting in view of the fact recorded by Mr. M. S. Clark that the last recorded occurrence near Adelaide was in 1882.

Early in June my son, A. K. Ashby, told me that there were some strange grass parakeets about, but it was on June 23rd, 1914, when two birds flew swiftly over my head, showing the bright scarlet under the wings so characteristic of this species. I sent a memo. of the occurrence to the meeting of the S.A. Ornithological Association held on July 31st.

Since first noting this bird on the aforementioned date small flocks have passed over my property morning and evening daily.

They feed soon after sunrise, and also in the latter part of the afternoon, roosting in the thick leafy tops of the Peppermint (*Eucalyptus odorata*) quite near my house.

They have a variety of notes, none of them resembling the harsh squeaks of the Lorikeets. The most common note is a shrill whistle, reminding one of the note of *Climacteris scandens* when heard at some distance.

When feeding in the Peppermints they sometimes utter a warbling note.

While I have not myself seen them feeding on the flowers of the Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoclyon*), the only Eucalypt now in flower in our district, from all the specimens examined by me, large amounts of honey exuded from their beaks and nostrils immediately on being shot.

The crops and stomachs contained a variety of food, much triturated, including insects and seeds, and parts of the ovaries of the Peppermints. As far as I could ascertain their favourite food before sundown is the unripe seed vessels of *Eucalyptus odorata*. In an afternoon I have counted several score near my house, so we may conclude that there are many thousands of this interesting visitor scattered throughout our hill country.

The following are the measurements of the two finest specimens, male and female, that I examined:—

Male:—

Total length	10.6"	26.5 c.m.
Tail	5"	12.5 c.m.
Wing	5"	12.5 c.m.
Tarsus	0.7"	1.75 c.m.
Culmen	0.6"	1.5 c.m.

Female:—

Total length	10.2"	25.5 c.m.
Tail	5"	12.5 c.m.
Wing	0.7"	1.75 c.m.
Culmen	0.5"	1.25 c.m.

While in most of the females the two centre tail feathers were nearly one inch shorter in a fully adult specimen the measurements of the female were identical with the male.

Adult Male:—Forehead deep red, lores yellow, fore-part of crown deep blue, changing to rich green at back of crown; nape, back of neck, back and upper tail coverts being uniformly of the same rich green.

The lower portions of cheek, chin, and throat bright red, margined more or less definitely with yellow, this line joining the yellow of the lores.

Ear coverts—Upper portion of cheeks and side of neck, bluish green.

Underside—From red of throat, down to vent, yellowish green, the base of many feathers being almost a pure yellow.

In most of the more brightly coloured specimens there are some scattered bright red feathers. In one specimen before me the brilliant red of the underside of the wings is continued almost across the breast in a broad streak. Also many of the inside feathers of the leg and those of the abdomen are fringed with pink, giving the impression of narrow pink bars.

Wing—Primaries, outer webbed deep blue, narrowly margined with yellow; inside webbed dull black; fourth to ninth primaries have a white spot in centre of inner webbed, which is also broadly margined with yellowish white.

Secondaries—Narrow marginal line of yellow, then broad band of rich green, centre and inner webbed black. The inner webbed of the four inner secondaries is bright rose red. (This appears to be a constant feature.)

Greater Wing Coverts—Rich green, changing to rich blue in the outer ones.

Median Wing Coverts—Rich green, bases black.

Lesser Wing Coverts—Bright blue, with black centres.

Spurious Wing—Deep blue.

Scapularies—Green.

Shoulders—Deep maroon red.

Under Wing Coverts—Crimson, mottled with blue and green at the margin.

Tail Coverts—Upper are in some cases tipped with blue, and other with rich green. Under tail coverts, pink, margined with yellow.

Tail—Two centre feathers one inch longer than the next. This was so in the case of the best male and best female skin under examination, but in the majority of females the four centre tail feathers were much of a length, and the general colouration more subdued. Two centre feathers for three-quarters of their length, and the outer webbed of all other tail feathers for half their length, dull maroon. Inner webbed, dull bluish black. Terminal portion of tail feathers, deep dullish blue.

Flank—Splashed with bright red.

Feet and Legs—Greyish flesh colour.

The bare skin round the nostrils is larger than is the case with most of the lorikeets, and is the same colour as the legs.

Beak—Upper mandible, greyish white; lower, cream and white.

Notes on some Birds observed at Roseworthy College, and not usual to the locality.

By H. E. LAFFER,

Curator of the Roseworthy College Museum.

Ducks.—From time to time representatives of this order alight during the course of their migrations upon one or other of the open dams or tanks, and within the past fourteen years I have secured quite a number, amongst which the following species were represented:—

Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa rogersi*).

Grey Teal (*Virago gibberifrons*).

Shoveller (*Spatula rhyncotis rhyncotis*).

Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus assimilis*).

Wood Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*).

On one occasion, 1910, when, owing to excessive rainfall, a low lying piece of land was submerged, the Black Duck nested in the neighbourhood, and two young birds were secured before they could fly.

The Bald Coot (*Porphyrio melanotus*).—I have recorded once, in October, 1913, when a very nice skin was obtained. Grebes also are not usual in this class of country, where the only water is in isolated dams. The only ones noticed were in March of the present year, when specimens of both the Black-throated (*Tachybaptus ruficollis norae hollandiae*) and the Hoary-headed (*Poliocephalus poliocephalus*) were shot within a week of each other.

Occasionally the Black-tailed Native Hen (*Microtribonyx ventralis whitei*) puts in an appearance, and in 1913 nested. I failed to find the nest, but the young were seen following the mother bird. A few seasons ago these birds were very plentiful for a few weeks.

In 1912 I noticed one of the small Crakes (apparently *Porzana plumbea immaculata*), but failed to secure a specimen. [More likely to have been *Zapornia pusilla palustris*.—Eds.]

A solitary Marsh Tern (*Hydrochelidon leucopareia fluviatilis*) was shot in September, 1913; a complete stranger to this inland locality, very poor in condition.

Of other birds usually inhabiting the neighbourhood of water may be mentioned the Sharp-tailed Stint (*Limnocinclus accuminatus*), one specimen, September, 1912; and the Black-banded Dotterel (*Elseyia melanops*), which has appeared on several occasions. [A common bird inland.—Eds.]

In September, 1912, a pair of Reed Warblers came and nested in some rushes bordering a dam. Unfortunately the nest was accidentally destroyed, and the birds went away without making another.

March, 1912, was the first time I recorded the Butcher Bird (*Bulestes torquatus ethelae*). At that time two specimens were secured. Since that time two more odd ones have been seen, the last one during the past two months.

The Kingfishers have been represented, once by the Laughing Jack (*Dacelo gigas*) in the early part of this year, and by one of the smaller blue ones in 1913. Neither of these birds were destroyed.

The first skins of the Striped Honey-eater (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata neglecta*) recorded from the lower north I obtained during June, 1912. Later on another specimen was secured, and at the present time there are two which have taken up permanent residence here, and which I hope will nest this season. They come right up to the house and their cheerful song makes a most welcome note.

Other two Honey-eaters secured were the White-fronted (*Gliciphila albifrons*), October, 1912, and the Regent (*Zanthomiza phrygia tregellasi*), March, 1914, both of which were solitary specimens, and had not previously been recorded.

Only twice have I seen the Brush Wattle Bird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia*), in September, 1913, and July, 1914.

Roseworthy College.

August 28, 1914.

A Long-Lost Bird.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

The rediscovery of John Gould's *Xerophila pectoralis* must come to Australian ornithologists as a subject of great interest, one specimen only having been seen up to this, and from which the great ornithologist described the species in 1871 (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., series 14, vol. VIII.). The bird is known now as *Aphelocephala pectoralis* (Mathews' "A List of the Birds of Australia," p. 246). Several South Australian ornithologists, including myself, have hunted for years after this bird, but could never find a trace of it, and I know of late a very strong feeling has been in my mind as to the possibility of this species ever existing. On June 29th, 1914, my assistant and taxidermist (Mr. J. P. Rogers) brought in a couple of small birds, and I at once recognised them as the lost bird. Within a few hours I met with a small party myself and secured several specimens. I found this bird to extend over the country for 100 miles west of Oodnadatta, and seemed to be entirely confined to the tableland country covered with gibber stones, with small clumps of low bushes and a few mulga (*Acacia aneura*) growing in the watercourses. *A. pectoralis* was found nearly always in the company of *A. nigricincta* and another species which was very numerous and resembled both *A. leucopsis* and *A. p. castaneiventris*. Their habits seem to be identical with other members of the genus, but their call is distinctive, in being a low plaintive note, and they are not nearly so bold as the more common species, and on being alarmed they flew straight away out of gun shot. A few points of rain fell in February over this country, and these birds must have bred, because fully fledged young were collected with the parent birds, but unfortunately I did not meet with any nests containing eggs.

Description of some Interesting Birds from the Northern Territory.

BY EDWIN ASHBY.

Amongst a small collection of birds recently collected by Mr. C. E. May at the Union Bore, near Pine Creek, Northern Territory, the following show differences from their nearest allies that are worth noting.

Karua (lalage) leucomela. The three specimens (two male and one female) in the collection have the abdomen and undertail coverts white instead of buff, as in *Karua leucomela rufiventris* (Gray); also the barring is much less pronounced than is the case in specimens of the latter species from Anson Bay in the Northern Territory.

If this inland race be considered worthy of subspecific rank I suggest the name of *Karua leucomela mayi* n.s. (The Pine Creek Caterpillar-eater). +

Dulciornis alisteri. The specimens sent by Mr. May of this species are paler, and the crown of the head less darkly striated, and ground colour rufous, not chestnut as in the Melville Island bird. It is evidently a race distinct from the island form, from which I suggest it should be distinguished under the name of *Dulciornis alisteri mayi* n.s. (The Northern Territory Grass Bird). +

Pardalotus melanocephalus melvillensis (Mathews). In the specimen sent me by Mr. May the rump is yellow, and not orange as in the Melville Island race, but as some of the specimens from that island in the Adelaide Museum collection show some divergence from the typical orange form I hardly think this race deserves subspecific rank.

Neositta pileata leucoptera (Qld.). There are two specimens of this interesting little bird, one of each sex. I am unable to separate them from the north-western form, *Neositta pileata naperi* (Mathews).

Lewinornis (Pachycephala) rufiventris minor (Zietz). I received two specimens, one male and one female. I concur with Mr. Zietz that it is a good sub-species. The black tail, black ear coverts, and dark rufous breast and abdomen seem to make it a distinct race from either *falcata* (Gould) or *colletti* (Mathews).

CURRENT OBSERVATIONS.

“Wittunga,” Blackwood.

FROM EDWIN ASHBY.

Throughout the month of July the Yellow-rumped Tits (*Geobasileus chrysorrhous perksi*) were busy building in the creepers round my house.

July 25th.—The Yellow Wings (*Meliornis nova hollandiæ subassimilis*) flew out of nest in the garden fully fledged.

August 5th.—Found nest in the orchard of *Ephthianura albifrons* with one egg of *Ephthianura*, and one egg of *Neochalcites basilis mellori*. The nest was on the ground, and the cock *Ephthianura* was sitting closely.

Early in August the Pallid Cuckoo (*Heteroscenes pallidus*) was whistling freely.

August 11th.—Found nest of Warty-faced Honey-eater (*Zanthomiza phrygia tregellasi*) just completed, situated in the fork of a Peppermint (*E. odorata*) about 10 feet from the ground. The outside of nest composed of bark and grass stems; the inside well lined with soft vegetable fibre and cotton. On the 17th (six days later) there were two eggs slightly incubated.

August 21st.—Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*) fledged and left the nest.

Warty-faced Honey-eaters are exceedingly numerous in our district this year, much more so than is usual.

August .—On this date we examined a Southern Little Wattle Bird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia*) nest. This was built in a loquat in my garden. Although the bird had been sitting for several days there was only one egg. On the 23rd August the chick was a fair size, covered with black down. Is the laying of only one egg due to the exceptionally dry season, or is one a full clutch in many cases? I have found usually two eggs to form a clutch of this species.

[Clutch of one egg not uncommon.—Eds.]

Birds observed in our Garden at Kingswood.

FROM F. R. ZIETZ.

During the past week a small flock of Waxbills or Red eye-browed Finches (*Aegintha temporalis loftyi*) paid us several visits. In the early days of this State these birds were plentiful on the Adelaide plains, but since the land has been cleared and built upon they have retreated to the moist gullies of the Mount Lofty Ranges, where they seek shelter in the braken fern and dense shrubs. Their appearance is probably due to the dryness of the season. The Southern Black-headed Minahs (*Myzantha melanocephala whitei*) are again in evidence, and fre-

quently visit the almond blossoms in search of nectar. The White-backed Magpies (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota*) are pairing. During the winter they congregate in large flocks; 26 were seen on about a quarter of an acre of newly ploughed ground in our neighbourhood. Small companies of Silver-eyes (*Zosterops lateralis westernensis*) are often seen busy amongst the shrubs in search of caterpillars and aphides. Although they damage soft fruit they do a great deal of good in destroying insect pests, especially when rearing their broods. Their nests are often built amongst the lower branches of the almond trees. They also eat the berries of the Pepper tree (*Shinus molle*), the seeds of which are often found adhering to the water taps where these birds come to drink.

A pair of Blue Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus leggei*) have built their nest in the Kaffir Apple hedge about 3 feet 6 inches from the ground. It took them about a week to build, and they have now commenced to line it with feathers.

Flame-breasted or White-fronted Robins (*Littlera chrysop-tera phænicea*) have not been seen since the 9th August; they have evidently left us for their breeding grounds.

Blue-Billed Ducks (*Oxyura australis*) and Freckled Ducks (*Stictonetta nævosa*).

BY F. R. ZIETZ.

In June and July of 1896 a number of Blue-billed Ducks (*Oxyura australis*) and Freckled Ducks (*Stictonetta nævosa*) were sold at the Adelaide Fish and Game Market. Since that time these birds have not been included in consignments of game received in Adelaide. The former, which are excellent table birds, often became entangled in the fishermen's nets. They have been found breeding on the lower Murray on several occasions. The Freckled Ducks had assumed their nuptial plumage; the males are handsome birds and can readily be distinguished from the females by the elongated feathers of the crown of the head which can be erected in the shape of a pointed crest, and the crimson colour at the base of the upper mandible. Over twenty of these birds were sold at one sale.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Cockatoo Parakeet (*Leptolophus auricomis*, Mathews ; *Calopsitta novæa hollandiæ*, Gould).

To The Editorial Committee of the S.A. Ornithologist.

Gentlemen,

A false idea has been spread abroad regarding this well-known bird, namely that it is unable to raise and lower its crest. A statement to this effect appears in the Rev. W. T. Green's "Parrots in Captivity," Vol. 1, Page 33. Richard Lydekker, F.R.S., in "The Royal Natural History," Vol. IV., Page 110, remarks upon "the feathers of the crest which cannot be depressed," and even Dr. Leach in his admirable work, "An Australian Bird Book," on Page 94 refers to "its immovable crest." In the illustrations the bird's crest is depicted in the first of these books erect, in the second, partially raised, and in the third, flat down on the head. I think I may concede that when perching the bird generally carries its crest erect, but I feel certain that when feeding quietly on the ground the crest is always depressed.

I am, etc.,

M. SYMONDS CLARK.

Knightsbridge, August 26th, 1914.

To The Editorial Committee of the S.A. Ornithologist.

Gentlemen,

As this magazine is the organ of the S.A. Ornithological Association its value would, I think, be much enhanced by the publication of the reports of the monthly meetings instead of giving merely the very meagre notice of the Annual Meeting. We are told that a most successful year is recorded. Why not give particulars of the successes? Of the several sub-species discovered, excepting in two instances (in which only one bird is

named), we have no clue to the order, family, genus, or species. Regarding *Calyptorhynchus banksi stellata*, how did Capt. White prove what is stated regarding the colouration of the under surface of the tail? What were the colours in the female and young male?

I desire also to suggest that when a new name for an old species is used it should be followed by the name given by Gould, and that reasons for the alteration should be given.

Most of your readers, I imagine, do not possess a copy of Matthews' newest list. What is the name of the book, and where is it obtainable? As Gould himself named *Ptilotis penicillata*, which he said was rarely met with in New South Wales, but was very abundant in South Australia, it would seem probable that it was named from South Australian specimens. If so should not its third name be *penicillata* instead of *whitei* under the new system? Mr. A. Zietz found a bird almost exactly like it, but much smaller, at Lake Callabonna. Surely this Northern White-plumed Honey-eater is not the one which is entitled to the double *penicillata*.

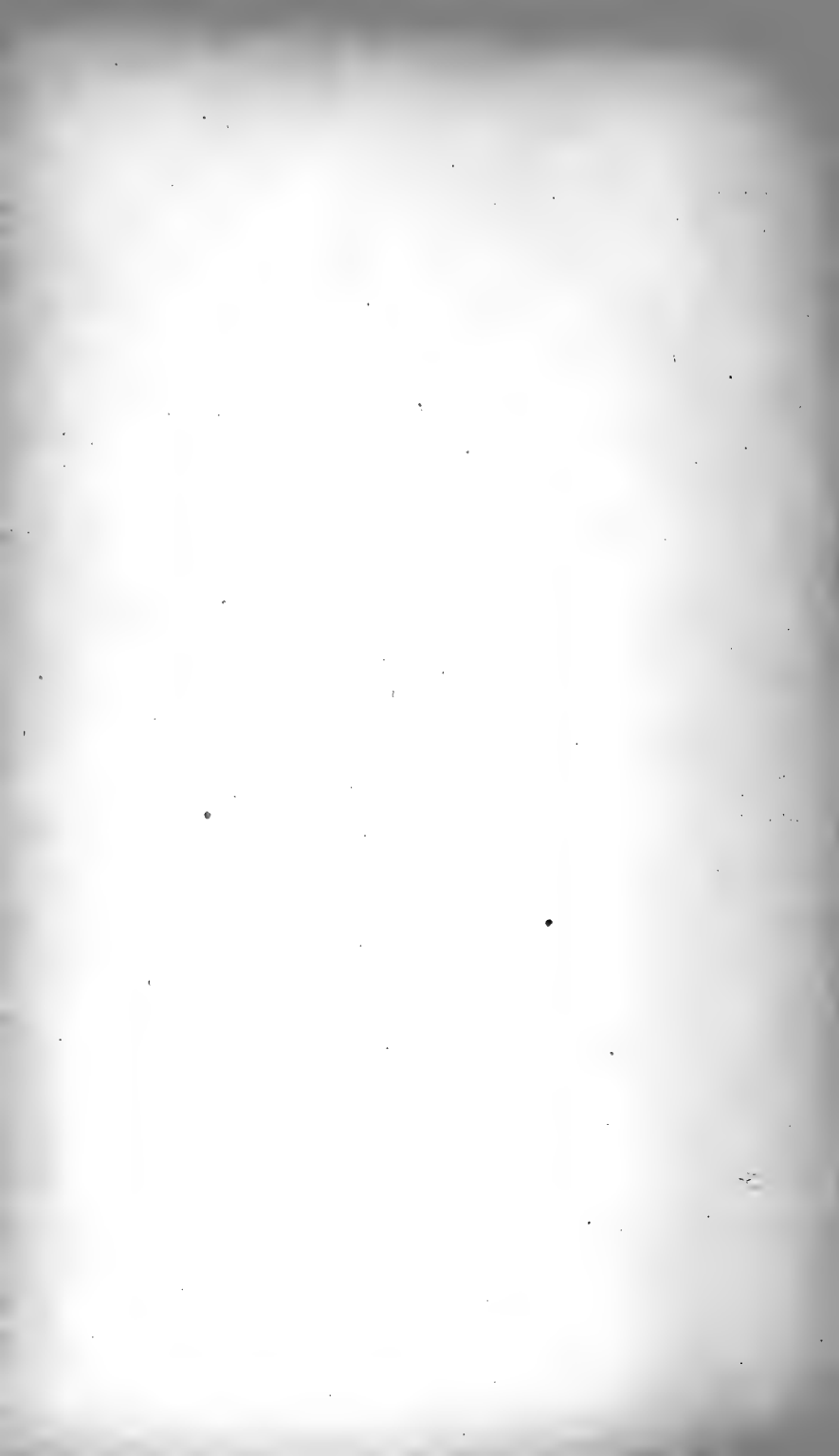
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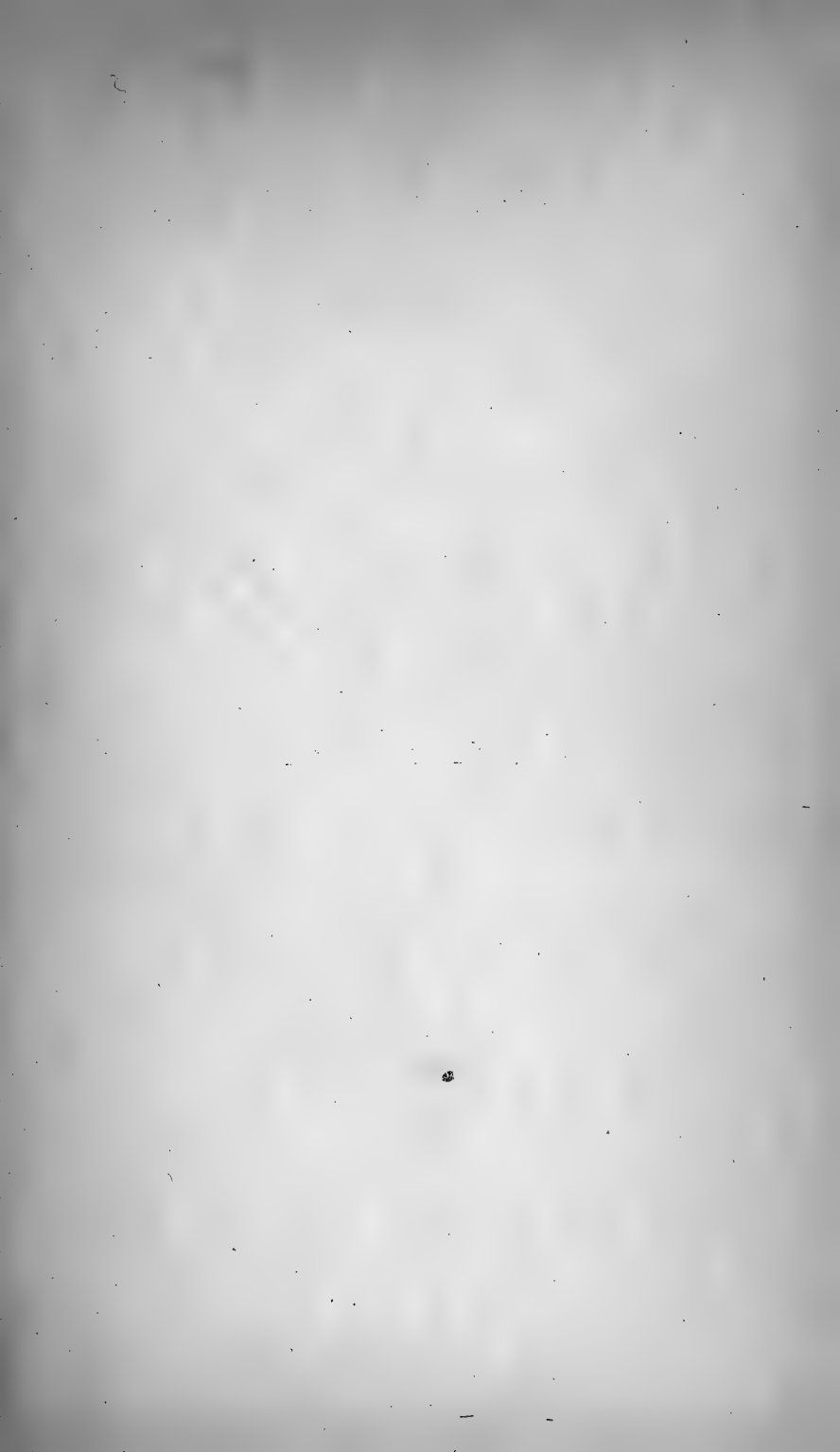
M. SYMONDS CLARK.


Knightsbridge, August 26th, 1914.

[Mr. Clark's suggestion that an extract of all the minutes should be published will be carried out.—Eds.]









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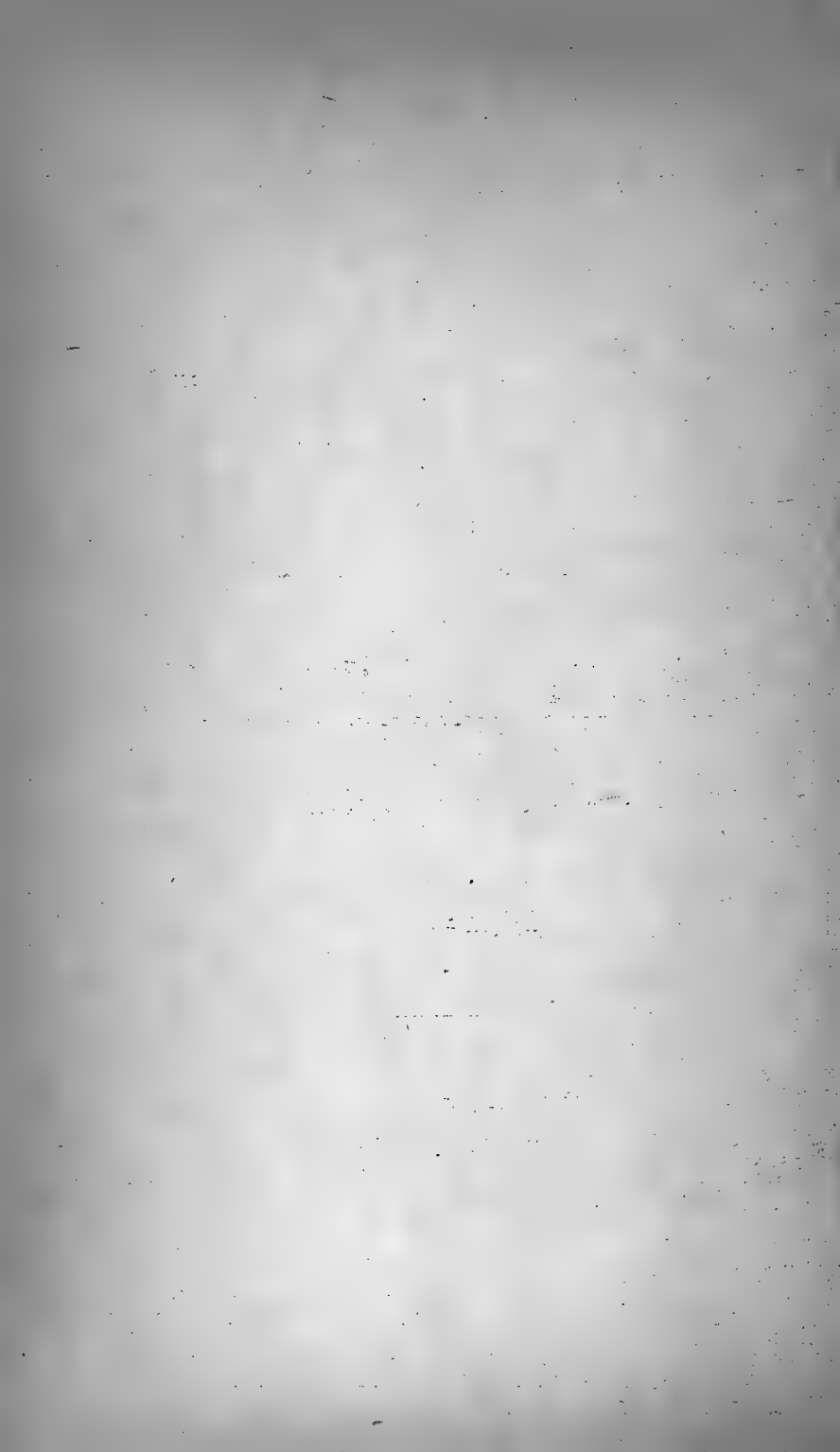
A Magazine of Ornithology.

JANUARY, 1915.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

MESSRS. F. R. ZIETZ,
A. M. MORGAN
S. A. WHITE,
R. CROMPTON.

Price, 2/-



THE
South Australian
ORNITHOLOGIST.



Editorial Committee :

Messrs. F. R. ZIETZ
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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

JANUARY, 1915.

[PART 1.

Notes on some of the Birds observed on Mount Dandenong, Victoria, October, 1914.

The Lyre bird was seen several times. There were evidences of their scratchings in all the gullies visited. Although the season was too far advanced to hear them calling, on most mornings about 7 a.m. one could be heard in a gully near the house where we stayed, going over a series of warbling or gurgling notes, uttered apparently while feeding amongst the fern. It could hardly be called a song although the notes reminded one somewhat of the Blackbird. As we drove up through the township of Mount Dandenong a Lyre bird was calling in a series of loud, rather unpleasing notes repeated monotonously without variation. This particular bird has, we were informed, been in continuous occupation of this particular gully that runs right into the centre of the township. My informant said that in the calling season this bird imitated the varied sounds of the township. Perhaps the most interesting bird met with was the Victorian Pilot bird (*Pycnoptilus floccosus sandlandi*, Mat.). I should judge that several pairs frequent most of the gullies. Their full, rich song was most striking, being a run of about seven to ten notes, the closing notes of the song having some faint resemblance to the swish of the stock whip, which is developed so remarkably in the song of *Psophodes*.

The *Pycnoptilus* have a strong vein of curiosity. On several occasions on hearing the note of the male I sat down under thick growths of hazel, musk, and other bushes where one could see some distance amongst the stems. It was not long

before the cock bird, followed a few yards behind by the hen, ran out from under a log and continued to travel in a semi-circle round me about 15 yards distant in a series of short runs and rapid jerky movements: every few moments it would utter its short song. Although so near it was mostly hidden by some branch or fallen trunk. While the tail is erected at an angle it was not carried erect as in *Malurus*.

I did not hear the hen bird utter any note, but simply follow the cock at a distance of a few yards. I did not see them on any occasion rise into the bushes, but on several occasions watched them run over fallen tree trunks.

The Victorian Coach Whip bird (*Psophodes olivaceus scrymgeouri*, Mat.) were very numerous in the high fern and low scrub that covered the wider portion of the valley. They were very tame. We had several opportunities of hearing the hen finish the song of the cock: on one occasion the hen was on the opposite side of the cart track to the cock.

Although I met with *Climacteris erythroptera* (the red-brown Tree Creeper) at this spot on the occasion of my visit three years ago I was unable to identify it on this occasion. Its near neighbour *Climacteris leucophaea* (white-throated Tree Creeper) was very numerous, owing to the lofty nature of the trees upon which they search for their food it was impossible to distinguish between the two species at the height above the ground at which they were usually seen. Unless there is some marked distinction in the notes of the two species it is quite possible that *C. erythroptera* is not uncommon but difficult to locate.

A flock of gang gang cockatoos was heard in the tops of the lofty gums. *Platyercus elegans* and *Platyercus crinitus* were both fairly common. The bronze, pallid, and fantailed cuckoos were numerous, the latter in great numbers uttering its full breeding notes that are rarely heard in South Australia.

The Victorian scrub wren (*Sericornis longirostris*) was in numbers, running about the fern like mice. One was in the usual position of hunting for insects on a small tree, some 20 ft. from the ground. The song of the male is very pleasing, but rather weak in volume. The green rumped Shrike robin (*Eopsaltria australis viridior*) was nesting, one nest with young was decorated with long strips of bark, but no lichen. Perhaps the bird that lent most charm to the gullies was the Vic-

torian Thickhead, *Pachycephala pectoralis youngi*. There were many pairs in each gully. The cock birds, resplendent in their gold and black and white plumage, would pour out their rich and varied notes to listeners only a few feet away. I think we have no bird whose notes more closely resemble those of the nightingale. The more retiring Timixos (*Pachycephala olivacea tregellasi*), Allied Olive Thickhead, were seen several times.

The Mountain Thrush (*Oreocincla lunulata dendyi*) were to be seen in the early morning and evening feeding on the damp moss-covered logs in the bottom of the gullies. The Victorian Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*) had adopted the note of the Australian Oriole (*Mimeta sagittata*), and added the same to its repertory. I was misled on several occasions by this note. The Oriole is fairly common in the more open forest country at the foot of the mountain, but I did not note it near the summit.

One pair of the charming little Rose-breasted robin (*Belchera rosea* Gld.) were met with far up the gully in the thick low scrub, and a deserted nest in the fork of a sapling about 8 ft. from the ground. But strange to say that a breeding male in female plumage was shot out of the top of one of the high gums, where it had been feeding out of gunshot for some time.

EDWIN ASHBY.

Heteroscenes pallidus—Pallid Cuckoo.

THE GREAT DISSIMILARITY BETWEEN SEXES.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

In all ornithological works which have come under my notice the plumage of the Pallid Cuckoo is stated to be the same in both sexes. For many years I have had grave doubts about this. After several years of close observation in districts where this bird is very common, and after handling over thirty birds in the flesh I can positively say that there is a vast difference between the sexes in adult plumage. Mr. G. M. Mathews put this question to me in 1911 just before we left for Eyre's Peninsula in that year, and I promised to try and prove my suppositions as to

coloration and call notes of each sex. We were lucky to meet with great numbers of these birds on their annual migration south on this trip, also the following year in the Gawler Ranges. Brief notes of these two trips have appeared in *The Emu*, Vols. XII., p. 2.; XIII., p. 16. I have supplied Mr. Mathews with my field notes on this bird, but seeing it will be some time before these notes appear in print it may be as well that I give a short account of my observations.

In August and September, 1911, while working over an extended piece of country on Eyre's Peninsula, the pallid cuckoo was met with in numbers coming from the north. They were calling all day long in their monotonous series of notes like the running of the scale, in fact, when there was the slightest moonlight or bright starlight their call was often heard in the silent watches. Each day specimens were collected, and on being dissected were found to be males. Not one female bird was procured during the trip. When passing through the Gawler Ranges in August and September of 1912 we again came upon these birds travelling south in great numbers. The first five specimens taken were all females, and there seemed to be more of that sex than males. A great deal of time was put into observations on this bird. There were no young birds, and every female handled had well-developed ovaries, in many cases within a few hours of being laid. Every one of these females had the rusty brown and grey mottled plumage. All males were in their full plumage, and there was little or no variation in their colouration, the white spot at the back of the head varied in size in some specimens. One female on being shot deposited an egg upon the ground, and many others contained eggs nearly as fully advanced.

The males were calling loudly in their long-drawn call, but the females only uttered a short harsh cry repeated once or twice, and this while on the wing at times.

The adult male has all the under surface gay under tail coverts nearly white, slightly barred with brown. Upper surface greyish brown, the primaries and tail feathers much darker. Inner webs of primaries barred with white. Tail feathers barred with white, two centre ones only showing white on the edges. On the back of the head a very conspicuous white spot. Upper tail coverts elongated, forming plum-like feathers, most pronounced at breeding time. Female.—Under surface brownish grey, becoming lighter on the abdomen. All upper surface dark brown, mottled

with light rufous. Markings of upper side of primaries and tail feathers buff instead of white. Upper tail coverts delicate plum-like feathers, but not so pronounced as in the male.

Note.

It was intended that reports of the proceedings of the Association should appear in this issue, but owing to the illness of the Hon. Secretary they will not appear until the next number.

Birds Found Nesting at Blackwood on October 25th last.

BY A. M. MORGAN.

Pseudartamus cyanopterus—Dusky wood swallow.—Bird sitting.

Campbellornis personatus munnia—Masked wood swallow.—Many nests building or with two eggs.

Campbellornis superciliosus—White-browed wood swallow.—Many nests building or with two eggs.

Pardalotus punctatus—Spotted Diamond bird.—Nest with four fresh eggs.

Pardalotus punctatus xanthopygus — Yellow-rumped Diamond bird.—A pair seen digging out a tunnel on flat ground. Another tunnel was found which probably belonged to this bird, but it could not be identified with certainty. These birds are readily distinguishable by their notes. That of *P. punctatus* is a double note, rather high pitched, like "pew-ter." That of *P.P. xanthopygus* is also a double note, the first high pitched, followed after an interval of a second by a low-pitched note, not audible for more than 20 or 30 yards.

Phaps chalcoptera—Bronzewing pigeon.—Bird sitting.

Seisura inquieta—Restless flycatcher—Nest, with bird sitting.

Grallina cyanoleuca—Murray Magpie.—Bird sitting in nest overhanging River Sturt.

Neochalcites basalis mellori—Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo.—A fresh egg found built into the lining of a *Malurus* nest.

Hirundo neoxena—Welcome swallow.—Two nests built on overhanging cliff.

Lagenoplastes ariel—Bottle swallow.—numerous nests under a stone bridge and on cliffs of River Sturt.

Ptilotula penicillata whitei—Greenie.—Two nests, one with young, one building.

Melithreptus gularis loftyi—Black-chinned Honey-eater.—Two nests, one building, one with bird sitting.

Description of the Eggs of *Eyramytis Goyderi* Gld previously undescribed.

BY EDWIN ASHBY.

Eyramytis goyderi Gld., Syn. *Amytornis goyderi*.

The Lake Eyre grass wren.

The nest, containing two eggs, with the parent birds was obtained at Douglas Creek, near William Creek, Central Australia, in January, 1913, by my friend, Mr. J. R. B. Love, to whom I am indebted for this opportunity of describing this hitherto undescribed egg.

Mr. Love was able to secure the parent birds. One is in my collection, and the other in the Adelaide Museum. The egg is in the collection of Mr. Love. Nest was placed in a blue-bush close to the ground, domed, side entrance, and was formed of blue-bush twigs and grasses. There were two eggs, one broken, the other being the specimen now described. The egg is thick oval in form, shell, close grained, smooth and slightly lustrous, pinkish cream ground colour, thickly sprinkled with small irregular-shaped spots and blotches of orange brown, interspersed with blotches of a pale purplish brown, which become confluent at the larger end, forming a well-defined zone or cap. Length 21 mm. x 15 mm.

In comparing this egg with an egg of *Cinctorhamphus cruralis cantatornis* Gld. I find the ground colour in *A. Goyderi*

is a much richer and deeper cream than in *C. cruralis*. The bright orange-brown blotches correspond very closely in shade in both eggs, though much more thickly distributed in the *Eyramytis* under review.

Note.—Mr. Love informs me that the parent bird crouched in the blue-bush, allowing him to approach and almost close the hand over it, when it flitted to the next bush. This species was seen at intervals from Douglas Creek to Barrow Creek.

Order Passeriformes, Family Sylviidae, Genus Malurus.

Malurus cyaneus leggei—Southern Blue Wren.

Adult Male.—Crown of head, feathers on side of lower mandible extending below the eye, cheeks, ear coverts, and a broad crescent-shaped patch on upper back cerulean blue; a broad line from lores passing above the eye velvety black, joining the broad collar of the neck, which is similarly coloured. Back, rump, and upper tail coverts velvety black. Under Surface.—Throat and upper portion of breast blue black, narrowly margined below by a velvety black band, remainder of breast, abdomen and under tail coverts greyish white. In some individuals the greyish white feathers of the breast are washed with blue. Flanks greyish buff, washed with light blue; thighs greyish brown. Wings.—Primaries brown, outer webs of secondaries and upper wing coverts washed with blue. Tail.—Blue, darker above than below, indistinctly narrowly barred with dark blue and tipped with white. Bill.—Black, legs and feet brown. Immature males resemble females in plumage.

There is still some doubt regarding the seasonal changes of plumage in the male blue wren. It is certain that fully plumaged males are to be seen in plenty at all seasons of the year, and it is also known that captive birds have changed to the brown plumage in winter, to resume their full plumage again before the spring; on the other hand individual males have been watched throughout the year and observed not to change at all. The probabilities are that all males do not change every year. It is also probable that all birds do not

change at the same time, and the period in winter plumage being short the moult, as it were, overlaps. Old males in winter plumage are distinguishable from the females by the black bill and the absence of the brown feathers about the lores and eyes.

Adult Female.—The whole of the upper surface, wings and tail brown, under surface greyish white; rufous feathers encircling the eye. Bill and legs reddish brown.

Total length, 4.85 inches. Wing, 2.05; tail, 2.45; tarsus, .9; bill, .49.

Distribution.—All the southern coastal parts of South Australia, as far west as Warrow, but nowhere extending far inland and never found in salt bush country. Favourite situations are well-wooded gullies, with thick undergrowth. They are also common on the Adelaide Plains and coastal sandhills, where there is good cover for them. Most gardens of any size in the city and suburbs have a resident pair or two. They are very local, each family having its own particular run, from which they drive away all intruders of their own species.

Habits.—Early in spring they are to be found in small flocks, generally consisting of a full-plumaged male and four to seven females and young males. From this fact they have gained an undeserved reputation for polygamy. The males are pugnacious and fight one another whenever they meet. They will even fight their own reflections in a mirror or window. They will sometimes band together for mutual protection. On one occasion three newly-fledged young were disturbed from some bracken, and at once three fully plumaged males appeared, and each went to the assistance of a fledgling. At mating time the male shows much excitement, puffing out the ear coverts, erecting the feathers of the crown and the back and shoulders, with the wings half spread and the tail depressed, displaying all his beauties for the captivation of the female, who for her part does not appear to be much impressed.

Food.—This consists of ants, aphides, small moths and insects. When semi-domesticated they will eat bread and cake crumbs. The greater part of the food is taken on the ground or in the branches of the undergrowth. Occasionally a flying insect is taken on the wing. The tail is carried erect and vibrated up and down and from side to side when moving slowly. When chasing an escaping insect it is carried horizon-

tally. They move on the ground by a series of long hops, and when pressed can get up an extraordinary pace.

Nest.—This is built near or even upon the ground in some thick bush or long grass, but if no suitable bush be handy they may build at a height of 5 or 6 feet. The nest is made externally of dried grasses and lined with fur or feathers. The opening is large and near the top, the back of the nest being brought over to form a hood. The female sits on the nest with the tail carried over her back. The male does not sit, but assists in building the nest and feeding the young. He also feeds the female whilst sitting. They are favourite hosts of the narrow billed bronze cuckoo. The eggs are usually three, rarely four in number. The ground colour of blown eggs is white; the spots are bright brick red, sometimes large and scanty, sometimes small and plentiful. Most eggs show a more or less distinct ring of spots at the thick end. The breeding season lasts from September to January, and during this time two and sometimes three broods are reared.

Average measurement of 10 eggs, 1.71 cm. x 1.29 cm.

Largest egg, 1.75 cm. x 1.35 cm.

Smallest egg, 1.70 cm. x 1.25 cm.

Song.—A melodious trill uttered from the top of a small bush or tuft of grass. Both sexes sing, but the male more than the female. At pairing time the note of the male is quite different from the usual one, being then a sort of running note difficult to describe.

Maluri Found in Central Australia.

BY S. J. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

In the Report on the work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia three species of *Malurus* are recorded, *i.e.*—

Malurus melanotus.—Black backed Superb Warbler.

Malurus lamberti.—Lambert's Superb Warbler.

Malurus leucopterus.—White-winged Superb Warbler.

This list came out in September, 1896.

In 1911 the Barclay Expedition passed through the central regions, and Mr. G. F. Hill published his list in The

Emu. Vol. 12, p. 238, and here we find that Mr. Hill's observations only allowed him to make sure of two species of *Malurus* between Oodnadatta to some distance north of the Macdonnell Ranges, namely, *Malurus assimilis*, purple-backed Wren Warbler; *Malurus cyanotus*, white-winged Wren Warbler.

After thoroughly working the region under notice I feel perfectly sure that *M. melanotus*, *M. lamberti*, or *M. assimilis* do not occur there, and from a large series of specimens collected the following species are those to be found in the centre of our continent:—

Malurus melanotus callainus—Turquoise Wren.—This is one of, if not the most, beautiful of the family. On approaching the Macdonnell Ranges this little gem is met with amongst the mulga scrub, a locality for which it shows a strong preference to any other, and not once did I see it frequent salt-bush country. It flew high, often over the top of the mulga scrub, and would remain amongst the tops of the trees for hours at a time, but frequently like other members of the genus, captured much of its food on or close to the ground. This bird has a very distinct colouration from *M. melanotus*. This and many distinctive traits in its character in my mind entitles it to specific rank. *M. melanotus*, which is confined to the low mallee belts along the River Murray, is seldom if ever seen far from undergrowth, and when alarmed will skulk away amongst the thickest cover near the ground, while *M.m. callainus* has a peculiar distribution. Occurring on the west side, at the head of Spencer Gulf (where my father procured the type specimens), across through the Gawler Ranges, then along the south side of Lake Torrens, where Dr. Morgan studied it very closely at the time of nidification, and now we find it along the foothills of the Macdonnell Ranges. On being alarmed it flew up on to the top of the highest mulga tree, passing from one tree to another till the bird was lost sight of.

Leggeornis lamberti morgani—Morgan's Wren.—Strange to say, this bird is closely associated with the preceding species, and Mr. Keartland tells us in the proceedings of the Horn Expedition that he procured at one shot a specimen of each, *Malurus melanotus* and *Malurus lamberti*, which birds without the slightest doubt refer to *M.m. callainus* and *M.l. morgani*. I procured my type specimen from the Gawler Ranges, where *M.m. callainus* was fairly plentiful, and throughout the central region they are found associated with one another. *Leggeornis*

lambergi assimilis is a distinct Sub. sp., and although found in the Flinders Ranges does not occur where the above two species are found.

Hallornis cyanotus—White-winged Wren.—This is a common bird throughout the central region, and is a true saltbush lover, seldom, if ever, seen in scrub or timber country. Very often it is the only bird to be found out upon the vast low saltbush plains. The male when, in full nuptial dress, is very shy, and extremely clever in keeping out of sight, especially considering his very striking plumage. His whereabouts is often betrayed by the strange plaintive note of his more sombre-coloured companions. The white-winged wren enjoys a great range of country, extending from twenty miles north of Adelaide to a considerable distance north of the Macdonnell Ranges.

Birds of the Cairns District, Queensland.

No. I.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

The following birds were collected by the late Captain Bowyer Bower between Cairns and Herberton in 1884-5. The numbers on the left hand are those pages of my "List of the Birds of Australia, 1913."

Captain Thomas Henry Bowyer-Bower was born at Brighton, England. His father was Captain Bowyer-Bower, of the 73rd Regiment. He died at Palmerston, Northern Territory, on the 22nd December, 1886, at the very early age of 24 years. This young naturalist made two scientific visits to Australia. On the first he went to Cairns, Queensland, and collected the birds in the list to follow. On the next occasion he went via Queensland, Thursday Island, and Palmerston, to Derby in North-West Australia, where he collected the birds that will be dealt with later on.

3. CASUARIUS CASUARIUS JOHNSONII. Australian Cassowary.

No. 149—Male.—Barron River, July 10, 1884.

No. 150—Male.—Barron River, July 16, 1884.

No. 151—Male.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 21, 1884.

On 23rd June, 1884, we started at 5.45 a.m. to hunt for Cassowaries, but saw none, though we could clearly see where they had been that morning.

On 19th August, 1884, two small Cassowaries, about the size of a Bantam, were caught. The old bird was seen with five chicks. The birds caught had the bill yellow; forehead and top of head to over the eyes hard and of a bluish horn-colour, becoming tinged with green on the edge and of a pink colour at the top; irides light slate, pupils black. The general colour of the birds was dirty white; head light rufous; upper surface striped, a broad brownish-black band down the centre of the back about an inch wide; three stripes on each side, the lowest one of which runs down the thighs. These stripes are about half an inch wide; the under surface dirty white, tinged with rufous and unmarked; the legs and toes light yellow, the claws white. The caruncles on the throat were clearly developed.

On Saturday, the 18th of October, two eggs were obtained, but on the 28th of August egg shells were found, out of which the young had just emerged. No nest was made. These birds are by no means rare, but very shy. The breeding season is from June to October.

5. *MEGAPODIUS DUPERREYI ASSIMILIS.* Eastern Scrub-Fowl.

Nos. 148—Female—167.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 12, 1884.

Length, 17 inches. Bill, dark brown; legs and feet greenish yellow, tinted with orange.

These birds are very numerous in some places.

6. *ALECTURA LATHAMI ROBINSONI.* Allied Brush-Turkey.

No. 146—Female.—Barron River, July 19, 1884.

No. 147—Male.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 12, 1884.

Length 27 inches. Head livid red, with a ring round the lower part of the neck light orange; feet dusky yellow, tinted with green.

Rather plentiful, but difficult to obtain without a good dog. On June 23 a nest was observed and the eggs were taken by the blacks.

12. *PTILINOPUS REGINA REGINA.* Red-crowned Fruit-Pigeon.

No. 143—Male.—Cairns, June 17, 1884.

Length 9.25 inches. Not common.

12. LAMPROTRERON SUPERBA. Purple-crowned Pigeon.

Plentiful, but difficult to get, for while they are all round one the thickness of the leaves prevents one from seeing them. A nest of *Macropygia* was found and the bird shot off it. A few days afterwards this beautiful little Pigeon had taken possession of the old nest and laid one egg.

13. MYRISTICIVORA BICOLOR SPILORRHOA. Nutmeg-Pigeon.

No. 144—Female.—Gordan's Camp, Cairns, October 13, 1884.

Length 15.75 inches. Bill yellowish white at the tip, becoming horn-blue at the base; feet of the latter colour, but more vivid.

Very numerous at certain seasons, when their favourite trees are white with them. The young are very good eating.

15. MACROPYGIA PHASIANELLA ROBINSONI. Northern Pheasant-Pigeon.

A common and stupid bird. Fourteen birds were shot out of a flock of eighteen, without their flying more than fifty yards between their two favourite trees. One, shot on June 9, 1884, measures 15.75 inches. In June they were in bad plumage, but very fat. They looked splendid as they flew through the dense scrub. The specimen saved had no secondaries and could hardly fly. On the 19th of December a nest with one egg was found, and a few days later the young one was hatched. At two days old it was covered with down of a tan-colour.

15. CHRYSAUCHENA HUMERALIS HUMERALIS. Eastern Barred-shouldered Dove.

One was killed on June 15, 1884, at Cairns.

16. GEOPELIA PLACIDA PLACIDA. Northern Ground-Dove.

No. 145—Male.—Cairns, June 2, 1884.

Length 8.5 inches. Numerous and always very tame. Sometimes they will enter the tent for food.

28. PORPHYRIO MELANOTUS NEOMELANOTUS. Northern Bald Coot.

No. 159—Female.—Scrubby Creek, January 17, 1885.

Length 18.75 inches. Irides brownish red; legs and feet pink, except the joints and under parts of the toes, which are

of a lilac-grey; bill and frontal plate bright red. Quite common in the swamps round Scrubby Creek.

29. *FULICA ATRA TASMANICA.* Eastern Coot.
Common on the lagoons. Two were shot on February 2, 1885, near Cairns; they were excellent eating.
54. *HÆMATOPUS OSTRALEGUS LONGIROSTRIS.* Eastern Pied Oyster-catcher.
No. 152—Male.—Gordan's Camp, July 2, 1884. Common.
73. *IREDIPARRA GALLINACEA NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ.* Eastern Comb-crested Jacana.
No. 160—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 18, 1885. Common.
74. *STILTIA ISABELLA.* Australian Pratincole. June 15, 1884.
81. *EGRETTA GARZETTA IMMACULATA.* Lesser Egret.
No. 157—Female.—Barron River, August 2, 1884.
Irides light greenish yellow, base of bill and space round the eye yellow; legs and feet black. Common.
82. *NOTOPHOYX NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ.* White-fronted Heron.
No. 156—Male.—Barron River, August 10, 1884.
82. *MYOLA PACIFICA.* White-necked Heron.
No. 153—Male.—Cairns, August 28, 1884.
No. 154—Female, 155.—Cairns, August 7, 1884.
83. *NYCTICORAX CALEDONICUS AUSTRALASIÆ.* Night-Heron.
No. 158. Barron River, August 4, 1884.
Common. Length 24.75 inches.
91. *ANAS SUPERCILIOSA ROGERSI.* Black Duck.
No. 161. Peterson's Pocket, December 12, 1884.
Common. Length 23.5 inches.
93. *NYROCA AUSTRALIS.* White-eyed Duck.
No. 162. Cairns. The only specimen obtained.

97. MICROCARBO MELANOLEUCOS. Little Cormorant.
Nos. 163-164. Barron River. August 25, 1884.
Length 23.5 inches. Common.
101. PELECANUS CONSPICILLATUS CONSPICILLATUS. Eastern Pelican.
Common.
103. ASTUR CLARUS COOKTOWNI. Northern Grey Goshawk.
No. 7—Male.—Barron River, September 4, 1884.
Length 16.75 inches. Irides brown, eyelid yellow; cere yellow, orange on top; legs and feet yellow.
103. ASTUR NOVEHOLLANDIE ALBOIDES. Northern White Goshawk.
No. 8—Female.—Dry Creek, October 14, 1884.
Length 18.5 inches. Irides dull orange, cere bright yellow; feet the same, but not so vivid.
104. ACCIPITER CIRROCEPHALUS CIRROCEPHALUS. Collared Sparrow-Hawk.
No. 9—Male.—Gordan's Camp, October 15, 1884.
Length 12.25 inches. Irides yellow; legs yellow.
The specimen obtained had caught a small bird close to the camp. It flew in the scrub; some time afterwards it again appeared, and went into a tree and was easily shot. Seen about Cairns and Herberton.
105. EUROAETUS AUDAX AUDAX. Wedge-tailed Eagle.
Observed on two occasions on the tablelands over the Cairns-Herberton Range, which is about 2,000 feet above sea-level.
107. CUNCUMA LEUCOGASTER. White-bellied Sea-Eagle.
No. 1—Male (immature).—Peterson's Pocket, December 2, 1884.
Length 31.5 inches, from tip to tip of wing 6 feet 8 inches.
Frequently seen round Cairns and on the Barron River. The one obtained was sitting on a tree about fifty yards from the camp and its sharp cry called attention to it.

107. HALIASTUR INDUS LEUCOSTERNUS. White-headed Sea-Eagle.

No. 2—Male.—Cairns, June 23, 1884.

Length 18 inches, 46 inches from tip to tip of wing. Irides clear brown; cere yellow, bill bluish horn-colour, becoming yellowish white at the tip.

[To be continued.]

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

[III.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST.]

Leaving Mount Mylor, near which Samuel White and his brother had camped, they passed out through Thornton's Gap, and followed a creek going north. This creek was dry and sandy, but during heavy rain it had overflowed and filled clay pans some little way back, and these supplied water for the brothers and their horse. The bird life was of the greatest interest, and new species came to their hands every day. Not only birds, but seeds, plants, land shells, insects, and many other specimens were collected. Great difficulties were experienced in many places in getting their light cart over the country, and in some localities they were days making little headway. Crossing over the tableland country they struck the Burdekin River, and followed it for a long distance in a northerly direction. Holding to his original plan of making the Gulf of Carpentaria Samuel White and his brother left the Burdekin and pushing further and further into a dry country they found that water was scarcer than ever, and had almost given up hope of finding the precious fluid when they came upon a hole containing about two gallons. Unfortunately a dead kangaroo, in an advanced stage of decomposition, lay in it. The water was boiled and half given to the horse and the remainder was strained and boiled several times, the scum being taken off at each boiling.

Soon after this it became only too apparent that these two naturalists would have to turn back, and from all accounts this they most reluctantly did, making up their minds to continue down the coastal belt. Records show that they saw one of Leichardt's marks—a large L cut deeply into a tree. The only maps available at this time were worse than useless. Watercourses were shown as having their sources in ranges marked on the maps, but the explorers found these markings to be incorrect in many cases, as no rivers were flowing anywhere near the ranges indicated. To turn back for the better watered country was easy enough, but to get there was quite a different matter. The few waters met with were drying up behind the travellers, and they had to hasten on—a difficult performance in such a rough country. One evening, after many privations and hardships, the two brothers tied up their horse to prevent it from straying and lay down, feeling sure that their end had come, for all that day the elder brother, Samuel, had searched the country around the camp for water, and although there were many likely spots none was found. Weary and sad he had more fallen than laid himself down, and neither brother spoke to the other. The stars came out one by one, and the pall of night spread itself over the land, and we can surmise that the thoughts of these two men did not widely differ from those of other explorers who have found themselves in the same difficulties. All at once a bird call sounded clear upon the night air. Samuel White raised himself upon one elbow and listened intently. He recognised the call instantly as that of the Satin Bower Bird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*), and he also knew that this bird would not be far from water. Again the call was heard, a rush of wings followed, and the bird was plainly seen passing overhead. The ornithologist, by the aid of a star, marked the direction in which the bird had flown, and then with parched throat and swollen tongue he crawled out in the direction the bird had gone. After a painful search the water was found, and then the tale is told of how the brothers struggled in their weak state to keep their horse from drinking too much—a mistake which they made themselves, and which brought on dysentery. They were very ill, and had the natives come upon them in this weak state they would have been easy victims. Although ammunition was of priceless value to them they were forced to discharge a gun at intervals during the nights on which they knew that natives were following them. I do

not think that it would be out of place here to allude to the saving of life by the knowledge of birds' habits. We know that this is by no means a solitary case. Only a short time ago Dr. Wm. MacGillivray, of Broken Hill, was telling me how his father's life, and that of a companion, was saved almost in the same way as the above, but in this case it was the flight of pigeons which attracted the attention of the early pioneer in Central Australia after he and his companion had given up all hope of finding water. There is no doubt many more would be added to the list of saved if they had only the knowledge of the habits of birds. The Satin Bower Bird had led Samuel White to a waterhole in a river, for which he had been searching for weeks, and he discovered it was many miles to the south of the position marked on the map. They followed the river as well as the nature of the ground would permit. Often belts of jungle could only be penetrated by cutting a passage for horse and cart, and the contour of the country often lead them miles out of their course. Bird life was more numerous here because many large waterholes had not dried up, but they crossed many small creeks coming down from the ranges which were quite dry. After some time it was found that this river was taking a turn into the hills, and that it would be necessary for them to cross it, so they searched for a crossing, but a good one could not be found. The side on which the brothers were was low and covered in a dense jungle to the very edge of the water, while the opposite bank was high and steep. Cutting a track through the sub-tropical jungle to the river they forded the horse and cart across the stream. But difficulties began on the other side. When half-way up the cart capsized, and with the horse rolled down the steep bank, where it was stopped by a fallen tree lying right across its course, and between this tree and the bank the mare became firmly wedged on her back, kicking and struggling frantically. The tree, being about two feet in diameter, dead and hard, it took the greater part of a day to cut it through with a blunt tomahawk before the mare could be released, and she was so numbed when she rolled into the water that the travellers despaired of saving her, but she eventually recovered. The boxes, which contained specimens, stores, ammunition, guns, etc., broke open and their contents were thrown into the water. The cart had to be taken to pieces and hauled back to the place from whence it had fallen, and there put together, and while doing this one wheel fell back

and the tire struck Samuel White's head, cutting a fearful gash and stunning him for a time, but directly he came to himself his indomitable spirit—which was ever shown through his life—again asserted itself, for his brother relates that although the blood streamed down the side of his face and saturated his clothes, his first remark was that he would sooner die than be beaten. It was late that night before they camped on comparatively level ground.

[To be continued.]







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J. H. Riley

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Part 2.

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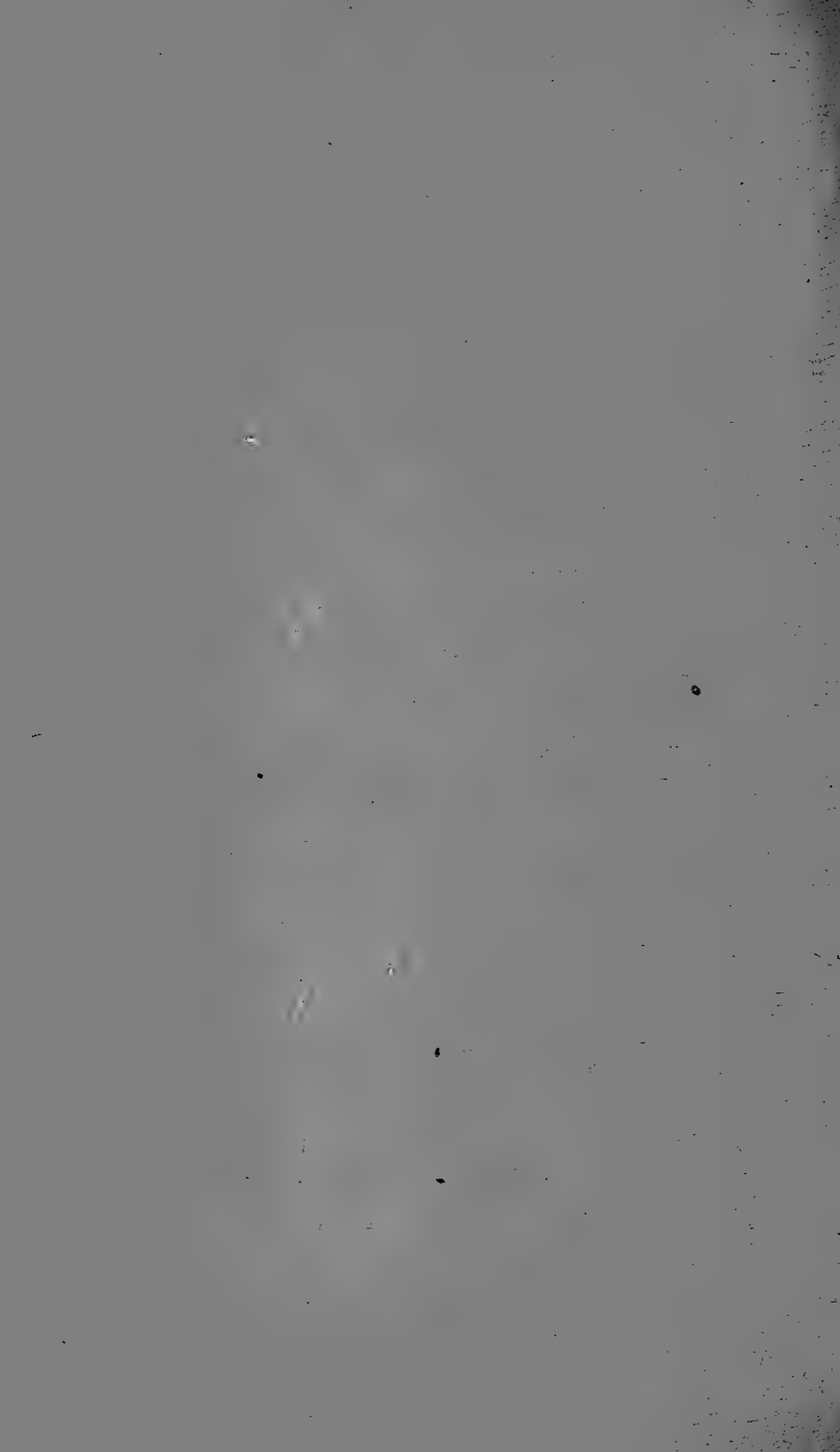
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APRIL, 1915.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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A. M. MORGAN, M.B., CH.B.
S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.
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THE

South Australian

ORNITHOLOGIST.



ERRATA.

Vol II., part 1, page 8, line 34—
“gay” should read “grey.”

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— THE —
South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

APRIL, 1915.

[PART 2.

Birds of the Cairns District, Queensland.

From Notes and Skins made by the late Capt. T. H.
Bowyer-Bower.

No. 2.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

108. *Haliaeetus spheonurus*. Whistling Eagle.
No. 165.
Common. As many as thirty have been seen rising from a flat, surrounded by mangrove, which was covered by water at high tide.
108. *Milvus korschun affinis*. Allied Kite.
No. 10—Female.—Scrubby Creek, January 1, 1885.
Length 21 inches. Irides brown; bill horn-colour; cere and feet yellow.
Common at certain seasons. They were coming about in January. Seen flying about the streets of Herberton.
110. *Baza subcristata*. Crested Hawk.
No. 11—Barron River, September 18, 1884.
Seen flying in pairs. Not common.
110. *Falco longipennis longipennis*. Little Falcon.
No. 4—Male.—Barron River, August 20, 1884.
Shot from a dead tree, where it had apparently settled for the night.
112. *Ieracidea berigora berigora*. Striped Brown Hawk.
No. 5. ? Barron River, August, 1884.
No. 6—Male.—Cairns. June 30, 1884.
Irides brown, cere bluish horn-colour.
Common both on the sea-coast and inland.

113. *PANDION HALIAETUS CRISTATUS*. White-headed Osprey.
No. 3—Female.—The Mulgrave, October 9, 1884.
Fairly common on the Barron River. The above one was shot on the wing shortly before sunset.
115. *SPILOGLAUX BOWERI*. Brown Owl.
Nos. 12 and 13—Male.—Peterson's Pocket, December 19, 1884.
Length 12 inches. Irides grey.
Common; as many as six have been put up together in the dense scrub, apparently one family.
118. *MEGASTRIX TENEBRICOZA MULTIPUNCTATA*. Northern Sooty Owl.
No. 166—Female.—Barron River, August 5, 1884.
The female was shot in a deep dry creek.
119. *TRICHOGLOSSUS NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ SEPTENTRIONALIS*. Northern Blue-bellied Lorikeet.
Nos. 116-121—Males and Females.—Cairns, June, 1884.
Length, male, 12.5, female, 11.5 inches.
Irides red, surrounded by white; bill red; legs brownish.
Common.
119. *EUTELIPSITTA CHLOROLEPIDOTA NEGLECTA*. Northern Scaly-breasted Lorikeet.
Nos. 122-126. Cairns, June 30, 1884.
Length 9.75 inches. Irides whitish brown, surrounded by pink near the pupil. Bills red; legs whitish brown.
A specimen shot near Sydney has "irides light reddish yellow, with a very narrow ring of dark red next the pupil. Bill scarlet; cere and naked space round the eye greenish white; tarsi and feet light ash-grey. May 4, 1882."
Common and nesting in holes in the trees.
121. *GLOSSOPSITTA PUSILLA*. Little Lorikeet.
No. 128—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 12, 1884.
Irides brown. Not common.
121. *OPOPSITTA DIOPHTHALMA LEADBEATERI*. Blue-faced Lorikeet.
Nos. 131, Female; 132, Male; 133, Female.—Barron River, September 30, 1884.
Length 6 inches. Irides brown; legs greenish tint.
Appears plentiful, but is often overlooked, as it makes no noise when feeding and creeps about like a mouse. The only indication of its presence is the quantity of seeds that keep dropping all the time it is feeding, but even under the very

tree it is in one can see and hear nothing of it, except by carefully watching. It only makes a noise as it leaves or arrives at a tree.

122. CALYPTORHYNCHUS BANKSII NORTHI. Northern Bank-sian Cockatoo.

Common, but difficult to obtain. If one is wounded the others will fly about, and four or five may then be shot. They are good eating.

144. EURYSTOMUS ORIENTALIS PACIFICUS. Dollar-Bird.

Nos. 38 and 39. Peterson's Pocket, December 27, 1884. Bill and feet red.

No. 40. Immature. Scrubby Creek, January 14, 1884. Length 10.25 inches. Irides brown. Common.

145. ALCYONE AZUREA MIXTA. Northern Purple Kingfisher.

No. 50. Barron River, August 26, 1884.

Length 7.5 inches. Irides brown; bill black; legs red. Common, but difficult to obtain.

147. DACELO GIGAS MINOR. Northern Brown Kingfisher.

Nos. 41, Female; 42, Male; 43, Female.—Cairns, June 21 and 27, 1884.

Length, male, 18 inches; female, 18.12 inches. Irides brown. Common; nest about forty feet up, in a hole.

147. DACELO LEACHI KEMPI. Northern Blue-winged Kingfisher.

A rare and wild bird. The laugh is entirely different from *Dacelo gigas*, and while flying it utters a kind of barking note.

148. CYANALCYON MACLEAYI BARNARDI. Northern Forest-Kingfisher.

Nos. 47 and 48—Female.—Cairns, June 13 and 30, 1884.

No. 49—Male.—Barron River, August 26, 1884.

Length 8.25 and 7.75 inches. Irides brown. Common.

Nest placed in a hole in a white ants' nest about thirty-five feet from the ground.

149. SAUROPATIS SANCTUS CONFUSUS. Little Sacred Kingfisher.

Nos. 44, Male; 45, Female.—Peterson's Pocket, December 18 and 27, 1884.

Length, male, 8.5 inches; female, 8.75 inches. Irides brown. Common in the Herberton Range.

150. *URALCYON SYLVIA*. White-tailed Kingfisher.
Appears about Cairns only at certain seasons. They arrive about January.
150. *COSMAEROPS ORNATUS ORNATUS*. Eastern Bee-eater.
No. 37. Cairns, June 15, 1884. Common.
152. *CAPRIMULGUS MACRURUS YORKI*. Large-tailed Nightjar.
No. 14. Barron River, August 13, 1884.
Common. It has a most peculiar note, which it gives out just before leaving, and for a short time after it has come out of the dense scrubs in which it seems to pass the day. The note resembles a distinct hammering noise; it is continued all through the moonlight nights.
153. *CHÆTURA CAUDACUTA CAUDACUTA*. Spine-tailed Swift.
Nos. 35 and 36. Barron River, August 5, 1884.,
Common, but difficult to obtain. Generally seen hawking about at a great height.
155. *CACOMANTIS RUBRICATUS ATHERTONI*. Northern Fan-tailed Cuckoo.
No. 140. Immature. Scrubby Creek, January 17, 1885.
159. *EUDYNAMYS ORIENTALIS FLINDERSII*. Northern Koel.
No. 141. Gordan's Camp, October 17, 1884.
Irides red; feet bluish. Not common, only a pair seen.
159. *SCYTHROPS NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ*. Channel Bill.
No. 113—Male.—Gordan's Camp, October 7, 1884.
Length 26 inches. Irides red; bare space round the eye and extending to the nostrils deep pink; feet a lighter shade. Common, but difficult to obtain. Generally seen in small parties flying very high. They continually utter their harsh notes during the night.
159. *POLOPHILUS PHASIANINUS PHASIANINUS*. Coucal.
No. 114—Female.—Cairns, June 28, 1884. Length 26.75 inches.
No. 115. McGregor's Camp, October 12, 1884. Length 24 inches.
Irides dark red; bill and feet lead-blue, the latter the lighter. Common and easily shot; a great difference in size is noticeable.
161. *COLOBURIS VERSICOLOR INTERMEDIA*. Intermediate Noisy Pitta.
Nos. 68, Female; 69.—Barron River, August 7 and September 3, 1884.

Length 8.25 and 8.5 inches. Irides brown; bill black; feet and legs flesh-colour. Common.

187. MYIAGRA RUBECULA YORKI. Northern Leader Flycatcher.
No. 56—Male.—Cairns, June 27, 1884.
Length 6.5 inches. Common.

189. MACHÆRIRHYNCHUS FLAVIVENTER SECUNDUS. Cairns
Yellow-breasted Flycatcher.
No. 57. Barron River, August 22, 1884.

Very tame, and has a peculiar note, a pretty little warbling and very characteristic song, by which one is able to follow it. Generally sits on a hanging vine between two trees, from which it catches flies, always returning to the same spot. Irides brown.

190. ORPHRYZONE KAUPI. Pied Flycatcher.
No. 55—Male.—Barron River, August 22, 1884.
Irides brown; eye yellow [?] Plentiful.

191. PIEZORHYNCHUS ALECTO WARDELLI. Long-billed Shining Flycatcher.

To the Editorial Committee of the South Australian
Ornithologist.

Gentlemen,

In Part IV., p. 31, I notice a letter from Mr. M. Symonds Clark *re Ptilotis penicillata*.

Looking up the original reference I find that Gould does not mention South Australia at all, but says Habitat Australia: locality, interior of New South Wales.

I suppose from this that Mr. Clark did not look up the matter before going into print.

Re Leptolophus. I am glad to find that Mr. Clark is convinced that this bird is able to elevate and lower its crest.

I am, etc.,

GREGORY M. MATHEWS.

Langley Mount.

Watford.

Herts, 15th November, 1914.

Order Passiformes, Family Motacillidae, Genus Anthus.

Anthus australis adelaidensis—The Southern Pipit, or Ground Lark.

Description.—Crown of head, neck, and back brown, each feather margined with reddish brown, wings and two central tail feathers blackish brown, margined with light brown, outside tail feather on either side white, inner webs marked with dark brown, shafts almost white, the next tail feather on either side white, inner webs marked with brown, shafts black. The remaining tail feathers almost black, and in some instances slightly tipped with white. Under surface buffish white, feathers on the sides of the neck, breast, and flanks having a dark blackish brown stripe down the centre, throat white, line over the eye buffish white, ear-coverts reddish brown. Iris dark brown, bill dark brown, lower mandible flesh colour, feet and legs flesh colour. Birds from the same locality very much in coloration. There is little or no difference between male and female.

Total length of skin, 147 m.m.; wing, 82 m.m.; tail, 62 m.m.; tarsus, 24 m.m.; bill, 13 m.m.

Distribution.—The whole of South Australia. It is represented throughout the whole of Australia, Tasmania, and the adjoining islands by closely allied subspecies. This bird prefers open grass land, although at times it is fairly plentiful in open forest country, but is never found in thick scrub. When scrub land is cleared for agriculture it is wonderful how soon the pipit appears, and in a few years it becomes one of the commonest birds.

Habits.—It spends practically the whole of its life upon the ground, though it may occasionally be seen perched upon a fence, or still more rarely upon a tree. It moves on the ground in a series of short, quick runs, bobbing the tail up and down two or three times each time it stops. If disturbed it hops upon a stone or other slight eminence to reconnoitre, and if further disturbed flies forty or fifty yards, then runs a few yards, stops, and runs again. If followed it will do this for perhaps half a mile, then rising to some height it will circle round and fly back to where it was first flushed. In common with other ground birds it feigns a broken wing if suddenly flushed from the nest.

Food.—Chiefly insects, which it catches upon the ground. It occasionally takes moths upon the wing, caterpillars living in the grass, and larvae and chrysales, which it finds hidden in the base of tussocks, also grass seeds to a small extent.

Flight.—Quick and slightly undulating; usually low. Now and then it may rise to a hundred feet or so, but it does not fly far unless pursued by a hawk or magpie, when it rises almost perpendicularly, keeping above its enemy, till it is often almost out of sight. So quickly does it rise that it is seldom, if ever, caught.

Song.—The song is not loud, but a very pleasing, high-pitched, trilling warble, uttered during its undulating flight. At this time it rises to a considerable altitude. When the song is finished it seems to almost fall straight down to its mate on the ground. It occasionally sings while perched upon a fence post. It only sings for a few weeks at mating time. The song and its habit of singing during its flight are very like a true lark. It also has an alarm call, which is a short chirrup, often repeated twice, uttered from its reconnoitring stone, or on leaving the ground when disturbed.

Nest.—This is placed in a depression in the ground, either made by the bird or in the footprint of a horse or cow, made when the ground is soft. It has been found in an empty jam tin, also in one instance in a broken bottle. It is often placed near a tussock of grass or small shrub, but sometimes quite in the open. The nest itself is a strong, well made, deep cup, about 7 c.m. internal diameter, composed outwardly of coarse grasses, finer grasses being used towards the lining, which is made of fine grasses, rootlets, and horsehair. Feathers and down are never used. The breeding season is extended. Fresh eggs may be found any time between the end of June and the beginning of January. The clutch is usually three, sometimes four, and two or three broods are reared each season.

Eggs.—Ground colour, greyish white, in some eggs with a faint tinge of bluish green. They are uniformly covered with small irregular spots and streaks of brown, sometimes so thickly as to completely hide the ground colour.

Average measurement of ten eggs, 2.20 c.m. x 1.64 c.m.

Largest egg, 2.35 c.m. x 1.75 c.m.

Smallest egg, 2.10 c.m. x 1.60 c.m.

Birds Observed at Stonyfell, S.A.

BY R. CROMPTON.

The following list of birds has been made up during the last 35 years by my brothers and myself.

Stonyfell is situated at the foot of the escarpment of the Mount Lofty Range, five miles directly east of Adelaide. Within a mile and a half there is a variety of country. The quartzite hilltops, covered with stringy bark scrub, intersected by deep gullies, with thick undergrowth and permanent water. The shale hill sides, clothed with peppermint gums and black wattle (acacia), interspersed with grass slopes, spreading out on to the plains. Also patches of red gum and poor land, covered with stunted red and blue gum, wattle kangaroo hedge bush and low bushes. There are also several hundred acres of vineyard, olives, orchard, and garden, and a few surface dams, which make temporary resting places for various waterfowl. Owing to successive bush fires the scrub is gradually disappearing. The poor land is also being cleared for cultivation with the aid of chemical manures, and the ever-approaching suburbs are causing many species to disappear, consequently many of the following birds may never occur again in this district. The names are taken from "A List of the Birds of Australia," by G. M. Mathews, except that binominals are used for dominant species.

(1) *Coturnix pectoralis*—Eastern stubble quail.—Fairly common in the early summer, formerly much commoner. A few used to nest; no nests found for many years.

(2) *Synoicus ypsilophorus sordidus*—Southern brown quail.—A few came in spring years ago; found one nest about 1885. This bird has long since disappeared.

(3) *Ortygodes varius*—Eastern painted quail.—Fairly common in the scrub on the hilltops.

(4) *Austrotornix velox*—Eastern painted quail.—Only visits us in the early summer; never common. Used to nest about here.

(5) *Pedionomus torquatus*—Plain wanderer.—Came in countless numbers one season in the early eighties. They were so tired and hungry that they could be killed with a stick. Some were taken by throwing a crab net over them. After a few days most of them moved on, but a few stayed for the rest

of the summer. These soon became very wild. This bird has never been seen since, no nests were found.

(6) *Geopelia placida tranquilla*—Eastern ground dove.—A recent arrival in this district, now fairly common. Has nested here for several years lately.

(7) *Phaps chalcoptera*—Bronze-winged pigeon.—This once common bird was completely exterminated by the early settlers, but since it has been totally protected, an occasional solitary bird visits us.

(8) *Hypotaenidia phillippensis australis*—Eastern buff-banded rail.—Formerly visited us every winter and nested, leaving in the early summer. This bird has been absent the last few years, probably owing to the clearing of its cover.

(9) *Neonectris tenuirostris brevicaudus*—Short-tailed petrel.—A single bird caught on the ground, from which it could not rise; apparently blown in by a gale about 1894.

(10) *Bruchigavia novahollandia ethela*—Southern silver gull.—A single bird settled here about 1889.

(11) *Lobibyx novahollandia*—Spur-winged plover. Occasionally a few rest here for a day or two; last seen 1913.

(12) *Zonifer tricolor*—Black-breasted plover.—Same as the last species, but come oftener; last seen November, 1914.

(13) *Burhinus magnirostris*—Eastern stone plover.—Usually a few present, more common than formerly; nested last year.

(14) *Herodias alba symatophora*—White egret.—A single bird shot on a dam about 35 years ago.

(15) *Notophox novahollandia*—White-fronted heron.—A single bird seen very occasionally.

(16) *Nycticorax caledonicus australasia*—Australian night heron.—A single bird has visited us on two occasions.

(17) *Botaurus poeciloptilus*—East Australian bittern.—A single bird, January, 1915.

(18) *Chenopsis atrata*—Eastern black swan.—Flocks of these birds fairly often fly over, especially at night; never known to settle.

(19) *Cercopsis novahollandia*—Cape Barren goose.—A single bird came here many years ago and stayed a day or two.

(20) *Casarca tadornoides*—Mountain duck.—A single bird settled here many years ago.

(21) *Anas superciliosa rogersi*—Black duck.—Used to come occasionally; none seen for a long time.

(22) *Virago castanea*—Eastern teal (grey teal).—Used to settle here occasionally; none for about 20 years.

(23) *Phalacrocorax carbo*—Black cormorant.—A single bird about 20 years ago.

(24) *Mesocarbo ater*—Little black cormorant.—Fairly common in 1893-1894; only a very few since.

(25) *Hypoleucus fuscescens*, or *Hypoleucus varius hypoleucus*—White-breasted cormorant.—Two birds only; last seen about 1894.

(26) *Microcarbo melanoleucus*—Little cormorant.—A very occasional bird; none seen for many years.

(27) *Circus assimilis*—Spotted harrier.—Formerly an occasional pair; not seen for many years.

(28) *Uroaetus audax*—Wedge-tailed eagle.—Still fairly common, formerly very much commoner.

(29) *Milvus korschun affinis*—Allied kite.—Occasionally seen years ago; not noted for a long time.

(30) *Falco longipennis*—Little falcon.—Occasionally met with.

(31) *Falco hypoleucus*—Grey falcon.—Not seen for many years.

(32) *Ieracidea berigora*—Striped brown hawk.—Common.

(33) *Cerchneis cenchroides*—Nankeen kestrel.—Quite common.

(34) *Spiloglaux boobook*—Boobook owl.—Quite common; may be heard any moonlight night; much more numerous than formerly.

(35) *Tyto alba delicatula*—Masked owl.—Always a few present.

(36) *Trichoglossus novae-hollandia*—Blue-bellied lorikeet.—Came in vast numbers in the autumn of 1878, then not seen for about thirty years. A few pairs seen at times during the last few years. Considerable numbers with us just at present, no doubt owing to the dry season.

(37) *Glossopsitta concinna*—Musk lorikeet.—A migrating bird; very common at times.

(38) *Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*—Purple crowned lorikeet.—Also extremely common when the gum trees are in flower.

(39) *Glossopsitta pusilla*—Little lorikeet.—Rarer than the last species, although they come along with them, in fair numbers to eat the gum tree honey.

(40) *Calyptorhynchus funereus*—Black cockatoo.—This bird has almost disappeared. Years ago they were fairly plentiful in the stringy bark ranges.

(41) *Cacatoes galerita*—White cockatoo.—At one time small flocks were seen occasionally. None seen for many years, except a flock of about 150 rested here for about two days in February, 1906.

(42) *Platyercus elegans adalaidae*—Adelaide rosella.—Always a few present; more plentiful of recent years.

(43) *Psephotes haematonotus*—Red-backed parrot.—This bird used to be fairly plentiful, but disappeared in the early eighties; none seen since.

(44) *Neonanoides chrysogaster*—Orange-bellied parrot.—A rare bird many years ago; none now.

(45) *Lathamus discolor tregellasi*—Victorian swift lorikeet.—Fair numbers came one season years ago. Three birds seen in 1914, probably this bird, but no specimens taken.

(46) *Melopsittacus undulatus*—Betcherrigah or shell parrot.—A few may be found on the grass land when the seed is ripening; unusually numerous the last three years.

(47) *Podargus strigoides*—Tawny frogmouth.—Fairly common.

(48) *Aegotheles cristata*—Owlet nightjar.—May be seen hawking moths on still moonlight nights; probably fairly common.

(49) *Alcyon azurea victoriae*—Blue kingfisher.—Was never common. Not seen for many years.

(50) *Dacelo gigas*—Brown kingfisher or laughing jackass.—Always present, although not in great numbers. Occasionally nests are found.

(51) *Sauropatis sancta*—Eastern sacred kingfisher.—Always a few present.

(52) *Cyanalcyon pyrrhopygius*—Red-backed kingfisher.—A single bird observed about thirty years ago.

(53) *Heteroscenes pallidus*—Pallid cuckoo.—Fairly common in the spring. Breeds here.

(54) *Cacomantis rubricatus*—Fantailed cuckoo.—Fairly common.

(55) *Neochalcites basalis mellori*—Narrow-billed bronze cuckoo.—Quite common.

(56) *Lamprocoecyr plagosus*—Bronze cuckoo.—Not so plentiful as the foregoing species.

(57) *Hirundo neorena*—Welcome swallow.—Very common.

(58) *Hylochelidon nigricans cayleyi*—Tree martin.—A common bird; nests in the air bricks.

(59) *Lagenoplastes ariel*—Fairy martin.—Fairly common; does not nest in this immediate vicinity.

(60) *Microeca fascians*—Brown flycatcher.—Not very plentiful; have never found its nest.

(61) *Petroeca multicolor frontalis*—Southern scarlet-breasted robin.—A common bird, may be seen at all times of the year. Nests here.

(62) *Littleria chrysoptera phoenicea*—White-fronted robin.—Single birds. Visit us very occasionally in winter.

(63) *Whiteornis goodenovii*—Southern red-capped robin.—Usually not at all common; very plentiful just now.

(64) *Melanodryas cucullata vigorsi*—Southern hooded robin.—Only an occasional bird.

(65) *Pachycephala pectoralis fuliginosa*—South Australian yellow-breasted thickhead. Not at all common.

(66) *Lewinornis rufiventris inornatus*—Southern rufous-breasted thickhead.—Quite common; nests freely. This bird has increased very much in the last ten years or so.

(67) *Rhipidura flabelifera whitei*—South Australian fantail.—Fairly common, although never found nesting.

(68) *Leucocircia tricolor*—Black-and-white fantail.—Always very common.

(69) *Seisura inquieta*—Restless flycatcher.—Fairly common, much commoner of recent years. Never found nesting.

(70) *Coracina novae-hollandiae melanops*—Black-faced cuckoo shrike.—Always a few present, sometimes in great numbers. Occasional nests found.

(71) *Morganornis superciliosus*—White-browed babbler.—A small company seen occasionally; more frequent visitors of recent years.

(72) *Cinctorhamphus cruralis cantatoris*—Southern brown song lark.—Rare; used to be more plentiful when more hay was grown in this district.

(73) *Oreocincla lunulata dendyi*—Victorian ground thrush.—Inhabits the scrub on the top of the ranges.

(74) *Ephthianura albifrons*—White-fronted chat.—Very common; nests every year.

(75) *Conopoderas australis*—Southern reed warbler.—A single bird in a crop of sorghum in 1909.

(76) *Geobasileus chrysorrhous*—Yellow-rumped tit.—Always a very common bird; nests very freely.

(77) *Geobasileus reguloides australis*—Southern buff-rumped tit.—A rare bird.

(78) *Malurus cyaneus leggii*—Southern blue wren.—Very tame and common; always several nests in the garden.

(79) *Campbellornis personatus munna*—Masked wood swallow.—Common at times, absent for long periods. This bird was unusually plentiful in October-November of 1914.

(80) *Campbellornis superciliosus*—White-browed wood swallow.—Comes and goes with *C. personatus*.

(81) *Pseudartamus cyanopterus*—Wood swallow.—A common bird. Comes in great numbers in stormy weather, evidently for the protection of the thick trees. Occasional nests found.

(82) *Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*—Victorian grey shrike thrush.—A very common, although shy, bird; seems to be increasing.

(83) *Grallina cyanoleuca*—Magpie lark.—Fairly common; very common of late years; nests.

(84) *Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconoto*—White-backed magpie.—Always very common; much more plentiful and tamer of recent years.

(85) *Falcunculus frontatus flavigulus*—Green-bellied shrike tit.—Fairly numerous.

(86) *Climacteris leucophaea grisescens*—Southern white-throated tree creeper.—Not very plentiful.

(87) *Zosterops lateralis westernensis*—Southern white eye.—Very common.

(88) *Austrodicaeum hirundinaceum*—Mistletoe bird.—Quite common.

(89) *Pardalotus punctatus xanthopygius*—Yellow-rumped pardalote.—Fairly common.

(90) *Pardalotinus striatus snbaffinis*—South Australian pardalote.—Very plentiful.

(91) *Melithreptus lunatus adelaidensis*—Southern white-naped honey eater.—Quite common.

(92) *Melithreptus gularis loftyi*—Southern black-chinned honey eater.—Plentiful.

(93) *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris loftyi*—Mountain spine bill.—Quite plentiful.

(94) *Zanthoniza phrygia tregellasi*—Southern regent honey eater (warty faced honey eater).—A few birds seen occasionally.

(95) *Ptilotula penicillata whitei*—Southern white-plumed honey eater.—Very common.

(96) *Melinornis novæhollandiæ subassimilis*—South Australian white-bearded honey eater.—A very common bird.

(97) *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera indistincta*—Southern crescent honey eater.—Fairly common in the thick scrub in the bottoms of the deep gullies. Comes into more open country in winter.

(98) *Myzantha melanocephala whitei*—Southern white-headed miner.—First few pairs arrived in 1902. These have increased and spread till now there are thousands.

(99) *Paraptilotis chrysops samueli*—Dark yellow-faced honey eater.—Always fairly plentiful.

(100) *Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia*—Southern red wattle bird.—Always common in the ranges. In the early autumn they come down to the plains to feed, always returning in flocks to the hills to roost. When going down in the morning they fly straight down, but on returning in the evening they follow one another from tree to tree, always taking exactly the same route.

(101) *Dyottornis paradoxus*—Brush wattle bird.—Always a few present; commoner just at present than for many years.

(102) *Anthus australis adelaidensis*—Southern pipit.—Extremely plentiful.

(103) *Stagonopleura guttata philordi*—Southern spotted-sided finch.—A single pair seen occasionally.

(104) *Taenopygia castanotis*—Chestnut-eared finch.—Small flocks seen only very occasionally; nested last year.

(105) *Aegintha temporalis loftyi*—Mountain red-browed finch.—Fairly common, especially in winter.

(106) *Corvus coronoides*—Australian raven.—These birds used to come in immense flocks, especially in summer, moving on in a day or two. A straggler or two usually remained behind and became very mischievous until they were shot. They are rarely seen now, and only in small companies.

(107) *Strepera melanoptera*—Black-winged crow-shrike.—Now rare; a disappearing bird. A single bird seen 1914.

Introduced birds—

Starling.

Blackbird.

Goldfinch.

House sparrow.

Greenfinch.

The South Australian Ornithological Association.

October 30th, 1914. Museum specimens of the following birds were exhibited for discussion:—

Euryostomus orientalis pacificus—The Australian roller.— Sometimes called the dollar bird on account of the light-blue patch on the wing, about as big as a crown, which is very noticeable when the bird is flying. This bird is very fond of living in the dead ringed forest, nesting in the hollows of the dead trees. It is entirely insectivorous.

Alcyon azurea—The blue kingfisher, from New South Wales, and *Alcyon azurea victoriae*, the Victorian blue kingfisher, were identical. *Alcyon azurea mixta*, the northern purple kingfisher from Queensland, was darker on the breast than the Victorian bird.

Micralcyon pusilla—The little kingfisher from North Queensland, and a specimen from the Northern Territory, apparently *micralcyon pusilla ramsayi*, could not be separated.

Syma torotoro—The yellow-billed kingfisher from New Guinea, has a black crown.

Syma torotoro flavirostris—From North Queensland, has a rufous crown. This was considered a good subspecies.

Dacelo gigas—The brown kingfisher, or laughing jackass, is the only member of the genus that laughs. No subspecies shown.

Dacelo leachi cervina—The fawn-breasted kingfisher. It was noticed that the male has a blue tail, while the female has a rufous tail.

Dacelo leachi nana—No Melville Island bird shown.

Dacelo leachi occidentalis—The western fawn-breasted kingfisher from Derby was smaller than the dominant species, otherwise no essential difference was noticed.

A bird from Derby, in the north-west of Western Australia, presumed to be *Dacelo cliftoni*, is also smaller than the *Dacelo leachi cervina*. It also has a larger bill, and is very pale in colour.

Cyanalcyon macleayi—The forest kingfisher, from New South Wales. It was noticed that the male has a white collar; the female has not.

Cyanalcyon macleayi distinguendus—The western forest kingfisher, from the Northern Territory, and *Cyanalcyon macleayi publa*, the Melville Island forest kingfisher, could not be separated.

Sauropatis sancta—The sacred kingfisher.—Two subspecies available, *westralasiana* and *ramsayi*. These could only be distinguished from the dominant species by their labels.

Sauropatis sordida—The mangrove kingfisher.—Is a larger bird than *S. sancta*; also it is duller in colour and has more white.

Sauropatis sordida melvillensis—Seemed to be the same as the dominant species.

November 27th, 1914. The birds exhibited were all foreign, being kingfishers and bee eaters from the Soudan, North America, India, and the East Indian Archipelago.

December 18th, 1914. An interesting account of the doings of the fourteenth annual congress of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and the camp at Mallacoota Inlet, by the President (Mr. J. W. Mellor). The birds met with have been published in "The Emu," vol. XIV., part 3.

January 25th, 1915. A good series of the pallid cuckoo, *Heteroscenes pallidus*, from the Museum was shown, bearing out Captain White's contention that the grey bird is the male, not the adult of both sexes, and the spotted bird is the female, not the young, *vide* "South Australian Ornithologist," vol. II., part 1.

Cacomantis pyrrophanus variolosus—The eastern square-tailed or brush cuckoo.—Two males were grey, while the only female available was rufous. This would seem to bear out the same theory that the male is grey and the female rufous. The rufous bird until now has been thought to be the young.

February 26th, 1915. Mr. Ashby exhibited a specimen of *Rallus pectoralis*, the slate-breasted rail, taken in Coromandel Valley. Although Mr. Mathews gives this bird as inhabiting South Australia members had rarely come across it near Adelaide. The same member also showed a specimen of the pink-breasted robin, *Erythrodryas rodinogaster inexpecta*, from Mount Dandenong, Victoria. Although fully developed and apparently breeding, it had only the faintest tinge of pink on the breast. It was observed feeding in the tops of the highest gum trees, some two hundred feet from the ground. Hitherto members have always expected to find robins in undergrowth or low scrub. A series of *Neochalcites basalis*, the narrow-billed bronze cuckoo, from the Museum was shown, and although there was considerable diversity of the amount of colouration it did not seem to characterise either locality or sex. A series of *Lamprocoecyx plagosus*, the bronze cuckoo, from the Museum was exhibited, also from Capt. White's collection. The amount of rufous on the tail varied considerably, but the members could not see any justification for separating them into three subspecies. Members also thought that the separation of *Neochalcites* and *Lamprocoecyx* into two genera was not correct, with the exception of Capt. White, who considered that we ought to have Mr. Mathews' reason for so doing before criticising his work.

Another New Bird for Australia.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

Acanthiza marianae sp. n.—Everard Range Tit:—

All upper surface (with the exception of tail coverts), bluish grey; feathers of the forehead tipped with white, those

of the crown having a distinct streak of black down the centre; wings dark brown, each feather edged with greyish white, tail brownish black, basal half dull reddish brown, each feather broadly tipped with buffish white; upper tail coverts reddish brown; throat and breast greyish white; flanks buff, abdomen and under tail coverts white; ear coverts grey, tipped with white; eyebrow and ring round eye white; iris dark red; bill and feet black. Sexes alike.

Measurements of dry skin:—Total length, 98 m.m.; bill, 9 m.m.; wing, 51 m.m.; tarsus, 19 m.m.; tail, 42 m.m.

Type:—A male collected between Moorelyanna Native Well and the Everard Ranges in the North-west of South Australia on August 1st, 1914.

The bird which is most closely allied to this species is *Acanthiza uropygialis condor*, but this new species differs in having a stouter bill of quite a different shape; the iris is of a very dark shade of red, while *A. uropygialis condor* is white, the bluish grey of the upper surface is of quite a different shade to any other *Acanthiza* in Australia.

Habitat:—Dense mulga scrubs in the vicinity of the Everard Ranges, North-west of South Australia.

I name this bird in honour of Mrs. G. M. Mathews, of England.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

IV.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

So the brothers battled on beset by all kinds of obstacles and privations, some days making good progress, others little or none, hacking their way for days through thick jungle, scrub and creepers, levering stones and logs out of the way to allow the horse and cart to pass. All this time collecting was going on, and most interesting and rare specimens were added to the collection. The thorny scrub and lawyer vines tore the clothing from their bodies and at last the supply of shirts gave out, so Samuel White and his brother were forced to make shift with shirts made from 50-lb. flour bags. A hole

was cut in the botton through which the head was passed, a hole at each side was made to which sleeves of the same material were attached. Before reaching Brisbane, the horse and cart and many other things were disposed of and the brothers went into Brisbane to ship home the valuable collections. After a short rest, they set out once more westward. This time they had to depend on what they could carry for they intended making along the rough ranges which extended down through the country they wished to explore some little distance from the coast and it was impossible to take any kind of conveyance. Setting out one day from Brisbane the naturalists made their way into the ranges and soon found themselves in very rough country. They were the first white men to climb Mt. Lindsay. Before reaching the top, they had to pass up several bare faces of rock by means of the creeping plants that hung down. The top of the mountain is called the tea-pot on account of its shape resembling the bowl and spout of that well-known utensil. Under the mass of rock which resembled the spout a beautiful lake was discovered upon which there were many water-fowl including pelicans. Where the overflow found its way down the mountain side a deep channel was cut, round the opening of this channel or cavern a mass of most beautiful sub-tropical vegetation grew, beautiful flowering creepers and gigantic masses of fern, while further in ferns of more delicate and exquisite shape clung to the damp rocks. Outside some fine *Castanospermum* trees shed their crimson blossoms over all. The vegetation round the entrance was so thick and rank that the interior was shrouded in semi-darkness. The travellers hanging to the vines and creepers pushed their way into this huge slit in the face of the mountain and to their surprise they saw many white spots floating about in the darkness. These spots were in pairs like eyes and the mystery was not cleared up till one of the objects was captured and it was found to be a beautiful dark blue butterfly with a large white spot on each wing, the insect was such a dark shade of blue that it was not discernable in the dim light, only the white spots as they hovered round. After securing a number of these insects, which must be lovers of darkness, because they would not allow the naturalists to drive them out into the light, the brothers continued on their way. Having to ford rivers, which came in their way, which in some instances were in flood, crossing was not made without much risk to life. Many valuable notes were made each day, as well as collecting, but the latter was much re-

stricted, as a small collection only could be carried to points where it could be forwarded. When they got down into New South Wales, the Hawkesbury River gave the travellers much trouble, because this fine river throws out innumerable arms into a very rough country, so they had to climb one rocky ridge after another to be confronted by one of these arms. It was here that the King Parrot was met with in numbers, and the brothers spent some time in observing these birds in their natural habitat. Having crossed the Hawkesbury river at last, they pushed on to Sydney, and camped a few miles from the town; a very rare moth was captured at this camp. (In 1880 I accompanied my father when he tried to locate this camping place, but found it a densely populated centre.) Having sent on their collections and having had a rest for a week, the naturalists once more set out on foot—this time Melbourne was the objective. Travelling some distance inland they soon lost the sub-tropical jungles and the animal and insect life changed with the country, their collecting soon dwindled down to a few specimens each day. From a pastoral point of view, the country was excellent, with great stretches of open timber beautifully grassed, and in some cases open downs. Although the naturalists admired the wonderful timber and beautiful country, they missed the prolific collecting ground amidst the sub-tropical belt, still they found much to interest them in bird life, on this journey between the capitals of New South Wales and Victoria, the overlapping of species alone was a most interesting subject. In due course Melbourne was reached and the brothers decided to take boat home, and they reached Adelaide some ten or eleven months from the time they had set out. The same journey in these times of rapid transport would be thought little or nothing of, but in those days it required some pluck to face it, as well as being a good bushman and able to put up with much privation to bring the journey to a successful termination.

[To be continued.]







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J. H. Riley

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THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
ORNITHOLOGIST,

A Magazine of Ornithology.

JULY, 1915.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

R. CROMPTON, R.A.O.U.

A. M. MORGAN, M.B., CH.B.

S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

F. R. ZIETZ, R.A.O.U.

Price, 2/-

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— THE —
South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

JULY, 1915.

[PART 3.

The South Australian Ornithological
Association.

The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Society was held at the Royal Society's Room, North Terrace, Adelaide, on Friday, March 26th, 1915. Mr. J. W. Mellor presided.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The Association has another year of useful work to record. Six new members have been elected, and one has resigned during the year.

The Association's lease of certain islands in the Coorong—so that the birds breeding on them may be totally protected—has been extended indefinitely. This is the only place in South Australia where the pelican is known to breed.

The swift lorikeet (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*) was present at Blackwood for some weeks in June and July last. This is the first time this bird has been noted in South Australia since 1882.

Regular monthly meetings have been held, the principal work of which has been examining all available specimens and discussing Mr. Mathews' classification. In several cases the members think that his genera are far too much split up, e.g., there are four genera of *Podargidae*, where it is thought that two would have been quite sufficient. Mr. Mathews' sub-species, the members think, are not always justified, e.g., there are 10 sub-species of *Podargus strigoides*, where three would seem to be amply sufficient. A series of four specimens taken at Alice Springs do not seem to be any of Mr. Mathews's birds.

If this should prove to be a good sub-species it would make four. Some of the members think that they should not be split up at all. All that can be said is that it is a very variable bird.

A pleasant evening was spent at "Weetunga," Fulham, on September 25th last, at the invitation of Capt. White, to see the specimens he had collected in the Musgrave and Everard Ranges. One of the most interesting of which was Gould's *Xerophila pectoralis*, called by Mathews *Aphelocephala pectoralis*. This bird was described by Gould, and has never been seen since. Now Mr. Mathews says it is the immature of *A. nigricincta*. Although found together with this bird Capt. White still holds that it is a good species.

A parrot, apparently a good sub-species, was noticed. It seems to be a link between *Barnardius zonarius* and *B. zonarius occidentalis*. This bird is identical with specimens taken by Capt. White north of Oodnadatta the previous year.

Spiloglaux boobook had a whitish patch on the forehead which does not seem to conform to any of Mathews's sub-species.

Neostrepera versicolor was rather different from any of Mathews's sub-species.

Capt. White had noticed that *Meliphaga sonora* (the singing honey-eater) had a different note from the bird about Adelaide.

Several crows (*Corvus coronoides*) were collected, some of which had white down and white eyes while others had sooty down and hazel eyes.

Several specimens of *Ashbya lovensis* were also collected.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—

President—Mr. J. W. Hosking.

Vice-President—Dr. A. M. Morgan.

Secretary and Treasurer—Mr. R. Crompton.

Editorial Committee for the South Australian Ornithologist—Dr. A. M. Morgan, Capt. S. A. White, Mr. F. R. Zietz, Mr. R. Crompton.

April 30th, 1915. The following unusual birds have been recorded on the Adelaide Plains during the month:—

Pachycephala pectoralis fuliginosa—South Australian yellow-breasted thickhead.

Rhipidura flabellifera whitei—South Australian fantail, both at the Reedbeds by Mr. J. W. Mellor.

Also the first appearance for this season of *Littlea chrysoptera phoenicea*—White-fronted robin (Flame-breasted robin), April 21st, at Kingswood and at the Reedbeds.

Capt. White drew attention to a list of English birds in the "Ibis," showing that eighty-two English genera are represented in Australia.

Mr. Mellor drew attention to Mr. Mathews's splitting of genera, and asked if the members thought he was right in making a genus on external appearance only. Dr. Morgan thought it was a chance for an individual worker, who has the opportunity, to upset some of them, but it was no use the Association trying to do it by resolution.

Mr. Zietz reported that a resident of the Lakes district had recently described *Podiceps cristatus christiani* (Australian tippet grebe) as the feather-eater. An article on this subject appears in this issue.

Mr. E. Ashby, M.B.O.U., exhibited a collection of specimens taken by Mr. C. E. May at Pine Creek, Northern Territory. This is dealt with in a separate article.

May 28th, 1915—Specimens of the swallow family (*Hirundinidae*) from the Museum and Capt. White's collections were tabled for discussion.

Hirundo rustica (European swallow)—Two specimens collected near Colesberg, South Africa, by Capt. White. This is a much larger bird than any Australian species. It has also a more pronounced forked tail. Members thought that our welcome swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) had been rightly kept in the same genus, but considered that many genera had been made on more slender differences.

Hypurolepis javanica frontalis (Eastern swallow)—Only one specimen to hand. Compared with the welcome swallow it was smaller, had a slightly less forked tail, and was richer in colour. It was considered to be a good species.

Cheramocca leucosternum stonei (Eastern black-and-white swallow)—This bird nests in a burrow about three feet long; if available seaweed is always used for the nest. The tunnel is often enlarged up to nine inches or more at the inner end. Dr. Morgan considers this is made by the birds to shelter in, several birds often roosting in the same burrow.

Hylochelidon nigricans (Tree martin)—A long series available from all parts of Australia. These could not be split up into valid sub-species, except that a single specimen from the Northern Territory, apparently *H. nigricans rogersi*, seemed possibly to be justified. A specimen from North-west of Western Australia was identical with an Adelaide bird.

Birds of the Cairns District, Queensland.

From Notes and Skins made by the late Capt. T. H. Bowyer-Bower.

No. 3.

[BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.]

No. 54—Male.—Cairns, June 23, 1884.

Irides bright red. Rare. Length 7.12 inches.

191. *SYMPOSIACHRUS TRIVIRGATUS MEDIUS*. Intermediate Spectacled Flycatcher.

No. 59—Male.—Peterson's Pocket, December 27, 1884. Common.

192. *MONARCHA MELANOPSIS MELANOPSIS*. Black-faced Flycatcher.

No. 58—Male.—Peterson's Pocket, December 27, 1884. Length 7.25 inches. Irides brown. Common.

193. *CORACINA NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ CONNECTENS*. Queensland Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike.

No. 21—Female.—Barron River, August 22, 1884.

No. 22—Male (immature).—Scrubby Creek, January 12, 1885.

Length 13 inches. Irides brown. Common.

194. *CORACINA HYPOLEUCA STALKERI.* Grey-banded Cuckoo-Shrike.
 No. 24—Male.—Cairns, June 9, 1884.
 Length 10.38 inches. Irides brown. Common.
194. *PARAGRAUCALUS LINEATA LINEATA.* Barred Cuckoo-Shrike.
 No. 23. Cairns, June 9, 1884.
 Length 11 inches. Irides light yellow. Common, but more so on elevated ground than in the valleys.
196. *KARUA LEUCOMELA LEUCOMELA.* Pied Caterpillar-eater.
 No. 25—Male.—Cairns, June 23, 1884.
 Length 8.08 inches. Irides brown.
197. *MACRORTHONYX SPALDINGI.* Black-headed Log-runner.
 One female. Plentiful over the Cairns-Herberton Range, but with such rapidity does it pass over the ground, amongst the thick underwood, that it is not easy to obtain.
201. *PSOPHODES OLIVACEUS LATERALIS.* Northern Coach-whip Bird.
 No. 60. Immature. Cairns.
 Common, but not easy to obtain.
210. *CISTICOLA EXILIS MIXTA.* Little Grass-Warbler.
 No. 66—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 14, 1885.
 Length 4.25 inches. Irides brown. When met with is fairly numerous, but not often observed.
227. *LEGGEORNIS AMABILIS BARRONI.* Allied Lovely Wren.
 No. 65—Male.—Cairns, June 19, 1884.
 Length 4.87 inches. Irides brown. Not common.
228. *RYANIA MELANOCEPHALA PYRRHONOTA.* Eastern Red-backed Wren.
 Nos. 61-64—Male.—Barron River, August 25, 1884; and Peterson's Pocket, December 19, 1884.
 Length 4.5—4.62 inches. Irides brown. Common.
234. *ARTAMUS LEUCORHYNCHUS LEUCOPYGIALIS.* White-rumped Wood Swallow.
 No. 52—Male. No. 53—Male.—Cairns, June 30, 1884.

- Length 7.25 inches. Irides brown; bill bluish-slate, tip dark brown; feet black. Common and easy to get.
236. *PSEUDARTAMUS CYANOPTERUS*. Wood Swallow.
No. 51—Male.—Cairns.
Length 7.25 inches.
237. *COLLURICINCLA HARMONICA PALLESCENS*. Grey-backed Shrike-Thrush.
Nos. 28 (Female), 29 and 30.—Scrubby Creek, January 12 and 14, 1885.
Length 9.75 inches.
240. *CALEYA MEGARHYNCHIA GOULDI*. Little Rufous-breasted Shrike-Thrush.
No. 26—Male.—Cairns, June 25, 1884.
No. 27. Barron River, July 6, 1884.
Length 7.87 inches. Common.
242. *MELLORIA QUOYI RUFESCENS*. Rufous Butcher Bird.
Nos. 15-20. Barron River and Gordan's Camp, August and October, 1884.
Length 14.25 inches. In the black phase: irides brown; feet black. In the rufous phase: irides brown; feet bluish. The bills are the same colour in both phases.
245. *FALCUNCULUS FRONTATUS HERBERTONI*. Pale Shrike-Tit.
No. 31—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 14, 1885.
Length 6.62 inches. Irides brown. Not common.
245. *OREOICA CRISTATA CRISTATA*. Crested Bell-Bird.
A wounded bird ran about very quickly. It has a most peculiar note—it sounds in two different places at once, and as distinct as if uttered by two birds.
249. *NEOSITTELLA STRIATA ROTHSCILDI*. Allied Striated Tree-runner.
No. 112. Cairns. Common.
253. *ZOSTEROPS LATERALIS CORNWALLI*. Queensland White-eye.
No. 107. Cairns, June 9, 1884.
Length 4.5 inches. Common.

254. *AUSTRODICÆUM HIRUNDINACEUM HIRUNDINACEUM.* Mistletoe Bird.
No. 104—Male.—Cairns, August 19, 1884.
Irides dark brown.
258. *CRYPTOSTOMUS FRENATA AUSTRALIS.* Cairns Sun-Bird.
No. 105—Male.—Cairns, 1884.
A bird shot on Thursday Island in 1886 seemed to have more of the blue colour in the throat than those obtained at Cairns.
A nest was suspended to the cord of a window in a church at Cairns.
263. *MYZOMELA SANGUINEOLENTA STEPHENSI.* Northern Sanguineous Honey-eater.
Nos. 102—Male, 103—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 14 & 9, 1884.
Length 4.5 inches: Irides brown. Common.
265. *MELOMYZA OBSCURA HARTERTI.* Dark Honey-eater.
No. 91. Cairns, January 14, 1885.
271. *PTILOTTA ANALOGA NOTATA.* Yellow-spotted Honey-eater.
No. 98—Male.—Barron River, September 3, 1884.
Length 7.75 inches. Irides brown; legs light slate-blue.
272. *MICROPTILOTTA GRACILIS IMITATRIX.* Cairns Little Yellow-spotted Honey-eater.
Nos. 96—Female, 97.—Cairns, June 21 & 7, 1884.
275. *MELIPHAGA FRENATA.* Bridled Honey-eater.
No. 99—Female.—Peterson's Pocket, December 27, 1884.
Length 8.75 inches. Irides blue-grey; bill dark brown, becoming fine yellow at the base; legs and feet blue.
Nos. 100 & 101—Male.—Barron River, July 21, 1884.
275. *CALOPTILOTTA MACLEAYANA.* Yellow-streaked Honey-eater.
Nos. 92—Male, & 93—Male.—Barron River, September 2 & 3, 1884.
Length 8 inches. Irides brown; legs slate.

280. *PTILOTULA FLAVESCENS SUBGERMANA*. Queensland Grey-tinted Honey-eater.
 Nos. 94—Male, 95—Female.—Scrubby Creek, January 9, 1885.
 Length—Male, 6.5 inches; Female, 6.25 inches.
285. *MELIORNIS NIGRA HERBERTONI*. Northern White-cheeked Honey-eater.
 No. 89—Female.—Peterson's Pocket, December 18, 1884.
 No. 90—Male.—Scrubby Creek, January 14, 1885.
 Length—Female, 6.5 inches. Common on the tablelands about 2,500 feet above sea-level.
292. *NEOPHILEMON BUCEROIDES BUCEROIDES*. Helmeted Friar-bird.
 Nos. 134-136—Male and Female.—Cairns, June 11 & 21, 1884.
 No. 137—Male.—Barron River, August 10, 1884.
 Length—Male, 13.7 inches; Female, 13.12 inches.
292. *TROPIDORHYNCHUS CORNICULATUS ELLIOTI*. Northern-Friar-bird.
 No. 138. Cairns, June 30, 1884.
 No. 139. Barron River, August 3, 1884.
300. *LONGICURVA CASTANEOTHORAX CASTANEOTHORAX*. Chestnut-breasted Finch.
 No. 67—Male.—Barron River, August 25, 1884.
 Length 4.5 inches. Irides brown.
305. *MIMETA SAGITTATUS SUBAFFINIS*. Queensland Oriole.
 No. 80—Female.—Barron River, September 4, 1884.
 Length 11.25 inches. Bill reddish brown.
306. *MIMETA FLAVOCINCTA KINGI*. Eastern Yellow Oriole.
 No. 81—Male.—Gordan's Camp, October 7, 1884.
 Length 12.62 inches. Irides red; bill reddish brown; legs lead-colour.
306. *SPHECOTHERES MAXILLARIS VIEILLOTI*. Northern Fig-Bird.
 No. 82—Male.—Cairns, June 20, 1884.

- Length 11.75 inches. Irides brown, space round the eye red.
307. *SPHECOTHERES FLAVIVENTRIS AUDONI.* Allied Yellow-bellied Fig-Bird.
 Nos. 83 & 85—Female.—Cairns, June 11 & 25, 1884.
 No. 84—Female.—Peterson's Pocket, December 29, 1884.
 Length 11.12 inches. Irides brown, space round eye bluish.
307. *DICRUOPSIS BRACTEATUS BRACTEATUS.* Spangled Drongo.
 Nos. 32 & 34. Cairns, June 17 & 9, 1884.
 No. 33. Gordan's Camp, October 19, 1884.
 Length 12.5 inches to 11.87 inches.
308. *METALLOPSAR METALLICUS PURPURASCENS.* Shining Starling.
 Nos. 86-88. Barron River, August and September, 1884.
 Length 9.5 inches. Irides red. Common; their peculiar long nests were very plentiful.
309. *SCENOPOETES DENTIROSTRIS.* Tooth-billed Bower-Bird.
 Nos. 75-77—Male & Female.—Peterson's Pocket and Barron River, December and August, 1884.
 Length 11.62 inches. Irides brown, nearly black; legs blue lead-colour.
310. *TILURŒDUS MELANOTUS MACULOSUS.* Spotted Cat-Bird.
 Nos. 70 & 71—Male.—Barron River, August 22, 1884.
 No. 72—Male.—Dry Creek, October 14, 1884.
 No. 73—Male.—Barron River, July 16, 1884.
 No. 74. Gordan's Camp, October 19, 1884.
 Length 12.75 inches. Irides brown; bill yellowish white; legs blue.
312. *PTILORIS PARADISEA VICTORIÆ.* Lesser Rifle-Bird.
 No. 108—Male.—Gordan's Camp, October 8, 1884.
 No. 109—Female.—Barron River, July 21, 1884.
 No. 111—Female.—Barron River, August 20, 1884.
 Length 10.12—10.75 inches. Irides brown; legs black.

A young bird was seen feeding quite close, about three yards off. It took off the bark from a palm-tree and devoured the insects. Frequently it could be seen hanging head downwards and climbing about in all positions.

315. STREPERA GRACULINA ROBINSONI. Northern Pied Crow-Shrike.

Common and generally to be seen round the gardens where there is Indian corn growing. One bird was picked up covered with sticky seeds one and a half inches long and of an elongated shape; they had stuck the feathers together in such a way that the bird was unable to fly.

Order Passiformes, Family Zosteropidae,
Genus Zosterops.

Zosterops lateralis westernensis—Southern White Eye (Silver Eye).

Description.—Forehead, crown, sides of head and neck bright olive-green, eyes surrounded by a ring of silvery-white feathers, a black line below the eye and extending from the anterior margin of the eye to the gape, back ashy-grey, rump and upper tail coverts bright olive green. Tail feathers brown, their outer webs narrowly margined with olive green, throat greyish white, washed with yellowish green, breast pale ashy grey, abdomen greyish white, under tail coverts greyish white, washed with yellow, sides of body and flanks olive brown. Primaries and secondaries dark brown, all except the first primary margined with bright olive green on their outer webs, inner web of primaries and secondaries margined with buffy white, in the former this does not extend to the apical fourth of the feather. Upper wing coverts brown, washed with olive green. Iris brown, bill, legs and feet slaty brown. The female is similar to the male.

Total length, 116 m.m.; wing, 58 m.m.; tail, 47 m.m.; tarsus, 58 m.m.; bill, 10 m.m.

Distribution.—All the southern parts of South Australia and Victoria, extending north about as far as Port Augusta.

It is not a constant inhabitant of the dry northern country, but is probably only an occasional visitor there. In the southern country it moves about to some extent, following the food supply. The Kangaroo Island bird does not differ in any respect.

Habits.—It spends most of its time in low trees and bushy undergrowth, congregating into small flocks in the autumn and winter, and separating into pairs for the breeding season. It apparently appreciates civilization, being much commoner in orchards and gardens than in unsettled country. They are most fearless little birds; shooting, scarecrows, and every other means the gardener can devise, do not frighten them in the least.

Food.—All soft fruits, especially figs, grapes, apricots, and olives. The full extent of the damage done by these birds is not so much the quantity eaten as the habit they have of pecking small holes in the most forward portion of the ripening fruit. They are also very destructive amongst strawberry and raspberry crops. Mistletoe berries and pepper tree berries (*Shinus molle*) are also eaten. This accounts for seedlings of the latter tree coming up in places frequented by this bird, especially near water taps and other damp places where they drink. Insects are captured on the wing, the bird returning to its perch with the prize. In winter the principal food is aphides, the blight of fruit trees and flowers: in this respect they do much good. At this time they also work for insects on the ground.

Flight.—Quick and jerky. They do not fly more than a few yards except when migrating, when they travel long distances without settling. Some years ago they migrated to New Zealand and settled there. In that country they are thought much of as insect destroyers.

Song.—The White Eye has several distinctive notes. When in search of food it utters a long-drawn plaintive call of three notes. The same call is uttered in flight, but is then shorter. The alarm call is a shrill short note, but is not loud. The true, or love, song is a beautiful sustained trilling warble with a considerable range of notes, but so low-pitched as to be inaudible at a short distance. They usually sing while resting in a thick bush in the heat of the day. It is quite pretty to see a pair of White Eyes sitting side by side on a twig, the male

singing his best, and frequently looking at his mate to see if it is being appreciated.

Nest.—This is a delicate and neatly constructed cup, composed of carefully woven grass and hair: when near houses string, cotton, wool, or small pieces of rag may be used. The nest is never lined with feathers or down. It is suspended by the rim in a thick bunch of leaves in a low tree or bush. They select a variety of trees, hakea, boxthorn, kangaroo acacia, fruit trees, and hedges being the most favoured. It is usually from three to twelve feet from the ground, but occasionally as high as thirty feet. Sometimes two or three pairs will build in the same tree.

The breeding season lasts from July to December, two or three broods being reared.

Eggs are two or three in number, being a uniform light blue.

Average measurement of 7 eggs, 1.73 x 1.21 c.m.

Largest egg, 1.75 x 1.25 c.m.

Smallest egg, 1.70 x 1.20 c.m.

The White Eye is included in the Third Schedule of The Birds' Protection Act of 1900, *i.e.*, totally unprotected. This is on account of its fruit-eating proclivities.

Birds noted by Members in the City of Adelaide and the Parklands.

The Parklands are public reserves approximately a third of a mile wide completely surrounding the City.

They are used as a racecourse, cricket ground, also for football, tennis, bowls, golf, botanical and zoological gardens, plantations, and public grazing. The River Torrens running through them is dammed, making a lake about a mile and a half long, which is used for boating and swimming. On the North Parklands, between the City and the River, are several public buildings, including Parliament House, Government House, Public Library, Art Gallery, Musuem, and University.

All birds on these reserves are totally protected. The names are taken from List of the Birds of Australia, by G. M. Mathews.

The birds marked * are rare visitors.

1. *Geopelia placida tranquilla*—Eastern ground dove (Peaceful dove).

2. *Hypotaenidia phillipensis australis*—Eastern buff-banded rail (Landrail).

3. *Zapornia pusilla palustris*—Eastern little crane.

*4. *Microtribonyx ventralis whitei*—Eastern black-tailed native hen.

5. *Gallinula tenebrosa*—Black moorhen.

6. *Porphyrio melanotus*—Eastern bald coot.

7. *Fulica atra tasmanica*—Eastern coot.

*8. *Tachybaptus ruficollis novaehollandiae*—Black-throated grebe (Dabchick).

*9. *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*—Hoary-headed grebe.

10. *Bruchigavia novaehollandiae ethelae*—Southern silver gull.

11. *Lobibyx novaehollandiae*—Spur-winged plover.

12. *Elseya melanops*—Black-fronted dotterel.

*13. *Stiltia isabella*—Australian pratincole (came in 1884).

14. *Burhinus magnirostris*—Eastern stone plover (Curlew).

15. *Notophoxynovaehollandiae*—White-fronted heron (Blue crane).

16. *Chenopsis atrata*—Eastern black swan.

17. *Anas superciliosa rogersi*—Black duck.

18. *Virago gibberifrons*—Grey teal.

19. *Nyroca australis*—White-eyed duck (Punkaree, hard-head).

20. *Biziura lobata*—Musk duck.

*21. *Phalacrocorax carbo*—Black cormorant.

22. *Mesocorbo ater*—Little black cormorant.

*23. *Hypoleucus varius hypoleucus*—Eastern pied cormorant.

*24. *Anhinga novaehollandiae*—Darter. A single bird stayed several days.

- *25. *Elanus axillaris*—Black-shouldered kite. (Seen once only. Three birds.)
- *26. *Urospiza fasciata*—Australian goshawk.
27. *Falco longipennis*—Little falcon.
- *28. *Ieracidia berigora*—Striped brown hawk.
29. *Cerchneis cenchroides*—Nankeen kestrel.
30. *Spiloglaur boobook marmorata*—Marbled owl (Boobook owl).
31. *Glossopsitta concinna*—Musk lorikeet.
32. *Glossopsitta porphyriocephala*—Purple-crowned lorikeet.
33. *Glossopsitta pusilla*—Little lorikeet.
- *33a. *Psephotus haematotus*—Red-backed parrot (Grass parrot).
34. *Aleyone azurea victoriae*—Victorian blue kingfisher.
35. *Dacelo gigas tregellasi*—Brown Kingfisher (Laughing jackass).
36. *Sauropatis sancta*—Eastern sacred kingfisher.
37. *Heteroscenes pallidus*—Pallid cuckoo.
- *38. *Cacomantis rubricatus*—Fan-tailed cuckoo.
39. *Neochalcites basalis mellori*—Narrow-billed bronze cuckoo.
- *40. *Lamprococcyx lucidus*—Broad-billed bronze cuckoo.
41. *Hirundo neorena*—Welcome swallow.
42. *Hylochelidon nigricans caleyi*—Tree martin.
43. *Petroica multicolor frontalis*—Southern scarlet-breasted robin. (A winter visitor.)
44. *Littlera chrysoptera phoenicia*—White-fronted robin. (Flame-breasted robin.) Comes in winter.
- *45. *Whiteornis goodenorii*—Southern red-capped robin.
46. *Levinornis rufiventris inornatus*—Southern rufous breasted thickhead. Comes in winter.
- *47. *Rhipidura flabellifera whitei*—South Australian fantail. (White-shafted fantail.)
48. *Leucocircia tricolor*—Black-and-white fantail. (Wagtail or Shepherd's companion.)
49. *Seisura inquieta*—Restless flycatcher.

50. *Coracina robusta mentalis*—Southern cuckoo-shrike. (Black-faced cuckoo-shrike.)
- *51. *Lalage tricolor*—White-shouldered caterpillar-eater.
52. *Epthianura albifrons*—White-fronted chat (Tin-tac).
53. *Conopodera australis*—Southern reed-warbler.
54. *Poodytes gramineus dubius*—Southern grass bird.
54. *Geobasilus chrysorrhous perksi*—Southern yellow-rumped tit (Tom-tit).
55. *Malurus cyaneus leggei*—Southern blue wren.
- *56. *Campbellornis personatus munna*—Masked wood swallow.
- *57. *Campbellornis superciliosus*—White-browed wood swallow.
58. *Pseudartamus cyanopterus*—Wood swallow.
59. *Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*—Victorian grey shrike-thrush.
60. *Grallina cyanoleuca*—Magpie lark. (Murray magpie or Mudlark.)
61. *Gymnorhina hypoleuca leuconota*—White-backed magpie.
62. *Falcunculus frontatus flavigulus*—Green-bellied shrike-tit. (Crested shrike-tit.)
- *63. *Neoclima picumna australis*—Southern brown tree-creeper.
64. *Zosterops lateralis westernensis*—Southern white-eye.
65. *Austrodicaeum hirundinaceum*—Mistletoe bird. (Flower-pecker.)
66. *Pardalotinus striatus subaffinis*—South Australian pardalote.
67. *Melithreptus lunatus adalaidensis*—Southern white-naped honey-eater (Black cap).
68. *Melithreptus gularis loftyi*—Southern black-chinned honey-eater (Black-throated black-cap).
69. *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris loftyi*—Mountain spine-bill (Spine-billed honey-eater). A summer visitor.
70. *Ptilotula penicillata whitei*—Southern white-plumed honey-eater (Greenie).
71. *Meliornis novaehollandiae subassimilis*—Southern white-bearded honey-eater.

72. *Myzantha melanocephala whitei*—Southern black-headed minah. A recent arrival.

73. *Coleia carunculata tregellasi*—Victorian yellow wattle bird. Comes in autumn.

74. *Anthochaera carunculata intermedia*—Southern red wattle bird (Brush wattle bird).

*75. *Acanthagenys rufogularis cygnus*—Southern spiny-cheeked honey-eater.

76. *Anthus australis adelaidensis*—Southern pipit (Ground lark).

Introduced birds:—

Domestic pigeon.

Starling.

Blackbird.

House sparrow.

Goldfinch.

Greenfinch.

Further Notes on Birds collected near Pine Creek, Northern Territory.

[BY EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U., "Wittunga," Blackwood.]

I have received a second parcel of birds collected by Mr. C. E. May.

Cracticus nigrogularis picatus, Gld.—Pied butcher bird.—Two specimens were received of this species, and although very little difference is evident between the two sexes the beak of the male is a little longer and the build of the bird is more robust. The black in the female is not as deep a black as in the other sex, and the mantle is grey instead of white. This subspecies is smaller than the South Queensland bird.

Seisura inquieta nana, Gld.—Little restless flycatcher.—One specimen only, the beak is much shorter than that of the southern form, being 125 m.m. against the latter's 175 m.m. The northern bird is shorter in length and more slender, and the sheen on the crown is greenish instead of purple, with a strong

greenish metallic sheen on the mantle, whereas the mantle of the southern form is dead black or greyish black.

Micro-philemon orientalis sordidus, Gld.—Little friar bird.—The first batch of skins from Pine Creek contained two specimens of this species, one in the immature plumage showing the golden yellow collar and yellow throat. The other shows none of these features. In the second batch of skins was a single specimen collected months later which is a larger bird. On comparison with specimens from North-western Australia I find it identical with that sub-species *Micro-philemon orientalis occidentalis*, Ram. (Western yellow-throated friar bird). Apparently the two sub-species overlap at certain seasons of the year at Pine Creek, or it may be that they are inseparable, and Ramsay's sub-species may have to be dropped.

Meliphaga sonora cooperi, Mat.—Northern singing honey-eater.—The four specimens received are identical with the specimens in the Adelaide Museum received from Melville Island. The bird is smaller and more slender and the bill narrower than the allied sub-species from S.A. or W.A., also the colouration of the crown and back is paler—a grey-brown rather than a brown.

Cissomela pectoralis, Gld.—Banded honey-eater.—I received in all eight specimens of this interesting little honey-eater. The series is a very interesting one. While in the adult specimens there is not the slightest indication of yellow ear coverts some of the immature ones have them bright yellow. In some the whole of the back and part of the head and wings is cinnamon coloured, others have the mantle only of that colour sprinkled with well defined black dashes. Again others have only a few cinnamon blotches in the normal black ground colour of the back, another has none of these cinnamon markings—the crown of the head, nape, back wings, and tail being uniformly black except a narrow edge of white margins on the tips of the wing feathers, the underside pure white with black pectoral band. The black pectoral band is present in all the specimens.

Stigmatops indistincta media, Mat.—Wyndham least honey-eater.—I received one specimen of this species from Pine Creek. It differs from specimens received from the coast (*Stigmatops indistincta melvillensis*, Mat.) in being much paler both on the upper and under sides, the breast, instead of being of the dark-brown of the coastal species, is as pale as the abdomen.

Grebes as Feather-eaters.

[BY F. R. ZIETZ.]

Contribution from the S.A. Museum.

In domestic poultry feather-eating is considered due to a craving for flesh food and is common during the moulting season when the new feathers are coming, some birds being plucked almost naked. When once this habit is acquired they will eat every small feather they can find.

In the case of grebes, feathers seem to constitute a portion of their regular diet. The first case which came under my notice was an Australian Tippet Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus christiani*) which was sent to the Museum as a "feather-eater" by Mr. F. Stacey of Wellington West, S.A. Upon examining the stomach I found it to contain a ball of grebe feathers, portions of quills of feathers partly digested, remains of water weeds, and what appeared to be frog's spawn.

On writing to Mr. Stacey for further particulars as to whether the birds plucked the feathers out of themselves or other individuals, or whether they picked them up during the moulting season, I received the following information from him:—"I have been fishing on the River Murray and Lake Alexandrina for over twenty-one years; the habits and food of birds have always been of much interest to me. I have known for many years that grebes eat feathers, and have examined many of their stomachs. They spend most of their time under the water in the quiet backwaters, where feathers float on the surface till they become thoroughly saturated and sink. I feel quite safe in saying that the feathers are not eaten until they have been submerged long enough to be in the first stage of decomposition. These birds eat not only feathers of their own kind, but I have found their stomachs to contain those of the Zebra or Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*), the Freckled Duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*), and the Teal (*Virago sp.*).

Although the grebes eat a great many feathers and spend the greater part of their life under water, they are always fat; domestic cats will eat them in preference to other birds. The Dabchick or Hoary-headed Grebe (*Polioccephalus poliocephalus*) also eats feathers, but not to the same extent as the former species." In regard to the Hoary-headed Grebe I might

mention that out of three specimens lately received at the Museum, two of them had feathers in their stomachs, whilst the third specimen contained only remains of insects.

Seehbohm* states in reference to the Great-crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*):—"Its food is entirely procured in the water, and consists of water beetles and other aquatic insects, small fish, small frogs, and mollusks. The seeds and slender shoots of aquatic plants are also found in its stomach; but instead of small stones and gravel, numbers of its own feathers plucked from the ventral region are mixed with its food. It is not known that this curious habit, which is more or less common to all the grebes, is intended to assist digestion, but it has been remarked by many ornithologists in widely different localities—Naumann (father and son), Meves (father and son), Yarrell, Thompson, Macgillivray, etc."

* Seehbohm's "British Birds," Vol. III., p. 456.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE OF THE S.A. ORNITHOLOGIST.

Gentlemen,

In Part II., Vol. 2, on page 33 is a letter from Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, which might be deemed to imply that I had made statements regarding *Ptilotis penicillata* without taking the trouble to verify them. Gould's Handbook to the Birds of Australia contained the information as to the naming of the bird, and as to its being rarely met with in New South Wales, but being very abundant in South Australia, and I merely suggested the probability of its having been named from South Australian specimens. The original reference which Mr. Mathews has seen was not available to me. It would seem strange that Gould, who had examined specimens from both N.S.W. and S.A., should not have observed differences such as would warrant Mr. Mathews in making a sub-species of those found in Adelaide.

Re *Leptolophus*, Mr. Mathews is glad that I am convinced that this bird is able to elevate and lower its crest. The word

“convince” is hardly appropriate as I have never doubted the fact, which I certainly have known since Christmas, 1856, when I first had a tame bird of the species. During periods aggregating more than 30 years I have kept living specimens, and I have a pair at the present time, which would quickly convince a doubting observer of the fact referred to.

I am, etc.,

M. SYMONDS CLARK.

Eden Hills, S.A.

24th May, 1915.

Notes on *Polophilus Phasianinus Melanurus*. Gld. (North-Western Coucal).

[BY EDWIN ASHBY, “Wittunga,” Blackwood.]

In comparing a skin collected by Mr. C. E. May at Port Keats in 1906 with the Adelaide Museum specimens I find that it differs from the Northern Coucal *Polophilus phasianinus macrourus*, Gld., in that the whole of the plumage is black with the exception of the wings, which are normal. In comparing the specimen which is under review, which is a male, with one of *P. p. melanurus* from North-western Australia, I find that it differs, in that the barring of the tail is almost absent, there are no white tips to the tail feathers, the under tail coverts are quite black, and not speckled as in the North-western specimen. We must either extend the range of that species as far as Port Keats in the Northern Territory, or designate this variety under the name of *Keatsi*.

Corrections.

In the October number of the S.A. Ornithologist the three specimens of caterpillar-eater referred to as a sub-species of *Lalaga leucomela* should have been referred to as *Lalaga tricolor*, probably they are identical with Mr. Mathew's *Lalaga tricolor indistincta* (the pale-rumped caterpillar-eater). I have now

received four more specimens from my correspondent: in none of them does the rump appear to be paler than in specimens collected near Adelaide. The freckled marking on the breast is present in all the specimens, including all the males, whereas there are no indications of it in the adult males from South Australia. I conclude that the presence of this marking in the Pine Creek specimens is due to immaturity.

EDWIN ASHBY,

“Wittunga,” Blackwood.

Vol, 2, part 2, page 42:—

Line 26—*Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia* (Southern red wattle bird) should be *Coleia carunculata tregellasi*.

Line 33—*Dyottornis paradoxus* should be *Anthochaera chrysoptera intermedia* (Southern red wattle bird), Brush wattle bird.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

[BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.]

V.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

Additional notes having come to hand I find that I have omitted one or two important facts. Soon after Samuel White's return with his brother, William, from the Murray River in 1865 he must have embarked on another expedition, this time taking a man servant, Cottrell by name, two horses, and a cart. On the latter was packed a light flat-bottom boat to enable the ornithologist to cross any estuaries or arms of the Gulfs. He seems to have shaped a course along the Gulf of St. Vincent, and passed round its head, then followed the coastline of Spencer's Gulf till a spot was reached some little distance north of Port Germein and south of Port Augusta. Here he undertook the hazardous course of crossing the Gulf, using a blanket as a makeshift sail for his little boat. Cottrell

remained with the horses and cart. All went well with Samuel while on the trip over. By sailing and pulling he reached the western coastline of Spencer's Gulf. Pulling his boat out of reach of the tide he formed his camp, and soon set out to explore for birds in a new country. The feelings and expectations of this early ornithologist can only be understood by those who have set foot in an unexplored country. There is no doubt many interesting specimens were collected, but his great find was a new blue wren (*Malurus callainus*, Gould), called by the describer in the vernacular "Turquoise Superb Warbler." I cannot do better than repeat what the great ornithologist, John Gould, tells us about this bird in his folio work supplement to "The Birds of Australia," Part IV., under the heading, *Malurus callainus*, Gould (Turquoise Superb Warbler)—"For the knowledge of the existence of this lovely species I am indebted to S. White, Esq., of the Reedbeds, Adelaide, who informs me that he was under the impression it was a new bird the moment he saw the first example that came under his notice. He was, therefore, induced to shoot and skin eight or ten others of both sexes, all of which, with the exception of two males, he had the misfortune to lose in crossing Spencer's Gulf. They were procured in the "Salt Bush Scrub" about 300 or 400 miles north-west of Adelaide. Upon measuring these Mr. White found that the extent of their wings from tip to tip varied from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 inches, the specimen sent me being one of the smaller examples. Their habits were very similar to those of the other members of the genus, and were not characterized by any peculiarity. The males, as is usual when adorned with their nuptial dress, were very shy, and those secured by Mr. White were obtained by a kind of ruse (placing his hat on the ground and hiding himself in the bush until curiosity prompted the birds to examine the unusual object). That this gentleman may again visit the home of the species and obtain the female is my ardent wish; he should bear in mind that, the locality being maiden ground, in all probability other unknown species of birds will be found, the discovery of which will amply reward him for the trouble of research, and I have no doubt he will do so, for I have reason to believe that no one of my many correspondents in Australia is more keenly alive to the interests which attach to our favourite branch of science—ornithology."

So Gould touched lightly upon an accident which was nearly a tragedy, and the means of cutting off the life of one

of Australia's greatest ornithologists. I say lightly, but that may be due to my father, for more than likely he made but passing comments to his friend Gould of this accident; which was ever his wont when speaking of his many dangerous experiences.

So far as I know the incident alluded to happened in this way. Having dragged his boat down to the water he put his specimens, guns, and camp equipment on board, and, pushing off, set sail for the eastern side of the Gulf. He seldom spoke of this experience in after life, but those to whom he told the tale say the breeze freshened towards the afternoon, and a sudden squall struck the boat when a considerable distance off the eastern shore, the improvised sail did not clear when he let it go, and the boat capsized, all the heavy articles going to the bottom. Strange to say a small box which contained the two *Malurus* and three other skins floated close by, and it was secured. The ornithologist stuck to the boat for some time in the hope of righting her. He found this impossible, and the wind and the tide taking the boat, which was awash, further out, he divested himself of all clothing possible, secured the precious little box with the specimens, and taking one of the floor boards from the boat he made for the shore. A fearful battle for life took place, and after swimming and floating for many hours in the water Samuel White had just enough strength left to drag himself on to the dry sand where he lay unconscious for a long time. With the assistance and attention of his man he soon recovered and returned to his home at the Reedbeds by another route. The new *Malurus* was forwarded to John Gould in London. The chief object, I believe, of this trip was to discover how far north *Epthianura tricolor* and *E. aurifrons* could be found. An odd bird or two visited the Adelaide Plains in those days—always coming from and returning to the North—and this early ornithologist was anxious to discover their home and how far north and north-west their habitat extended.

In Part IV. of this series I stated that the Queensland trip took eight months, but from information now to hand I find Samuel White and his brother William were away from home the greater part of two years.

In April, 1869, Samuel White married, thus securing a loving companion who shared the hardships and pleasures of many an ornithological expedition by land and sea.


On the 14th of July, 1869, they both sailed for England in the "Fire Queen," and after a voyage of five months landed safely in the Old Country. Their sojourn in England proved a very happy one. A great deal of time was spent with John Gould, who gave a little dinner on one occasion in honour of the Australian ornithologist, and at this gathering many Old World bird men met my father. I have been told days and nights were spent discussing ornithological subjects, and a great and lasting friendship sprang up between the great author of "The Birds of Australia" and the greatest field ornithologist Australia has ever possessed. As a son I may be biased, but it has always been my contention that in spite of the great regard that John Gould had for my father the great author never made use of his opportunities to enlighten the scientific world with regard to the great work my father accomplished in ornithological field work. A few scant references were the extent of acknowledgement of only a few of the many new birds discovered by Samuel White.







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J. A. Riley

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Part 4.

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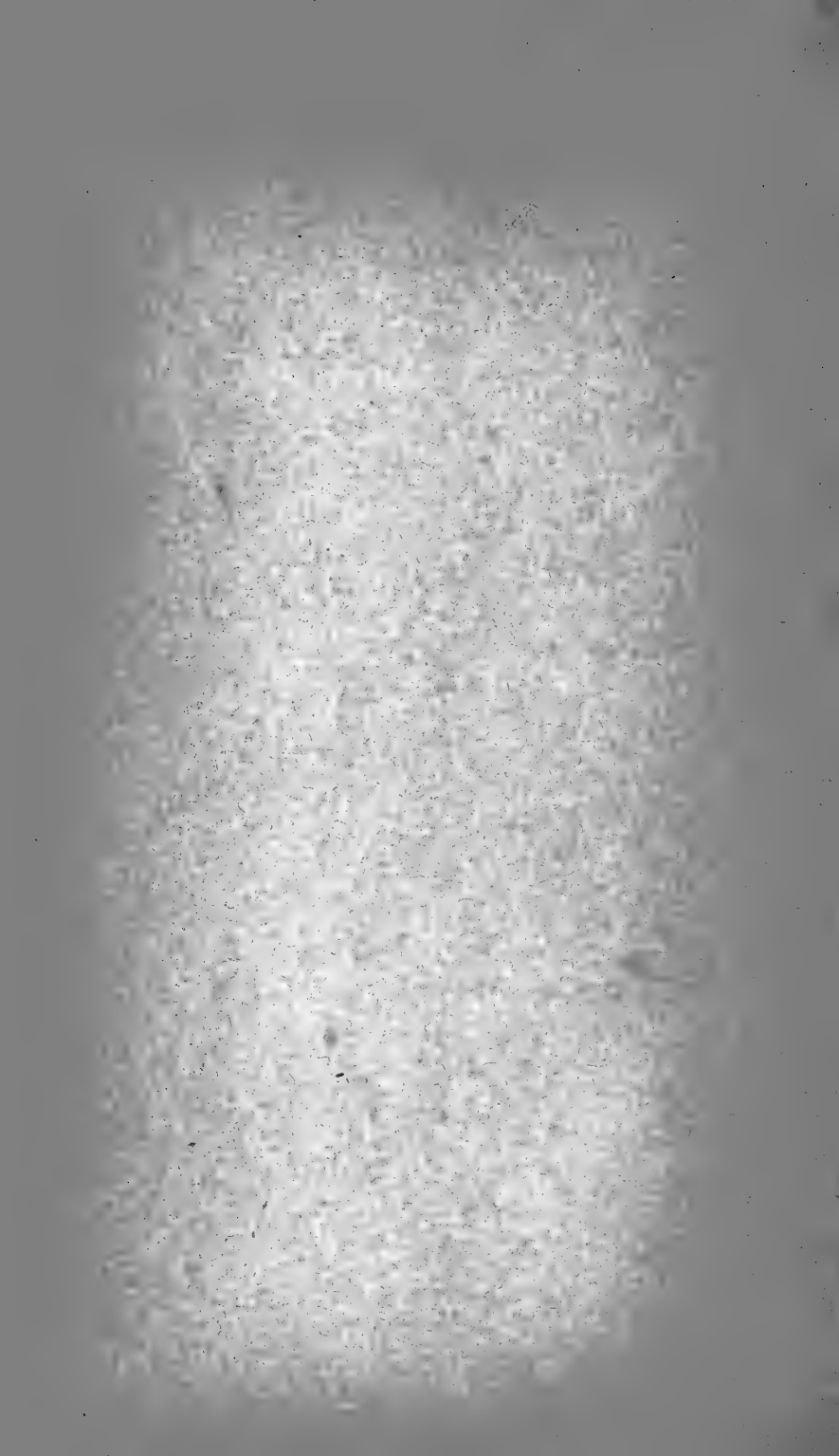
A Magazine of Ornithology.

1st OCTOBER, 1915.

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S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.
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THE
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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

Vol. II.]

1st OCTOBER, 1915.

[PART 4.

The South Australian Ornithological Association.

Three monthly meetings (which were well attended) have taken place since the last issue of this Journal. The extracts of the meetings are as follows:—

June 25th 1915.

The Hon. Secretary (Mr. Robert Crompton) tendered his resignation due to his enlistment in the Expeditionary Forces. The Chairman spoke of the good work done by Mr. Crompton. It was the unanimous opinion that the Hon. Secretary's resignation be held over until such time as he returns to the State to continue the work.

Mr. Arthur M. Lea exhibited a wonderful and interesting collection of pellets or casts from the "Screech Owl" (*Tyto alba delicatula*). These pellets or casts were taken at the Reed-beds by Capt. S. A. White and presented to the Museum.

Mr. Ashby exhibited some interesting specimens of the "Pilot Bird" (*Pycnoptilus floccosus*) from the Blue Mountains, and *P. f. sandlandi* from Victoria. A fine series of robins was shown from the Museum, Mr. Ashby's, and Capt. White's collections. The "Flame-breasted Robin" (genus *Littlera*) was found to differ somewhat in New South Wales, the birds from that State being of a decided orange colouration. The "Scarlet-breasted Robins," genus *Petroica* were found to differ in the East, South, and Western parts of Australia; the bird

found in Tasmania resembles the Kangaroo Island form. Specimens of the following species were examined, *Erythrodryas rodinogaster*, *Belchera rosea*, *Whiteornis goodenovii*, *Melanodryas cucullata*, and *Amaurodryas vittata*.

July 30th.

Capt. S. A. White stated, he had taken action in reporting the destruction of swans on Lakes Albert and Alexandrina by half-castes and others, the members present supported him in his prompt action.

A paper was read on "Some Pellets and Casts of the Screech Owl" (*Tyto alba delicatula*), by Capt. S. A. White. The paper is published in the present number. Mr. A. M. Lea, F.E.S., Museum Entomologist, exhibited another collection of pellets or casts from the Screech Owl; this collection was presented to the Museum by Mr. J. W. Mellor. It was pointed out that there was a great difference in the contents of the pellets, in comparison with those collected two miles to the west.

The genus *Smicrornis* came under discussion. A number of skins from the Museum, also from Mr. Ashby's and Capt. White's collections were shown. It was noted that *Smicrornis brevirostris viridescens*, extended as far north as Leigh Creek, while *S. b. flavescens*, or a bird which closely resembles it, is found all through the country between the Macdonnell Ranges and Oodnadatta; specimens have been taken at the latter place.

August 27th.

Correspondence was read from the Commissioner of Crown Lands re protecting swans, and the appointment of a custodian for the islands in the Coorong. Mr. Frank Hall, of Tea-tree Gully was elected a member. Mr. Bellchambers of Humbug Scrub, read some notes on nature and gave some interesting habits of the Mallee Fowl, which birds he has had under observation for some time.

Smicrornis (Tree-tits) and *Gerygone* (Fly-eaters) were discussed. A good number of skins of these birds were exhibited from the Museum and Mr. Ashby's collections.

Dr. Morgan reported having made the following observations in the Mount Lofty Ranges during the previous week. "Southern Hooded Robin" (*Melanodryas cucullata vigorsii*) nest-

ing. "Yellow-rumped pardalote" (*Pardalotus punctatus xanthopygus*) constructing their nesting tunnel in a bank. "Harmonious Shrike-Thrush" (*Colluricincla harmonica victoricae*), nesting on the side of a rock, in same situation as last year's nest, also the restless flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*) busily building their nest. Mr. J. W. Mellor stated that a pair of shrike thrushes had built a nest on a window-sill of an out-house at the Reed-beds. Capt. White said he had seen fully fledged young of this bird during the second week of the present month, he also stated that the Spotted-sided Finch (*Stagonopleura guttata philordi*) and the Red-browed Finch (*Aegintha temporalis loftyi*) were both nesting at the Reed-beds within a few yards of each other. The same member drew attention to the last number of the "Ibis" tenth series, Vol. III., No. 3, which contains some fine plates, also the Austral Avian Record, Vol. III., No. 2, containing a reproduction of Thos. Watling's painting of the "pallid cuckoo" painted in the year 1790, when Latham described it as a pale pigeon (*Columba pallida*). Mr. Mathews concludes his explanation with:—"The plate here given is a faithful copy in the minutest detail of the painting made by Thomas Watling about the year 1790. It must when criticising, therefore, be remembered that 125 years have elapsed since it was made, and allowance given for draftsmanship. When this is done I am sure all Australian Ornithologists will agree with me that it is a good figure of the cuckoo in immature plumage, and that Latham's name, as confirmed by Gould, is tenable."

Birds of the North and North-West of Australia.

FROM NOTES AND SKINS MADE BY THE LATE CAPT.
T. H. BOWYER-BOWER.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

No. 4.

The following birds were collected by the late Bowyer-Bower in 1886. Most of them were shot near Derby, but a few were obtained at Thursday Island, off North Queensland,

and others at Palmerston, in the Northern Territory. These will be noted in the body of the work.

The notes have been worked up from the carefully kept notebook of the collector. The exceedingly accurate descriptions of the soft parts, marks Bowyer-Bower as a very keen observer. These were noted as soon as the specimen was killed, as on some occasions he notes "the bird had been dead some time before I saw it, so cannot be sure of the colour of the soft parts."

This young and ardent field naturalist was the means of first recording many birds from the North-west of Australia. His *Pisobia damascensis* is the only one to date recorded as killed in Australia.

Most of this collection that reached England is in either the British Museum or my own. Over 600 skins of 150 species and sub-species were collected.

cf. Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W., ser. ii., vol. I., p. 1,096, 1887, and vol. II., p. 165, 1887, where it will be seen that certain birds are recorded from Derby, but in this list that follows their real locality is given. Thus *Halcyon macleayi* is from Palmerston, *Colluriocincla rufogaster* is from Thursday Island, as is also *Ptilotis notata*.

7. *SYNOICUS YPSILOPHORUS ROGERSI*. Dark brown Quail.

Coturnix australis rogersi (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 179, 1912. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

Nos. 109, Male; 279, Male; 329, Male—June and September, 1886.

Length, 7.2 to 7.8 inches. Irides, dull red; bill, dark brown at the point, bluish at the base; legs and feet, yellow.

16. *CHRYSAUCHÆNA HUMERALIS INEXPECTATA*. Western Barred-shouldered Dove.

Geopelia humeralis inexpectata (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 186, 1912. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 222—Male. Length, 12.6 inches. (27/8/86).

No. 236. Length, 12.8 inches. (29/8/86). Irides, straw yellow; orbital space, rose pink; bill, very pale bluish white; feet and legs, blood-red; nails, horn colour.

16. *GEOPELIA PLACIDA PLACIDA*. Northern Ground Dove.

Geopelia placida (Gould), Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1844, p. 55. Port Essington.

No. 85. Length, 7.3 inches. (2/6/86). Irides, grey; orbital space, grey; bill, brown; legs and feet, flesh colour.

No. 235—Female. Length, 8.3 inches. (29/8/86). Irides, bluish white; orbital space, pale green; bill, light brown, becoming blue over the nostrils; feet and legs, flesh colour; scales, purple.

No. 455—Male. Length, 8.4 inches. (27/10/86). Irides, pale greenish white; orbital space and soft parts on bill, beautiful pale greenish white, tinged with blue on the lores, and slate colour showing chiefly on the soft parts of the bill; feet and legs, fleshy white, with purple scales.

No. 462—Male. Length, 8.4 inches. (28/10/86).

17. STICTOPELEIA CUNEATA MUNGI. Western Spotted-shouldered Dove.

Geopelia cuneata mungi (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 187, 1912. Mungi, North-west Australia.

No. 238—Male. Length, 8.2 inches. (13/7/86).

No. 457—Female. Length, 7.9 inches. (27/10/86). Irides, red; eyelids, brown; orbital space, red; bill, dark brown, with its soft parts of a leaden colour; legs and feet, white.

18. PHAPS CHALCOPTERA CONSOBRINA. Northern Bronze-winged Pigeon.

Phaps chalcoptera consobrina (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 188, 1912. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 313 = 312—Male. Length, 14.1 inches. (13/9/86).

No. 233—Female. Length, 13.3 inches. (12/7/86). Irides, brown; bill, dark brown; legs and feet, red.

A nest containing two young, about a fortnight old, was found on 13/10/86. The nest (which is a very slight structure and exceedingly small for the bird, is composed of twigs, and put together very roughly, like the majority of nests of the *Columbidae*) was placed in a small tree about 9 feet from the ground. On going near the tree the old bird left very quietly (and not with the noise always made with the wings as these birds take flight), and, flying to the ground about 10 yards from the tree, appeared to have a broken leg or wing. Suspecting these actions the bird was nevertheless followed

for some 25 yards, when it flew up and went away quite strong.

19. HISTRIOPHAPS HISTRIONICA ALISTERI. Northern Flock Pigeon.

Phaps histrionica alisteri (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 189. 1912, Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 117. Length, 11.9 inches. (12/6/86). Irides and naked skin round the eye, black; bill, black; feet and legs, lilac, tinged on the back of the tarsus and soles of the feet with pink.

No. 123—Male. Length, 11.8 inches. (12/6/86).

No. 124—Male. Length, 11.9 inches. (14/6/86).

No. 157—Male. Length, 11.6 inches. (20/6/86).

No. 185—Male. Length, 11.9 inches. (26/6/86).

Nos. 198, 199—Female. Length, 11.5 inches. (27/6/86).

20. LOPHOPHAPS FERRUGINEA MUNGI. Pale Red-plumed Pigeon.
Lophophaps ferruginea mungi (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 190. 1912, Mungi, North-west Australia.

No. 383—Male. Length, 8.7 inches. (9/10/86).

No. 384—Female. Length, 7.7 inches. (9/10/86).

No. 385. Length, 7.9 inches. (10/10/86).

No. 394—Male. Length, 8.1 inches. (12/10/86).

No. 395—Male. Length, 7.8 inches. (12/10/86).

No. 396—Female. Length, 7.7 inches. (12/10/86).

No. 397—Female. Length 7.9 inches. (12/10/86).

No. 405—Female. Length, 8.1 inches. (14/9/86).

No. 464—Male. Length, 8.1 inches. (28/10/86).

No. 470—Male. Length, 7.9 inches. (28/10/86).

No. 472—Female. Length, 8.1 inches. (29/10/86).

No. 473—Female. Length, 8 inches. (29/10/86).

No. 474—Male. Length, 7.8 inches. (29/10/86).

No. 379—Male. Length, 8.7 inches. (8/10/86). Irides, bright orange, of a redder and more fiery tint next the pupil; eyelid and naked skin round the eye, bright coral red; bill and soft skin round nostrils, black; feet and legs, deep lead,

with a purplish tint, which is more conspicuous on the back of the tarsi; claws, black.

No. 380—Male. Length, 8.1 inches. (8/10/86). In their flight these birds somewhat resemble the quail, but do not fly so swiftly; they make a noise very similar to that bird on rising, but fly straighter and to about the same distance, the latter portion being accomplished with outspread wings. On regaining the ground they run quickly, and are very quail-like in their movements. During the heat of the day, when in the shade it is about 105 to 110, these lovely birds may be seen on the bare sandstone rocks in the full enjoyment, apparently, of the sun's powerful rays, and when in such a position are with great difficulty seen, owing to the similarity of the colour of the stone. They appear very easily killed; indeed, some shot at 25 yards with small collecting charges (viz., $\frac{1}{2}$ drachm powder and some dust shot) were quite dead. If wounded they flutter, and the feathers come out in large quantities. They are difficult birds to skin, as both skin and flesh are very tender and difficult to separate. They are good eating. Although there are generally from 6 to 15 in a flock they do not fly together as quails do, but go off in twos or threes, often in quite opposite directions. They make no note, and only once were seen to perch on a dead fallen tree.

21. *OCYPHAPS LOPHOTES WHITLOCKI*. Western Crested Pigeon.
Ocyphaps lophotes whitlocki (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 191. 1912, East Murchison, West Australia.
No. 516—Female. Length, 13.2 inches. (5/11/06).
No. 517—Male. Length, 13.4 inches. (5/11/86).
27. *MICROTRIBONYX VENTRALIS TERRITORII*. Northern Black-tailed Native Hen.

Tribonyx ventralis territorii (Mathews), Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 195. 1912, Alexandra, Northern Territory.

Order Passeriformes, Family Artamidae, Genus Pseudartamus.

Pseudartamus cyanopterus—The Wood Swallow.

Description.—Head, neck, and breast light fuliginous grey, gradually becoming darker on the back, rump, abdo-

men, and flanks; upper and under tail coverts almost black; lores and feathers at the base of the lower mandible dusky; outer surface of wings dark slaty blue; outer web of second, third and fourth primaries white; under wing coverts white; under surface of primaries and secondaries ashy grey; tail black, broadly tipped with white; the two central tail feathers and the outer webs of the two outer tail feathers entirely black; bill light slaty blue, tipped with black; legs and feet lead colour; iris brown. There is little or no difference between the male and female. Young.—Brownish grey above and below, each feather with a broad whitish shaft streak; primaries and secondaries narrowly edged with greyish buff.

Total length of skin, 170 m.m.; wing, 130 m.m.; tail, 80 m.m.; tarsus, 20 m.m.; bill, 16 m.m.

Distribution.—All the southern parts of this State. It does not extend into the dry interior, its place being there taken by *Austrartamus melanops*. It is also found in Victoria, New South Wales, Southern Queensland, and Tasmania.

Habits.—It is a resident bird in South Australia, though, perhaps, not so plentiful in winter as in spring and summer: possibly there is a partial migration or they may wander in search of better food supplies. Odd pairs have been known to stay in the same locality for several years. They like open forest country rather than thick scrub. Most of their time is spent upon the wing, looking for insects, or perched in companies upon a bare tree limb, fence, or telegraph wire, from whence they sally forth to catch any passing insects, returning to the perch with their capture. When perched in this way they have a habit of lifting one wing, partially opening it as though to stretch it and closing it again: this is repeated many times. After nesting time they congregate in parties of from 10 to 40 in number, and occasionally in much larger flocks. They do not nest in companies: each pair keeps to its own beat, and drives away all intruders of the same species. At this time they will attack any birds or animals, large or small, which come near the nest, and will even attack man, swooping swiftly down upon him with harsh cries, and snapping the bill. In the non-breeding season they roost in companies, having the peculiar habit of clinging together in a bunch like a swarm of bees. Favourite roosting places are the thickish branch of a tree with rough bark, such as a peppermint, a thick bunch of gum leaves, or the butt of a mistletoe. The

first birds arrive at dusk, and get a firm foothold upon the roosting place, and the others cling on to them as they arrive. The same roosting place is used night after night. They sometimes gather in the same way in the day time, particularly on cold, misty, or drizzly days.

Food.—This is mostly taken upon the wing, much after the manner of swallows, but they also search the bark of trees for insects, clinging to it with the feet, and using the outspread tail as a support. Occasionally they take their food upon the ground. It is not uncommon to see them searching the flowers of *eucalypti*, *hakea*, and other flowering shrubs, but whether for the nectar or for insects is not known. With this possible exception the food consists entirely of insects of all classes. They are especially fond of bees, and for that reason are not beloved by the apiarist.

Flight.—Graceful and gliding; very like that of swallows.

Song.—While hawking for insects or sitting upon a perch they utter a single, rather harsh and plaintive note frequently repeated. In the spring they have a continuous twittering song, soft and musical, but so low pitched as not to be heard at any great distance. When singing they have a habit of wagging the partly outspread tail from side to side.

NEST.—Favourite nesting places are the top of a broken off limb, between a piece of loose bark and the hole of a tree, in a thick fork of a peppermint, or in the butt of a mistletoe. The nest may be any height from the ground, from a few feet to 40 feet or more, but is usually not more than 10 or 12 feet up. It is rather a frail looking structure, but is really strongly, though lightly, constructed. The materials are fine twigs and dried grasses for the framework, and rootlets and finer grasses for the lining. No soft material, such as fur or feathers, is used. Two, sometimes three, broods are reared in the season; the young birds of the first clutch being driven away as soon as they are able to look after themselves. The same nest is sometimes used twice, but usually it is too dilapidated, and is pulled to pieces to make way for a new one in the same place. The breeding season lasts from August to December. The usual clutch is three eggs, but sometimes four, and sometimes only two are laid.

Eggs.—The ground colour varies from white, through creamy white, to light brown. They are spotted, mostly in a

ring about the larger end, with dark brown, black, and dull purple, the latter being semi-submerged.

Average measurement of 18 eggs, 2.33 c.m. x 1.73 c.m.

Largest egg, 2.50 c.m. x 1.80 c.m.

Smallest egg, 2.25 c.m. x 1.70 c.m.

On some Pellets or Casts of a Screech Owl (*Tyto alba delicatula*, Gould).

By S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U., R.A.O.U.

In a pine tree at the Reedbeds, near Adelaide, a screech owl has been in the habit of resting during the daytime, from the last week in December, 1914, or possibly the first week in January, of the present year.

In June a number of pellets were noticed under the tree, and some of these were exhibited at a meeting of the Royal Society of South Australia. Later more pellets were gathered, and it was thought that a paper dealing with these would be of interest.

The screech owl (*Tyto alba* or *Flammea flammea*, "B.O.U. List, 1915") is widely distributed, being found in all the continents, and is known under many names, such as "Masked," "Delicate," "Barn," "White," and "Screech" Owl," and in New South Wales sometimes as the "Night-hawk." In England it is commonly known as the "Barn Owl" (*Strix flammea*, but now as *Flammea flammea*). Many varieties or sub-species have been named; our common sub-species as *Strix delicatula*, Gould; but Mathews now refers to it as *Tyto alba delicatula*, and it will be known in the near future as *Flammea f. delicatula*.

In common with other owls this species lives largely on mice, rats, young rabbits, small birds, and night-flying insects; bats and frogs are also eaten. The food is not passed through the intestines as with most other birds, but after the nourishment has been extracted from it, the waste parts are ejected from the mouth as pellets, and from these the nature of the food of the bird may be easily found out.

The screech owl lives a solitary life, except during the nesting season. On mating a suitable hollow is found, and in this the young are reared; these not coming into the open until

they are practically able to take care of themselves; but on the ground beneath the nesting hollow the pellets are always numerous, although it is probable that these are from the old birds only.

It is seldom to be seen away from watercourses, or at least from permanent waterholes. Sudden cold seems to be very injurious to it, as after every cold snap a few dead birds may be picked up.

Whilst rabbit shooting by moonlight this owl has often been observed flying low down over rabbit warrens, and to suddenly clutch at some object with its claws: from examination of the pellets this object must often have been a young rabbit; matured rabbits do not appear to be attacked. It has also been observed alighting to capture crickets and other insects.

It was once very common at the Reedbeds, but, like other native birds, of late years has become scarce. A few are, however, still to be heard at night, or occasionally may be seen perched in some thickly foliated tree during the daytime. Its worst enemy is undoubtedly man, who, blaming it for killing chickens, pigeons, and young game birds (usually due to the rat) shoots it remorselessly.

Its hideous call, resembling the shriek of a child in agony, and suddenly breaking the stillness of the night, also prejudices people against it. But the pellets from this single bird are sufficient to prove that the species is one of the most useful, if not actually the most useful one, that we have in Australia. The Laughing Jackass (*Dacelo gigas*) has been seen on several occasions to kill, or seriously injure, individuals, and, in common with other owls, it is frequently mobbed by small birds. Hawks have been known to attack it.

There can be no doubt as to the approximate date when the particular owl, whose pellets are now under consideration, began to frequent the pine tree, as the ground beneath this had been raked over just before Christmas, and no pellets were seen. It is also certain that no other owl used the tree during the past year, so that the whole of these pellets are from one bird. But the same bird used other trees, and has now disappeared. It is reasonable, therefore, to estimate that the total number of pellets ejected for the six months is at least double that found under the tree, or for a whole year four times that number. Of the pellets the actual number obtained were:—

Complete or almost so—172.

Partly broken up, or loose skulls—109.

These were presented to the Museum, and as it was considered desirable for Museum purposes that they should be exhibited in mass, but seven complete ones were disintegrated for examination. From these and from examination of pellets generally, and from the loose bones, the following particulars were prepared by the Entomologist, Mr. Arthur M. Lea, who also received much assistance as regards the identification of bone contents from the Ornithologist, Mr. F. R. Zietz, the Director, Mr. Edgar R. Waite, who also identified some of the bones, and Dr. A. M. Morgan identified some sterna and skulls of a few doubtful specimens. The pellets were estimated to contain bones of vertebrates as follows:—

Sparrows	160
Starlings	16
Musk Lorikeets	10
*Other small birds	5
Young Rabbits	15
Bat	1
Frogs	48

Allowing, as previously surmised, that the bird ejected as many elsewhere for the six months, a fair estimate for a year's destruction of various pests would be:—

Sparrows	640
Starlings	64
Mice	1600
Young Rabbits	60

In addition numerous rats and thousands of destructive insects would be eaten. The bone contents of the seven disintegrated pellets represented:—

1. Four mice.
2. Two mice, four frogs, and a jew lizard (*Amphibolurus barbatus*).
3. Two mice and seven frogs.
4. One mouse and one young rabbit.
5. One mouse and two sparrows.
6. Three mice and one sparrow.
7. Three mice, one young rabbit, and one frog.

* Mostly Honey-eaters.

The fact that a jew lizard was eaten is of interest as indicating that possibly small snakes are also eaten, although no bones of such were noticed in the pellets. No fragments of egg shells were seen, and this is also of interest, as these are so hard and indigestible that, had the owl habitually fed on birds' eggs, some fragments of these must have formed part of the pellets. Very few birds' claws were seen, and practically no flight or tail feathers.

The following insects, or parts of the same, were identified as occurring in the pellets:—

- Soldier ant (*Myrmecia pyriformis*).
- Green-headed ant (*Ectatomma metallicum*).
- Sugar ant (*Camponotus sp.*).
- Mole cricket (*Gryllotalpa coarctata*).
- Ground cricket (*Gryllus servillei*).
- Large carnivorous cricket (*Gryllacris sp.*).
- Introduced earwig (*Labidura truncata*).
- Fragments of several kinds of cockroaches (*Blattidae*).
- Numerous night beetles (*Antitrogus burmeisteri*).
- Numerous dung beetles (*Onthophagus pentacanthus*).
- Numerous large cockchafer (*Anoplognathus odewahnii*).

Some pellets were made up almost wholly of remains of these beetles, and, owing to their loose construction, probably others were broken up, and so not examined.

Thousands of fragments of small cockchafer of the genus *Heteronyx*, probably of several species of these common night-flying beetles.

- Small stag beetle (*Figulus lilliputanus*).
- Stag beetle (*Lamprima varians*).
- Weevil (*Desiantha maculata*).
- Weevil (*Rhinaria tibialis*).
- Wire-worm beetle (*Lacon caliginosus*).
- Night beetle (*Pterohelaeus*, 2 species).
- Night beetle (*Helaeus haagi*).
- Beech beetle (*Caedimorpha heteromera*).

This and the preceding species were probably taken during a visit to the adjacent beach.

- Longicorn beetle (*Phoracantha recurva*).

The pellets vary from the size of a small walnut to that of a hen's egg. When first ejected they are covered with a slimy

crust, but through which many bones project, the most common of these being heads, breast and leg bones of sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), and lower jaws and leg bones of mice. On exposure to weather the pellets partially break up, and the bones become more noticeable; still later the pellets fall to pieces, but loose skulls, jaws, and other bones, are to be seen in large numbers under the trees the owls frequent. The pellets are also sometimes pecked to pieces by birds, in particular by family groups of the "Happy Family" or "Twelve Apostles" (*Morganornis superciliosus*). The softer parts are often eaten by larvae of clothes moths, by Museum beetles (*Anthrenus* and *Dermestes*), *Psocus*, etc. Small spiders and ground mites are also to be seen in large numbers in them. On many pellets sparrow skulls form the most conspicuous feature, but on closer examination numerous lower jaws of mice become visible. On some of the larger pellets rabbit bones and jaws may be easily made out. Only one jaw of a bat was noticed, but doubtless had all the pellets been disintegrated others would have been seen. Many pellets contained remains of both sparrows and mice; some, remains of rabbits and mice; others, at least two kinds of birds; and scattered generally through them were the harder parts of insects. Occasionally two sparrow skulls were distinctly visible in one pellet, and rarely three. In one three mouse skulls were distinct. Very many of the sparrow and starling (*Sturnis vulgaris*) skulls were smashed in at the base, this evidently having been done before the birds were eaten.

The outer crust is frequently largely composed of the fur of mice and rats, and the whisker hairs of rats and rabbits are always visible on the pellets containing bones of same. On many pellets curious leathery objects were visible, and one pellet was broken up to examine one of these closely, when it was found to be portion of the stomach wall of a sparrow. Pellets composed largely of the remains of mice break up less readily than others, whilst those largely composed of remains of frogs and insects break up very easily. No doubt with mice and birds the fur or feathers act as a kind of cement to bind the whole.

Mr. J. W. Mellor recently presented to the Museum many pellets of the same species of owl. These were found under a pine tree at Lockleys, near Adelaide. The trunk of the tree is only about six yards from the back door of a newly-built house, and the owl did not appear to be disturbed by the build-

ing operations. The pellets were certainly not older than a year, and were remarkable for the large numbers of larvae of clothes moths working in them. They were also being eaten by numbers of a small introduced beetle (*Ptinus fur*). They were estimated to contain bones of vertebrates as follows:—

Sparrows (introduced) ..	465
Starlings (introduced) ..	10
Musk Lorikeets	2
Other small birds	5
Mice	80
Rats	5
Frogs	5

There was a striking difference between these and the first lot examined, sparrow skulls being far more numerous, and jaw bones of mice much scarcer; no bones of rabbits were seen in them. Three pellets were disintegrated for examination, and their bone contents were as follows:—

1. Four mice and one sparrow.
2. Three mice and one sparrow.
3. Three sparrows.

A pellet found elsewhere contained bones of two mice and a rat.

An owl found dead in July was handed to the Museum, and Mr. Zietz found in its stomach remains of one mouse only.

In conclusion a paragraph may be quoted from Waterton, dealing with this species of owl in England:—

“When it has young it will bring a mouse to the nest every twelve to fifteen minutes. But in order to have a proper idea of the enormous quantity of mice which this bird destroys we must examine the pellets which it ejects from its stomach. Every pellet contains from four to seven skeletons of mice. In sixteen months from the time that the apartment of the owl on the old gateway was cleaned out there has been a deposit of above a bushel of pellets.”

Field Notes in the Blue Mountains.

BY EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U., R.A.O.U.

It was my privilege to spend the week-end June 12th last at Woodford, in the Blue Mountains, N.S.W. The altitude is

2,013 feet. The township is on a ridge, with steep gullies falling away on either side. The smaller gully bottoms were dense with shrubs, undergrowth, and ferns, though very few tree ferns were seen, and no typical tree fern gullies.

Origima solitaria (Lewin)—Rock Warbler.—Was seen running over the rocks early in the morning almost in the township, and also again later in the day one was disturbed in a small cave near the creek in the main gully. This bird we watched for some time within a few yards of us, exhibiting no signs of fear. It then flew on to the top of the rock beneath which was the cave, and settled quite close to another of our party.

Menura novaehollandiae (Latham)—Lyre Bird.—In a branch gully, not far from the cave before mentioned, a freshly made lyre bird's nest was found. It was made of sticks and fine twigs, and lined with still finer twigs and roots. It appeared completed and ready for eggs. The hole was the shape of a half circle, the straight line at the top, the top overhung making a sort of eaves, no doubt to shoot the rain.

The nest was in the centre of a low grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea*), which was growing close to the edge of a small cliff. From the nest quite an extensive view down the gully could be obtained.

I sat for half an hour near the nest next day, hoping to get a sight of or to hear a sound of the birds, but neither heard nor saw them.

In some dense scrub on the rising ground above the locality of the nest were a number of open spots that had been used by the birds as performing grounds. Some were old ones, but one or two evidently quite recent.

I saw no *sericornis*, although the country seemed so suitable.

Pycnoptilus floccosus (Gld.)—Pilot Bird.—Two specimens of this interesting bird were obtained. They were both in the gully bottoms, and were creeping about under the fern in the silent mouse-like manner of a *sericornis*. I heard one early in the morning much higher up the gully, but evidently the birds were not calling, as that was the only time that I heard its cry, "a guinea a week."

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris (Latham)—Spinebill.—These lovely little birds were exceedingly numerous and very tame,

also they were in full song, which was not the case with any other birds. Several times one would settle within a yard or so of me and pour out its sweet little song.

Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera (Latham)—Crescent Honey-eater.—This bird was everywhere.

Lophoptilotus melanops (Latham)—Yellow-tufted Honey-eater.—One of this lovely species of honey-eaters came and sat within a couple of yards of me, and I got a good opportunity of watching it.

Nesoptilotis leucotis (Latham)—White-eared Honey-eater.—These were very numerous. Its well-known "bull frog" note was one of the commonest sounds in the bush in the latter part of the afternoon.

Strepera graculina—White Pied Crow-shrike.—A flock of these birds were busy picking up fallen apples in a small orchard in the township. Their loud, not unmusical, cries were common sounds in the morning and evening. They are most destructive in the apple orchards.

Platycercus elegans (Gmelin)—Crimson Parrot.—Were in small flocks.

Calyptrorhynchus (sp.).—Several Black Cockatoos were both seen and heard, but was unable to identify the species.

Callocephalon galeatum (Latham)—Gang-gang Cockatoo.—Several small flocks seen.

Pachycephala pectoralis (Latham)—White-throated Thick-head.—No males seen, and not once were their notes heard, but a female was shot. One wondered whether this species had gone nearer the plains for the winter, as one would have expected to find it one of the commonest species.

Acanthiza lineata goulburni (Mathews)—Striated Tit, and *Acanthiza pusilla*—White Brown-tit.—Were both common.

Eopsaltria australis—White Yellow-breasted Shrike-robin.—These charming birds were very numerous round the house on the top of the ridge, and seemed to frequent the more open spaces on the top of the hill rather than the denser gullies.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

[BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.]

VI. THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

Samuel White with his wife, returned to South Australia in the ship "Murray," landing on July 29th, 1876, after a most eventful and trying voyage. Fearfully rough weather accompanied the ship all the way. Taking the route around Cape Horn, the ship was three weeks in the ice, lost a mast, and was knocked about generally. From letters and rough notes I find that my father, in 1871, was on his way to Queensland, bent on an ornithological expedition. The records of this trip are meagre, simply a few scant notes stating that a large collection of birds and natural history specimens was taken.

In April, 1872, Samuel White again sailed for England, this time in one of the early steamships. This was a business trip in connection with estate matters, which required his presence in London. In some rough notes on the voyage, he speaks of the boat calling at Albany. "We had a great scramble to get on shore," he said, "there were few boats and the sea was running high, and the passengers and luggage were soaked by the seas. The chief hotel, which was a very poor place, was soon reached. The weather being stormy, I did not go out until after dinner. The harbour is a beautiful little basin of an inlet from the eastward. The town is scattered, and the houses small. It is one of the sleepest places I have ever been in. In the afternoon I set out from the back of the town proceeding for about two miles, and found the country as far as I could see, covered with scrub—it put me much in mind of the black swamps in South Australia—but the eucalypti were stringy-bark and calophila. Upon my return I visited the naturalist of the town, a Mr. Maxwell, an old man of the last century. He knew how to ask for money for the few curios he had, wanted £1 per dozen for Buprestis beetles, many species being those I already have. Returning to the hotel ended my first ramble in Western Australia.

The land appears very poor, undulating white sand, covered with scrub, great boulders of granite cropping up in every direction. The scrub is very beautiful in itself. There is a greater variety of banksia here than I have ever seen before.

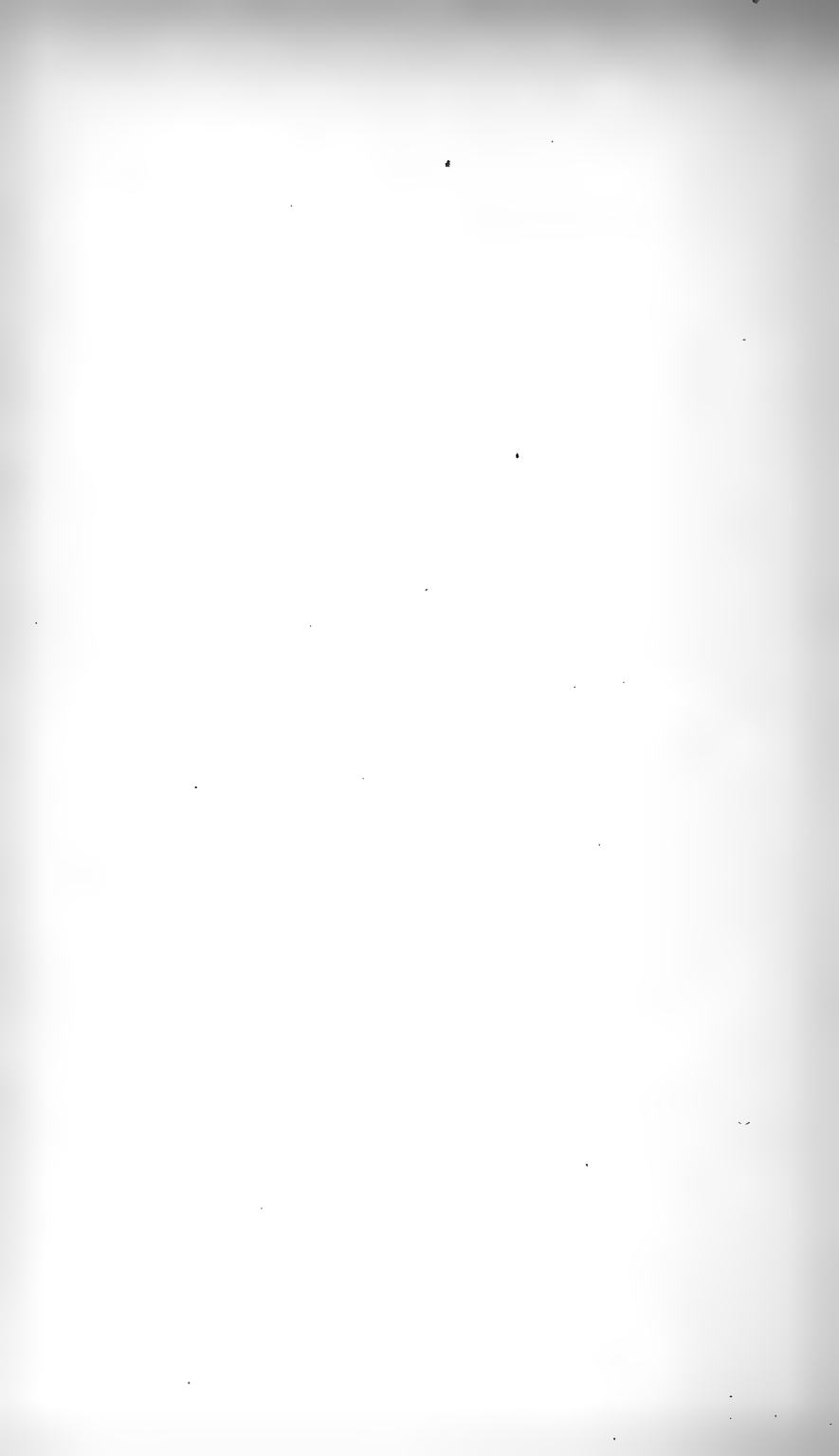
Some of them have large blossoms, a foot long, others were small, but exquisitely beautiful. I did not see any birds.

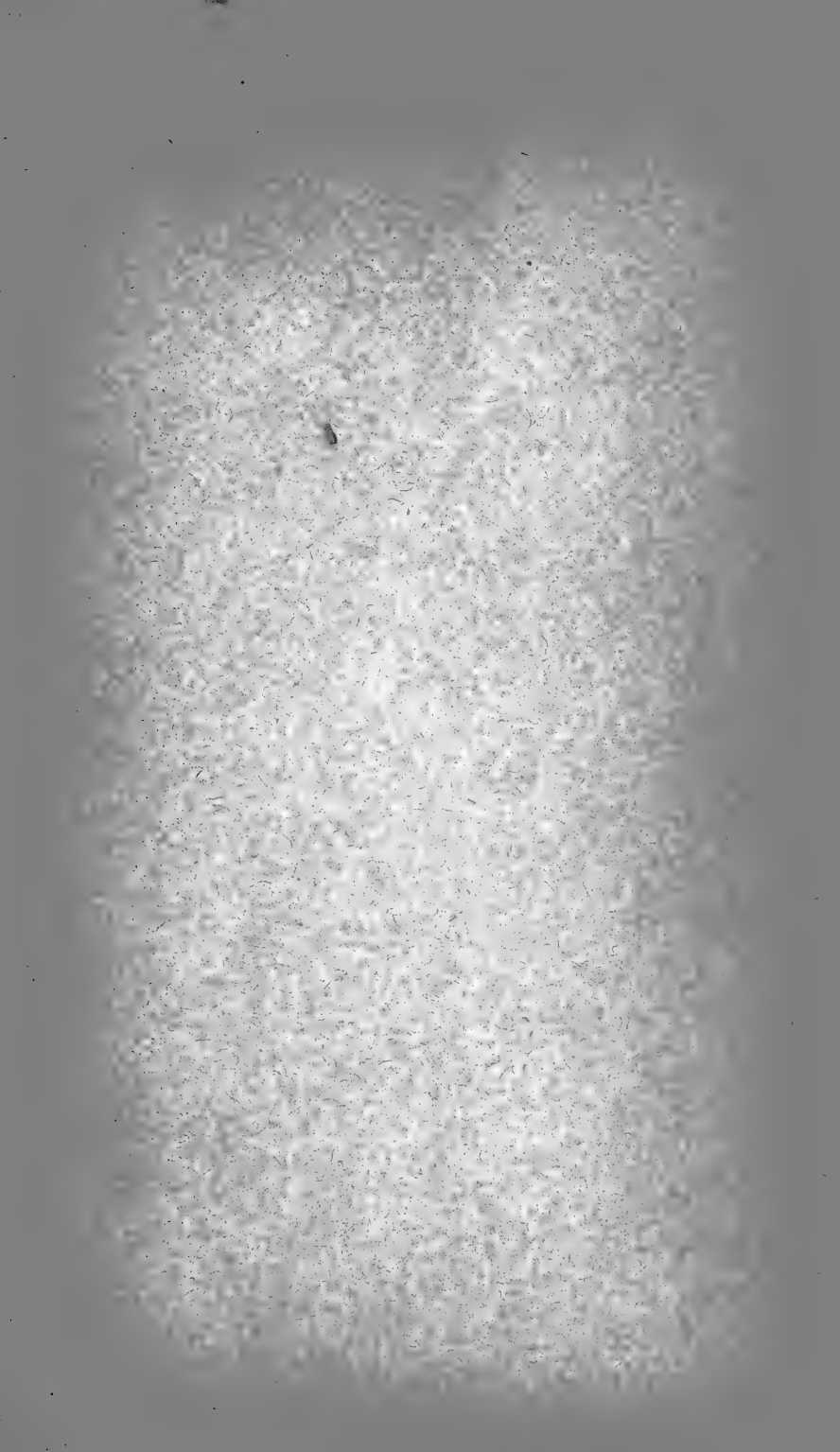
Next day, as the 'Bangalori' had not arrived, I made an excursion in the opposite direction to the route taken the previous day. Had not gone far when a magnificent calestemon was discovered in full bloom. It really looked beautiful, with its profusion of flame-coloured or orange-scarlet-blossoms. The country seemed of the same poor description. A few casuarina were seen about 20 feet high. I am told that this tree grows in good soil very tall, with straight boles four or five feet in diameter. No birds were seen. Getting wet through returned to the settlement. I find there is a brisk trade doing here in curiosities, such as cockatoos, rugs, skins, black-fellows' implements, quondong stones, anything for money without much trouble." Notes further on speak of sea-birds occasionally seen, and of many tropical birds of Ceylon, where the ship called, then he speaks of numerous kites at Aden, which were likened to our *Milvus affinus*, with a note stating that the call of both birds is similar. Passengers left the steamer at Suez in those days, and took train to Alexandria, to again board a steamer for Europe. In his notes Samuel White regrets taking the rail journey by night, for he only saw about thirty miles of the country after daylight, and speaks of a light grey bird with white tails; also of the crops of the surrounding country being taken off on camels, and square plots being flooded in for rice cultivation. He did not remain long in England, but while there, independent of his business, he spent some time with the bird men of the old country, and at the British Museum. After Samuel White returned a few years elapsed before he took another big trip, but we know that during that time, he was putting in much good ornithological work. He had always a yacht in commission, and if not making trips inland with a covered van, constructed for the purpose, he was cruising amongst the islands off the Australian coastline. In these trips his wife and family accompanied him. During all this time he was building up a wonderful collection of bird skins, and a knowledge of Australian birds not yet equalled by any field worker in the world. An ardent ornithologist in those days worked alone, for he was looked upon by the average man as being deficient in intellect. There was no assistance or encouragement from scientific bodies, but for all that the subject of this sketch was so engrossed with the wonderful science of ornithology that it was his one great aim in life, an ever absorbing hobby.

In 1878 North Queensland seems to have again called Samuel White, and he set out well equipped for a lengthy sojourn in the Cape York peninsula and the surrounding islands. In a letter to his wife headed, "Somerset, September 25, 1878," he says, "I have just returned from a cruise amongst the islands in Torres Straits. I am quite well, no fever yet, though many around me have it. I have my headquarters with Mr. Jardine still, he is really one of the nicest fellows I ever met, his kindness and hospitality is unceasing. I have been able to make a cruise of about 400 miles amongst the islands lately, and hope next week to be able to get away amongst another lot of islands. . . . I have been here some time, but will not leave until after December. It is a long way to this place (about 3,000 miles), and I came too early, as the season does not begin till late in October, I want to do all I can while here." Later he goes on to say, "I have been all this day putting away and labelling my specimens procured during the last trip among the islands. I have only been away fifteen days, and brought back a fine lot of skins, mostly sea-birds. Then I have sea and land shells, crabs, botanical specimens, and a thousand and one natural history specimens. I have not the space here to describe the lovely islands we called at, where cocoanuts and bananas grow wild, and the natives are yellow-skinned and straight-haired (New Guinea tribes). The weather has been very disagreeable, always blowing a gale, heavy squalls. The excessive skinning is making my fingernails part from the flesh into which the arsenic penetrates, causing a festering sore, and I suffer great pain, but there, I should bear it cheerfully when I am getting so many rare bird skins." . . . Of a later date still, a letter contained the following, "The weather now is very hot in the scrub, the wind has been blowing a gale ever since I have been here, never ceasing, always from the south-east. This is the south-east season, and when the north-east trades set in, then comes the birds and mosquitoes. The sand-flies here are very bad, wherever they bite me the place rises into a festering pimple. Insects never made a mark on me before. In a fortnight I will make another trip to the islands in Torres Straits. First to Moa and Bardo, where there are some shelling stations. Hope to be gone about a month, then return to Somerset. The right season is setting in now, and I hope to procure a great many bird skins, unless I am attacked by fever. Somerset is a pretty place, Mr. Jardine is sole proprietor, all other people here, principally blacks, are his servants. The scrub is very

thick hereabouts, and one has to be very careful not to get lost, the first few times of entering it. I had a letter from poor Broadbent who is at Port Moresby, he has had fever very badly, but is recovering. It is trying work walking about in the hot scrub all day, attacked by green ants and hornets. The grass grows higher than a fellow's head here."









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J. A. Riley

Vol. II.

Part 5.

THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
ORNITHOLOGIST,

A Magazine of Ornithology.

1st JANUARY, 1916.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

R. CROMPTON, R.A.O.U.

A. M. MORGAN, M.B., CH.B.

S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

F. R. ZIETZ, R.A.O.U.

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THE
South Australian
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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

1ST JANUARY, 1916.

[PART 5.

The South Australian Ornithological Association.

There has been a good average attendance for the last three monthly meetings. The proceedings are as follows:—

September 24th, 1915.

Mr. Samuel Sanders exhibited a small case of mounted birds, consisting of three species, and was highly complimented upon his excellent work.

Mr. Bellchambers gave interesting notes upon the pelican, describing their flight, food, and habits.

Mr. R. Zietz stated that several little pied cormorants had been procured from the River Murray for scientific purposes, and on the examination of stomach contents, it was found that these birds were living entirely upon carp (often called goldfish) and "yabbies" (or crayfish).

The birds discussed during the evening were of the genus *Wilsonavis*, *Ethelornis*, *Heteromyias*, *Quoyornis*, and *Tregellasia*. A good collection of these birds was exhibited from the Museum collection by Mr. Zietz.

October 29th, 1915.

A letter was read from the Secretary to the Commissioner for Crown Lands, confirming the appointment of Mr. Applecamp as Custodian of the islands in the Coorong leased to this Association.

Mr. Bellchambers, of Humbug Scrub, forwarded interesting notes upon bird life in his district. Amongst others, he

stated that the black-throated grebes (*Tachybaptus ruficollis novae-hollandiae*) had constructed their floating nest upon the waters of a large dam, which he had enclosed to protect the wild fowl and other native birds.

Mr. Arthur M. Lea, F.E.S., exhibited a case of tabulated stomach contents of the English starling (*Sturnis vulgaris*). These stomachs had been sent in by Capt. White and Mr. Ashby. One of the leading features was the great quantity of African boxthorn seeds found in the stomachs of these birds, and the great harm done by the birds distributing this thorny plant. It was shown that many seeds and remains of insects and caterpillars were found in the stomachs. A very important item was the discovery of maggots, or larvae, of the blow-fly.

The evening was set apart for the examination of material collected during a recent excursion made to Moolooloo, Flinders Ranges North. The trip was made under the auspices of the Field Naturalists' Section of the Royal Society of South Australia. Capt. S. A. White (President of the Section) gave a brief outline of the trip and the country worked, also field notes, with specimens collected, and described a new sub-species of *Barnardius barnardi* as *Barnardius barnardi lindoi* (Lindo's Ring-neck Parrot).

Mr. J. W. Mellor showed a few specimens collected upon the same excursion, amongst them *Pomatostomus ruficeps*.

Both Mr. Zietz (from Museum collection) and Mr. Ashby showed a fine lot of material for comparison.

November 26th, 1915.

Mr. Bellchambers gave some further notes upon the black-throated grebe, and described how the young are covered over in the nest for several days, and that they are then protected under either wing of the adult bird. In this way the young are conveyed about in the water and fed.

Mr. E. Ashby exhibited a collection of skins lately procured in the Illewarra district, N.S.W. A description of the country collected in, and the flora, was given, also field notes upon the following specimens:—

Monarcha melanopsis (Vicillot).—Black-faced Flycatcher.

Howeavis rufifrons (Latham).—Rufous Fantail.

Rhipidura flabellifera alestri (Mathews).—White-shafted Fantail.

- Belchera rosea* (Gould).—Rose-breasted Robin.
Petroica multicolor coccinea (Peale).—Eastern Scarlet-breasted Robin.
Eopsaltria australis (White).—Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin.
Pachycephala pectoralis (Latham).—White-throated Thick-head.
Zosterops lateralis (Latham).—White-eye.
Wilsonavis fusca (Gould).—Brown Fly-eater.
Climacteris leucophaea (Latham).—White-throated Tree-creeper.
Acanthiza lineata goulburni (Mathews).—Striated Tit.
Lamprococyx plagosus (Latham).—Bronze Cuckoo.
Meliphaga lewini (Swainson).—Yellow-eared Honey-eater.
Sericornis longirostris parvulus (Gould).—White-browed Scrub Wren.
-

Birds of the North and North-West of Australia.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

No. 5.

No. 258—Female. Length, 14.1 inches (2/9/86).

Irides, orange yellow; upper mandible, rather bright light green at the base, and gradually shading into bright olive green for the remainder of its length; lower mandible, dull coral red at the base, becoming olive green towards the tip; legs and feet, red.

No. 526—Female. (7/11/86)

28. PORPHYRIO MELANOTUS NEOMELANOTUS. Northern Bald Coot.

Porphyrio melanotus neomelanotus (Mathews). Birds Austr., Vol. I., p. 246, pl. 60, 1911. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 243—Male. Length, 17.5 inches (13/7/86).

No. 245—Female. Length, 17.5 inches (13/7/86).

No. 249—Male. Length, 18.8 inches (31/8/86).

Irides, red; bill and frontal plate, deep red; legs and feet, flesh colour, with the scales on all the joints of an olive grey colour.

No. 344—Male. Length, 18.8 inches (18/9/86).

Irides, hazel; bill and frontal plate, red, passing with brown at the tip of the bill; legs and feet salmon colour, darker or of a grey tint at the joints.

29. *FULICA ATRA AUSTRALIS*. Western Coot.

Fulica australis (Gould). Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1845, p. 2. West Australia.

No. 363—Male. Length, 15.6 inches (24/9/86).

No. 361—Female. Length, 14.6 inches (24/9/86).

29. *PODICEPS CRISTATUS CHRISTIANI*. Tippet Grebe.

Podiceps cristatus christiani (Mathews). Birds Austr., Vol. I., p. 267, pl. 64, 1911. Victoria.

No. 360—Female. Length, 20.8 inches (24/9/86).

Shot in a large pool about two hundred yards across and some three hundred long, with clear water in the centre, but with thick weeds for some fifteen yards round the side, which weeds grow below the surface of the water.

30. *TACHYBAPTUS RUFICOLLIS PARRYI*. North-western Black-throated Grebe.

Podiceps fluviatilis parryi (Mathews). Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 197. 1912, Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 231—Male. Length, 10.9 inches (12/7/86).

No. 232—Female. Length, 10 inches (12/7/86).

No. 333—Female. Length, 10.4 inches (30/7/86).

Irides, a fine line round the pupil bright white, succeeded by a broad one of pale ochre, minutely freckled with black; upper mandible, olive brown along the culmen, yellowish-white on the sides from under the nostrils to the gape, where the yellow becomes lighter; bluish horn on the sides from the nostrils to the tip, which is white; lower mandible yellowish-white, tinged with brown at the tip, base and skinny parts greenish yellow; legs and feet, dark olive, much tinged with yellow on the inside of the tarsi and on the broad webs of the toes.

No. 337—Male. Length, 11.1 inches (30/7/86).

No. 338—Female. Length, 10.3 inches (30/7/06).

No. 339.—Female. Length, 10.1 inches (30/7/06).

No. 515—Female. Length, 10 inches (5/11/86).

They are wonderfully quick, and seem to dive at the flash of the gun, as one often hits the very spot where they were. They show very little of the body when swimming, and often sink bodily, gradually, and not in any way disturbing the water, but without any of the splash or kick-up which is general when they dive.

45. GELOCHELIDON NILOTICA MACROTARSA. Gull-billed Tern.

Sterna macrotarsa (Gould). Synops., *Birds Austr.*, Pt. ii., pl. 37. 1837, Victoria.

No. 204—Male. Length, 16.9 inches (28/6/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill and feet, black.

This bird had several grasshoppers in its stomach.

48. STERNULA ALBIFRONS TORMENTI. Western White-shafted Ternlet.

Sterna sinensis tormenti (Mathews). Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 210, 1912. Point Torment.

No. 127—Female. Length, 10.9 inches (14/6/86).

No. 178—Female. Length 9 inches (24/6/86).

55. ERYTHROGONYS CINCTUS MIXTUS. Western Red-kneed Dotterel.

Erythrogonyx cinctus mixtus (Mathews). Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 215, 1912. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 119—Immature. Length, 7.4 inches.

No. 120—Female. Length, 7.5 inches.

No. 121—Female. Length, 7.5 inches.

Irides, dark brown; bill, black; base of lower mandible, reddish flesh colour; tibia and knee, flesh colour; tarsus and feet, bluish grey.

No. 122—Male. Length, 7.5 inches (12/6/86).

No. 177—Male. Length, 7.4 inches (24/6/86).

No. 300—Male. Length, 7.8 inches (10/9/86).

Bill, black, with basal two-thirds of lower mandible rose pink, of which colour there is a line in front of the nostrils on the upper mandible; tibia and tarsal joints, rose pink; tarsi and feet, bluish lead.

56. LOBIBYX MILES PERSONATA. Lesser marked Plover.

Lobivanellus personatus (Gould). *Birds Austr.*, Vol. VI.,
pd. 10, 1842. Coburg Peninsula.

No. 131—Female. Length, 13.4 inches (15/6/86).

Irides, wattles, and bill, lemon yellow; tip of the bill,
brown; tibia, fleshy red; legs and feet, reddish flesh colour,
with the scales reddish brown; spurs on the wing, yellow.

They arrived near Derby on the 14th June, and were
found about the lagoon.

No. 136—Male (immature). Length, 13.2 inches (16/6/86).

No. 138—Male. Length, 13.5 inches (16/6/86).

No. 217—Female. Length, 12.2 inches (2/7/86).

No. 226—Female. Length, 13.6 inches (28/8/86).

No. 300—Female. Length, 13.3 inches (21/7/86).

60. ELSEYA MELANOPS RUSSATA. Western Black-fronted Dot-
terel.

Charadrius russatus (Gerdon). *Madras Journ. Lit. Soc.*,
Vol. XII., p. 213, 1840. India.

No. 196—Female. Length, 6.7 inches (27/6/86).

Irides, brown; eyelids, coral red; bill, orange at the base,
black at the tips; legs and feet, fleshy yellow.

No. 230. Length, 6.4 inches (7/7/86).

No. 317—Female. Length, 6.6 inches (14/9/86).

Irides, dark brown; eyelids, fleshy, and of a vermilion
colour; bill, reddish flesh at the basal two-thirds, remainder
black; legs and feet, flesh colour.

No. 414—Male. Length, 5 inches.

Eggs found 19/10/86, in a slight hollow in the sand on a
spot running out into the river.

No. 431—Male. Length, 6.3 inches (24/10/86).

No. 440. Length, 6.1 inches.

Eyelids, brownish olive; bill, olive at base, passing into
dark brown at the tip; legs and feet, flesh colour.

No. 441. Length, 6.1 inches. Same as above.

61. HIMANTOPUS LEUCOCEPHALUS ASSIMILIS. Northern White-
headed Stilt.

Hypsibates leucocephalus assimilis (Mathews). *Nov. Zool.*,
Vol. XVIII., p. 219, 1913. Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 128—Female. Length, 12.5 inches (14/6/06).

Irides, dark reddish brown; bill, black; legs and feet, pink, with a bluish tinge at the joints.

No. 180—Female. Length, 14 inches (25/6/86).

Bill, black, lighter at the base of the lower mandible.

No. 203—Female. Length, 14.1 inches (28/6/86).

No. 253—Female. Length, 14.4 inches (1/9/86).

Irides, red; bill, black; legs and feet, pink, inside of the tibia and tarsi with a narrow stripe of a light lilac.

No. 434—Male. Length, 14.4 inches (25/10/86).

Order Passeriformes, Family Turdidae, Genus *Ephthianura*.

Ephthianura albifrons—The White-fronted Chat or Tin-tac.

Description; (male).—Upper surface.—forehead, white; crown of the head and occiput, black; back of neck, dark grey; back, grey, each feather with a broad band of dark brown down its centre; rump, grey; upper tail coverts, black.

Under surface.—Chin, throat, and space round the eye, white, joining up with the white of the forehead, below the white a broad band of black crosses, the upper part of the breast joining up with the black of the occiput; rest of under surface, white; thighs, dull black, some of the feathers largely tipped with white. Wing, dusky black. Tail.—Two central feathers, black; lateral feathers, black, with their inner webbs largely tipped with white. Iris, reddish buff; bill and feet, black.

Total length (dry skin), 121 m.m.; wing, 70 m.m.; tarsus, 17 m.m.; bill, 10 m.m.

Female.—The whole of the upper surface, brown, each feather with a darker line down the centre. The white of the throat has a tinge of grey, and the pectoral band is dull black; abdomen, greyish white; flanks, grey. In some specimens there is a whitish line over, and extending behind, the eye. Wings, brown. Tail.—Two centre feathers, brown; lateral feathers, brown, tipped with white, as in the male. Young birds resemble the female, except that there is only an indication of the pectoral band, which is brown, and the

feathers of the back lack the median dark line. Bill, brown; legs and feet, brown.

Distribution.—All the southern parts of the State, including Kangaroo Island. It has been recorded as far as 400 miles north of Adelaide, and possibly extends still further. It is also found in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia.

Habits.—They frequent open plains and swampy lands—samphire swamps and flats are favourite resorts. In the north they inhabit lightly timbered country and salt bush plains. They seldom perch in trees, but may often be seen on the tops of the samphire bushes or on wire fences. They are sprightly little birds, very pipit-like in their actions, running along the ground, and bobbing the tail up and down at each stop. Most of the food is taken upon the ground, though they occasionally search thistles or low bushes for insects, and now and then capture flying ants upon the wing. During the breeding season they are found in pairs, but after nesting is over young and old congregate in large flocks up to several hundreds, which move about the country in search of food supplies. They are nomadic rather than migratory, for some individuals are to be found on the Adelaide plains at all times of the year.

Food.—Insects and their larvae, occasionally small seeds.

Flight.—Low and jerky; not long continued, but when gathered in flocks they sometimes fly very high, and for long distances.

Song.—Consists of two or three simple notes. It is uttered chiefly when on the wing. The alarm call consists of two notes, said to resemble the words "tin-tac," hence its local name.

Nest.—They are very early breeders. Nests have been discovered early in July, and the young have often left the nest by the end of the month. The season extends until December, two, and sometimes three, broods being reared in that time. Both sexes sit, and when disturbed from the nest they flutter along the ground as though legs or wings were broken, or struggle on the back, as if in a fit, in order to entice the enemy from the vicinity. The nest is always built low down, often quite upon the ground in a tuft of couch grass or rushes—more often a few inches to two or three feet up in a samphire, salt bush, or thistle. Other favourite breeding places are prickly acacia and gorse bushes. They are favourite hosts of the narrow-billed bronze cuckoo. The

nest is made externally of dry grass stems or fine twigs of samphire, and lined with horse and cow hair; feathers are not used. The egg cavity measures about $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. The eggs are three or four in number. In the south three is the usual number, but in the north, if the season be good, four are generally laid.

Eggs.—Ground colour white, sparingly marked, with small rounded spots, varying in colour from deep red brown to black. The spots are grouped mostly about the large end, but only occasionally form a distinct ring.

Average measurement of 14 eggs, 18.4 m.m. x 13.5 m.m.

Largest egg, 19.0 m.m. x 14.0 m.m.

Smallest egg, 17.0 m.m. x 13.0 m.m.

A New Parrot for South Australia.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

Barnardius barnardi lindoi (subsp. n.).—Lindo's Ring-neck Parrot.

Frontal band, dark red; crown, dark brown, some of the feathers tipped with bluish green; occiput, dark brown, crossed by a deep band of light yellow; cheeks, bright greenish blue; chest, bluish green; abdomen and under tail coverts, rich verditer green, centre of abdomen crossed by a deep band of bright orange yellow; primaries, blackish brown, external margins deep royal blue; secondaries, first four feathers blackish brown, externally margined with greenish blue, the remainder having the external margins deep green; wing coverts, first three feathers very pale blue, basal half bluish brown, the remaining feathers shading from light yellow to green; shoulders, bright blue; spurious wing, deep royal blue; back, greenish blue; two central tail feathers, rich green, slight tinge of blue at the tip; the lateral feathers very pale blue, basal half dark brown; upper tail coverts, rich verditer green; bill, bluish white; feet, ashy grey. Type, a male, taken at Moolooloo, Flinders Range North, October 16th, 1915, by S. A. White, and now in the "Wetunga" collection.

The female is much duller in colouration all over; the abdominal band showing quite a reddish tinge.

The immature male in first year's plumage is paler throughout, with the exception of the frontal band, which is a lighter and brighter red; the abdominal band is very indistinct, but some of the feathers are tipped with red, giving the abdomen a mottled appearance.

I have much pleasure in naming the above after J. W. Lindo, Esq., the owner of Moolooloo Station, who is taking such a great interest in the ornithology of his district, and has given so much assistance to science generally.

The Migration of Swallows in South Australia.

BY A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.

Four swallows inhabit South Australia. They are the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*), the Tree Swallow (*Hylchelidon nigricans caleyi*), the Fairy Martin or Bottle Swallow (*Lagenoplastes ariel*), and the White-breasted Swallow (*Cheramaeca leucosternon stonei*). None is confined to South Australia; the first three have been recorded from every part of the Australian Commonwealth, the fourth from every State except Tasmania, which it does not visit.

Authorities differ considerably in their opinions as to the migratory habits of these birds on the Australian Continent. As regards Tasmania, all are agreed that they are purely migratory, leaving in the winter, and returning next summer to nest. The fairy martin is probably only an occasional visitor, since Littler (*Birds of Tasmania*) has not seen it.

Gould (*Handbook of the Birds of Australia*) says of the welcome swallow:—"The arrival of this bird in the southern portions of Australia is hailed as a welcome indication of the approach of spring, and is associated with precisely the same ideas as those popularly entertained respecting our own pretty swallow in Europe. The two species are, in fact, beautiful representatives of each other, and assimilate . . . in their migratory movements." Quoting Caley, he says further, "the earliest period of the year that I noticed the appearance of swallows was July 12th, 1803, when I saw two . . . The latest period I observed them was 30th May, 1806, when a number of them were flying high in the air." Gould also says, "a few stragglers remain in New South Wales during the winter, but their numbers cannot for a moment be compared with those observed in the summer."

Of the tree swallow he says, "It is a very common summer visitant to the southern portion of Australia and Tasmania, arriving in August, and retiring northward as winter approaches.

Of the fairy martin that "It is dispersed over all the southern portions of Australia, and like every other member of the genus, it is strictly migratory."

Of the white-breasted swallow, "It is a very wandering species, never very numerous."

North (Nests and Eggs of Birds found breeding in Australia and Tasmania) says of the welcome swallow, "After the breeding season to a large extent it forsakes the streets of Sydney during the day, congregating in large flocks about Hyde and Cook's Parks and the Sydney Domain. These flocks may be seen, more particularly during dull weather, from February to July, in some seasons returning to the city about dusk, and perching for the night in a sheltered situation on some large building." He says further, "At one time I regarded these flocks as pre-migration meetings, but for many years past I have noticed the birds remain here in flocks throughout the winter, and then associate in pairs as the spring ensues." In the same work Dr. W. McGillivray says that they are present throughout the year at Broken Hill.

Mr. T. Parish says that is a stationary species at Cobbara, N.S.W., and the late Mr. K. H. Bennett says it is stationary at Moolah, in Central N.S.W.

North (*op. cit.*) says of the tree swallow that "it is freely distributed from the end of March or April, but in mild winters stragglers can be obtained throughout the year."

Mr. Thos. P. Austin (*op. cit.*) says, "*P. nigricans* is very plentiful about this district during the latter part of the year, and usually departs again about the end of January."

Dr. W. McGillivray (*op. cit.*), of Broken Hill, says, "*P. nigricans* is a very common bird in the spring. . . . It arrives early in the spring or late winter, August being the usual month . . . a few birds remain throughout the winter, but most leave here late in April or early in May."

Mr. J. W. Mellor, of Fulham, S.A., says, "*P. nigricans* is migratory, but owing to putting up a number of nesting places many remain with us all the year round. Generally large flocks congregate, and are often seen on the ground just prior to leaving in the late autumn months, and they return in large numbers about the end of July."

Of the fairy martin North says, "In the neighbourhood of Ashfield, five miles W. of Sydney, it usually arrives early in August, and departs again about the end of April. It is not, however, a strictly migratory species, for in very mild winters it remains throughout the year."

Hall (*Insectivorous Birds of Victoria*), says of the welcome swallow, "This beautiful creature of the air was quite content, on account of the mild season of 1896, to remain in Victoria." Of the fairy martin he says, "This fairy-like swallow arrives in Victoria towards the end of August, and leaves again after the summer. If the winter is mild many flocks will stay throughout the year." Of the tree swallow he says, "*P. nigricans*, as well as I know, stays for the winter, and breeds in the holes of trees," but in the next sentence he says, "In a way it is a migratory bird, leaving after February, and returning in August and September."

Campbell (*Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*) says of the welcome swallow, "At such times (the breeding season) the birds are more numerous in the southern parts of Australia and Tasmania, moving, of course, to more northern climes on the approach of winter. At Cardwell, which is well within the tropics, Mr. K. Broadbent states it is a stationary species, but their numbers must be considerably augmented by southern birds . . . However, in many southern parts they do not always retire northwards, individuals and small families remaining in their breeding places during winter." He gives instances of such. Of the tree swallow he says, "It is a common visitor in summer to the southern parts of Australia and Tasmania." Of the fairy martin he says, "It is more strictly migratory than the two other swallows above mentioned, for after February or March the birds are rarely seen except in the northern parts of the Continent." Of the black-and-white swallow he says, "This is a stationary species."

Belcher (*Birds of Geelong*) says of the welcome swallow, "The name welcome rather suggests return after a migration, but the result of my observations goes to show that the swallows never leave us at all, and are just as plentiful at one time of the year as another." Of the tree swallow he says, "It is of that class which I have 'infra Australian migrants.' . . . My earliest note of their arrival is of a flock of a dozen or two . . . on September 8th, 1912." Of the fairy martin he says, "Odd birds may be seen in any

month of the year, but the majority are true 'infra Australian migrants,' coming to us to breed in September, and retiring to more northern parts of the country (just how far north they go is not known) about April."

Leach (*An Australian Bird Book*), treating the swallows as a group, says, "Migration is not complete," and "that in 1910 (on account of the mild winter) there was probably little migration."

Mr. F. L. Berney (*Emu*, Vol. IV., p. 45) records the welcome swallow from Richmond, Flinders River, North Queensland, as a winter visitor, but says he has records from October to March. This may be meant for from March to October. He says the black-and-white swallow is present at almost any time; it is irregular and uncertain, and does not nest there. He says there are two lots of the fairy martin, a summer and winter lot. The summer residents go north in winter, and their place is taken by visitors from the south. Both lots nest from December to February, and July to August.

Mr. Mattingly (*Emu*, Vol. VI., p. 130) records a pair of birds remaining in the same situation throughout the year for twelve years, in North Melbourne.

Mr. C. A. Barnard (*Emu*, Vol. IX., p. 92) records fairy martins building at Coomoboolaroo, Queensland, in May, then leaving off on account of cold weather, returning to occupy them in August.

Dr. McGillivray records all four species from the gulf country of North Queensland; the black-and-white in March and June, the others without dates.

The results of my own observations for South Australia are that the welcome swallow is less numerous about Adelaide in the winter. They certainly do not all leave, nor by any means all, for birds are quite commonly seen in all months of the year. With the exception of the black-and-white swallow they are, locally, the least numerous of the family. They breed in separate pairs, and leave their nesting places as soon as the last brood is reared, all circumstances which would lead one to believe that they have migrated or partly migrated. I have never seen them gather in flocks, as recorded by Mr. North for New South Wales, though in the autumn months one may sometimes see as many as 20 or 30 skimming the water in search of insects. Not only do a considerable number of birds remain with us throughout the

winter, but they even breed at that season. Mr. Justice Murray found young birds in a nest in his stable at Magill in June, and I saw birds building a nest under a verandah in King William Street South on 1st April, 1911. These birds remained about the spot, but did not finish the nest until September. In 1910 the same pair of birds built in the middle of July. Capt. S. A. White has twice recorded them building about the end of July at Fulham. I should say, without looking up records, that July is our coldest month, and if the birds can maintain themselves and feed young in that month they would have no difficulty in staying the whole winter. I remember having seen, many years ago, numbers of swallows roosting in the reeds on Lake Alexandrina, but could not remember the time of year or the species, so Capt. White, at my request, wrote to Mr. F. G. Ayers, of Narrung. He replied as follows, "Referring to your enquiries about swallows. I do not remember ever seeing tree swallows roosting in the reeds. The ordinary swallows almost invariably roost on the drooping reeds on the lee side of the reed bunches, and in the winter months, after a frosty night, I have often seen up to eight and ten dead swallows on the water beneath their roosting places. This often occurs when food is scarce, *i.e.*, when the Lakes are salt and few aquatic insects are about." Which goes to show that there, at any rate, swallows remain throughout the winter in considerable numbers. I am convinced that the tree swallow does not leave the plains at any time of the year. A small colony of eight birds nest under the roof of my neighbour's house, the common hole of entrance being opposite my dressing room window, so that I have the opportunity of observing them every morning. During the last three winters these birds have remained in the neighbourhood, and used the nesting place for roosting, though they do not begin to carry nesting material until the middle of July. I was formerly of opinion that these birds migrated from the fact of their gathering in large flocks upon the ground during February and March. One such gathering place used to be on the North Park Lands, where the Corporation nursery now is. I observed this flock for three years in succession, and found that they did not leave in a body, but that the flocks dwindled away gradually till about the end of March, when none were left. They begin to gather about the end of January, quickly increasing in numbers, until the end of February, and then, as above. Since the Nursery and University Oval have been established they no longer gather there, but on any day of the year numbers may be seen in the

air or skimming the water of the Torrens Lake or the ponds in the Botanic Gardens. These swallows breed in companies when the circumstances are favourable, such as a large gum tree with many small hollows, a house with convenient holes under the eaves, or where nesting places have been provided for them, as at "Holmfirth," the residence of Mrs. Mellor. For the most part these companies split up after the nesting season, re-unite in larger groups, and leave the immediate locality, which circumstance has given rise to the common belief that they are migrating. The fairy martin, in my experience, is a purely migratory bird in the southern parts of South Australia. They arrive in September, the earliest date I have record of is September 13th, 1914, when numbers of them were busy building new nests and repairing old ones. They had not returned on September 5th, 1915. I have no exact record as to when they leave, but have never seen a bird after the 1st April. I do not know of any breeding place on the plains at the present time, though they are said to have nested near Morphettville in days gone by, but they breed in numbers in many of the gullies of the Mount Lofty Range, wherever they can get water and suitable nesting sites. At Laura they were purely migratory. However, they did not visit that town every year, but at Wirrabara, 11 miles north of Laura, they were regular visitors, and were there purely migratory. Indeed, I think they would perish if they remained through an average winter, for the late Mr. Malcolm Murray informed me that he found dozens dead in their nests, where they seem to have crowded for warmth, after a late frost at the end of September in, I think, 1894. In the Gawler Ranges in August, 1902, though there were plenty of old nests, not a single bird was seen from Yardea to Port Augusta, though I saw them near Mount Gunson on August 6, 1900, flying over a waterhole, but they had not yet started nesting.

The white-breasted swallow is at any time an uncommon bird in the Adelaide district, so it is difficult to say whether they are here migratory or not. I have never seen a bird in this locality earlier than September or later than April. At Laura, 140 miles north of Adelaide, they were purely migrating, coming to breed in September and leaving in March. At Port Augusta, about 60 miles further north, they are a resident throughout the year. Laura is 700 feet above sea level, and has a very cold winter. Port Augusta is not so cold. They were also said to be resident at Mount Gunson, but I have no accurate winter observations for there.

Aquatic Birds breeding near Adelaide.

BY A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.

On October 2nd, 1915, I had an opportunity, in company with Mr. C. F. Rischbieth, of visiting a samphire swamp on the Adelaide plains, where stilts were said to be nesting. When still about a quarter of a mile from the swamp we were met by a few white-headed stilts (*Himantopus leucocephalus*), which settled on the ground, and began to dance about with the wings drooping, in a helpless kind of way. As we got nearer more birds arrived from the swamp, and acted in the same way; all were at the same time uttering their bark-like notes. On entering the swamp Mr. Rischbieth almost at once found a nest containing a single egg, and as we got towards the centre nests became plentiful. About 20 nests were seen altogether, containing mostly three or four eggs, one only contained five. The nests were substantial structures built of samphire twigs, and placed on the top of samphire bushes growing in the water. Although so large they harmonised so well with their surroundings that they were by no means conspicuous, and on several occasions each of us waded within a few feet of a nest without seeing it. There had evidently been a recent rise in the water level, for two submerged nests were found, from one of which three eggs had been washed out, and were lying on the bottom. These eggs were taken, and on being blown proved to be slightly incubated. While hunting about for stilts' nests I found a grebe's nest with three eggs, covered over with green water weed. I supposed it was that of the hoary-headed grebe, as that is the commonest species in the locality, but on walking over to a patch of clear water, where some grebes were swimming, I was surprised to find that they were all black-throated grebes (*Tachybaptus ruficollis novae-hollandiae*). Afterwards about 15 grebes' nests were found, all except two were built in low samphire bushes level with the water, and were simply a mass of green water weed; the two exceptions were floating among some short green rushes. The nests contained from one to four eggs, most of them three. The nests containing one egg were evidently incomplete clutches, as the eggs were white, and were not covered over. Probably the theory that the eggs were covered for warmth and not concealment is correct, as the white fresh eggs are much more conspicuous than the nest stained partly incubated ones. One submerged nest was found. A nest of the red-kneed

dottrel (*Erythrogonys cinctus*) was found built of small samphire twigs and placed in the top of a samphire bush. It contained three slightly incubated eggs. This is the first time I have heard of this bird building a nest. As a rule the eggs are laid on a bare mud bank, surrounded by water, but in this case the swamp was so full that there was no suitable bank available, so the birds had evidently adapted themselves to circumstances. Mr. Tom Carter, of Western Australia, mentions (Mathews' Birds of Australia, Vol. III.) that he found the nest of the Western Australian sub-species "well concealed in a tuft of samphire," but says nothing of the construction of the nest.

A flock of 20 marsh terns (*Hydrochelidon leucopareia fluviatilis*) were flying over the swamp, and judging by the clamour they made when we approached some scanty nests built of green rushes, they were intending to breed, but no eggs were found.

In company with my son I visited the swamp again on October 16th. The stilts and grebes had nearly all hatched their young, and the marsh terns had disappeared. We did not succeed in finding a single stilt chick, though there must have been many of them about. I have never yet seen the chick of this bird. Young ones, just able to fly, are common enough, as are old birds and eggs. I fancy the chicks must be adepts at concealing themselves. On this second visit a pair of red-kneed dottrels evidently had eggs or young in the vicinity. I fancy the latter, for we quartered the ground, and searched for the eggs for nearly an hour without finding them. The behaviour of the old birds was most interesting, especially one manoeuvre of falling into the water as though shot, and lying partly submerged and feebly flapping with the wings. They rose easily from the water when we left the neighbourhood.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

By HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

VII. THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

We are now approaching the last few months of my father's life, months full of activity and ornithological work.

He returned from Cape York and New Guinea in the early part of 1879, and, on making a trial of his new steam yacht, "The Eclipse" (the machinery for which he had imported from England), he found that the steamship drew too much water for successful navigation in the shallow seas to the east of Australia. She was disposed of, and Samuel White set about the building of a new craft, and this time it was built of red gum, to resist the coral reefs. All the timber was sawn from trees on his estate at the Reedbeds, and he was very particular, examining every plank before it was used. It can be well understood that all his time and energy was required for the execution of this big undertaking. I will now quote an article which appeared in the daily press of April 7, 1880, the day upon which Samuel White started upon his last expedition.



Under the heading "Scientific Expedition to New Guinea," the writer says:—"Amongst the men who contribute to the fame of a new colony, but whose deeds are as unostentatious as their names, were once unfamiliar to the old world beyond the seas, are some of the sons of our old colonists, who venture forth into the unexplored regions of the interior in search of new country, and endure the most extreme hardships in their pursuit after wealth. There are few, however, who, with ample means at their command, would give up the comforts and luxuries of home life to risk unforeseen dangers and privations in the field of scientific research—the object of whose life would be the collecting and classification of specimens of the flora and fauna of the South; the gathering of shells that stud the seashore, of fossils that lie hidden in caves, or the capture of winged denizens of the air, whose brilliant plumage is a charm for ever in the eyes of the ornithologist.

"Some six miles out of Adelaide, on the road to Henley Beach, stands a handsome, well-built residence, portions of which have only recently been completed, while other parts of the homestead exhibit unmistakable signs of age. This is the abode of the son of one of our earliest settlers, Mr. John White, who arrived in the Colony in 1836. Mr. Samuel White, possessed of ample means to live a retired life, has displayed a passion for ornithology, and in his pursuit of specimens of the feathered tribe has explored nearly every portion of the Australian Continent, and now intends to carry his investigations into a more distant region. Mr. White first commenced his scientific travels about the year 1862, when he endeavoured to sail up the Murray River, but being baffled in this, he made

his way on land, with but one companion, into the interior beyond Lake Hope. This trip took some considerable time, and the naturalist met with great difficulties in getting part of his collection within the bounds of civilization. After some minor expeditions in 1868 he traversed the greater part of Queensland, landing at Cleveland Bay, and following the River Burdekin for a few hundred miles. His brother, William, accompanied him on this trip, and suffered so much from the effects of it that he has never ventured on another. Fever, ague, encounters with the blacks, and being reduced to a state of starvation were amongst the privations these venturesome ornithologists had to endure. On his return to his home Mr. Samuel White informs us that he discovered a 'fair specimen' that he captured by fairer means than by the use of his rifle—his wife, and after the wedding tour in England he made another exploring trip to Cleveland Bay, Cooktown, and Trinity Bay, and in the dense tropical forests there caught the fever, and was laid up for a considerable time. He would have died had it not been for the attention and kindness of the natives. He was taken by a Batavian steamer to the nearest point to New Guinea—Thursday Island—and after that spent some considerable time on the south coast of New Guinea, principally in the Papuan Gulf, on Yule Island up the Katow River, and often in company with the Torres Strait 'pirates.' He was quite alone, but went amongst the natives and 'pirates' with perfect immunity from harm. He describes the 'pirates' as being a most genial and hospitable set of pearl-divers, and says he was never better treated in his life than on the shell boats which belonged to them. During the twelve months he was on the New Guinea coast he collected about 800 bird skins, and since his return twelve months ago he has stored them away till his return from the next expedition. Unable to rest ashore, and enjoy the quiet routine of life at the Reedbeds, Mr. White has determined upon making another exploring expedition to New Guinea, and for that purpose has had constructed a schooner yacht of 80 tons, in which he will sail for his destination to-day. He will take his wife and family with him to Sydney. Two naturalists, or taxidermists, will accompany the expedition, Mr. F. W. Andrews, who is well known in this Colony, and Mr. J. Cockrell, who has collected largely in the Southern seas. A captain, chief officer, and twelve hands will compose the crew. Mr. White has named the craft the 'Elsea,' after his wife. He proposes to finish fitting out in Sydney, then to proceed with all haste up the coast to catch the first of the south-east trade winds, pro-

ceeding inside the Barrier Reef, and touching, if time should permit, at several islands and places where rare birds are to be procured, but his chief hunting ground will be the Charles Irwin Mountains, Aru Islands, etc. He estimates that he will have to return to Sydney for stores in about twelve months, and that in two years he will gather the largest and most valuable collection of specimens ever made in the Southern seas. He has plenty of small arms, two brass four-pounder guns, one on each quarter, mounted on swivels, and a long two-pounder, which will be mounted in mid-ship, and a ton of shot on board, and will employ about eight guns in the mountains, where he expects to fall in with the rarest and choicest kinds, including birds of paradise. He will collect duplicates for purpose of exchange, and on the return to Adelaide, which may not be for four, or even five, years hence, contemplates adding new wings to his residence at the Reedbeds for the safe keeping of his specimens. Mr. White has furnished some interesting particulars of his craft:—‘She is a fore and aft schooner of about 80 tons; shipwright’s measurements:—length over all, 65 feet; breadth, 16 feet; with 9 feet 6 inches depth of hold; the keel is of jarrah in one piece; the planking inside and out is of red gum. . . . The seas to traverse will be difficult and dangerous to navigate, hence the unusual strength of the craft. The scantling is quite heavy enough for a 500-ton ship, and you will perceive I have done away with the usual mode of fastening with trenails, and used copper instead, which is stronger and more durable. There are over two tons of pure copper and nearly the same of yellow metal distributed about the hull. . . . Be her sailing qualities what they may, I must take the responsibility upon myself, as I consulted my own ideas as to my requirements, and modelled and drafted the work myself. The hull was completed and launched on the 14th of February, and named the *Elsea*, after my wife, who accompanies me as far as Sydney, and to whom I am greatly indebted for much valuable assistance in preparing for my voyage.’

‘The *Elsea* sailed from Port Adelaide on Sunday last, and has since been lying off Henley Beach, taking in baggage, etc. Mr. White intends sailing this evening, or by daylight on Thursday, and we can only wish him and his family *bon voyage*. We need add nothing more than good wishes for health and success of an enthusiastic scientist, who assures us seriously that all the hardships of a disastrous trip and six months’ illness with fever were compensated for by the discovery of a new species of butterfly.



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1st APRIL, 1916.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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A. M. MORGAN, M.B., CH.B.
S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.
F. R. ZIETZ, R.A.O.U.

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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

1ST APRIL, 1916.

[PART 6.

The South Australian Ornithological Association.

Only two meetings were held during the last quarter. Owing to the Christmas holidays clashing with the December meeting, and the fact that many members were out of town, the meeting was cancelled.

January 28th, 1916.

An exceptionally large gathering took place to hear the results of a trip to the islands off the South Australian coast line, undertaken by Dr. Morgan and Capt. White at the kind invitation of the Messrs. Rymill Brothers, the owners of the beautiful little motor yacht, the "Avocet." A description of the bird life down the Gulf and on several of the small islands, as well as those around Pondalowie Bay, was given. Much research work was done. The cormorants were of especial interest. It was shown how the yellow-faced bird keeps well up the Gulfs, and the black-faced variety was found on the rocks and islands exposed to the open ocean. Temperatures of the sea birds were thoroughly gone into. Stomach contents of sea birds were also investigated—not a single marketable fish was found in the cormorant stomachs. Eight granite stones worn very smooth, were taken from one of their stomachs. The skins of the arctic skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), both the dark and light forms, were represented by one of each. These are the first known to have been taken in South Aus-

tralian waters. The sterna of the skuas, as well as petrels', to show the great difference existing between the two birds, were shown by Dr. Morgan.

February 25th, 1916.

A letter was read from Chief Justice Murray, stating he would be pleased to accept the patronship of the Association in place of the late Sir Samuel Way. Messrs. A. G. Rymill and T. G. Souter were elected members.

Mr. T. P. Bellchambers read some valuable bird notes. Dr. Morgan exhibited the sterna of the domestic fowl, as well as the mallee fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), for comparison. He pointed out their resemblance to one another. Mr. E. Ashby showed the skin of a fine male blue-billed duck (*Oxyura australis*) which had a single white feather in the wing, also a nice specimen of the Cape York black-backed butcher bird (*Bulestes mentalis kempfi*).

Birds under discussion were flycatchers, and the following species were discussed:—Intermediate rufous fantail, Victorian rufous fantail, Cape York rufous fantail, wood fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons dryas*, Gould), which absorbs *Rhipidura mayi* (Ashby) as a synonym. Many members expressed their belief that Gould's bird may yet turn up, and the *Rhipidura mayi* is a sub-species of it. The Northern fantail, Queensland fantail, and the black and white fantail were also discussed. A number of specimens of these birds were exhibited from the Museum collection by Mr. F. R. Zietz, and from the private collections of Mr. Ashby and Capt. White by the owners.

Order Passeriformes, Family Prionopidae,
Genus Grallina.

Grallina cyanoleuca—Magpie Lark.

Description.—Male—Upper portion of head, neck, back, throat, and breast, black, with a blue metallic lustre; a broad line above, and a short crescent below the eye; ear coverts and sides of neck, white, leaving a black horizontal line, extending from the eye to the occiput; primaries and secondaries, black, tipped with white, the latter white at the base;

upper and under wing coverts, white; rump, upper tail coverts and tail, white; the tail with a broad black subterminal band, which is broadest on the central feathers, and decreases in width towards the distal portion of the outer ones; all tail feathers tipped with white; bill, yellowish white, with a dark brown streak along the apical portion of the culmen, extending to the tip; legs and feet, black; iris, yellowish white. Measurements.—Total length of skin, 260 m.m.; wing, 180 m.m.; tarsus, 44 m.m.; culmen, 19 m.m.

Female.—Lores, forehead, and throat, white; no white above or below the eye; a broad black vertical band extends from the crown of the head, through the eye, to the black pectoral band, otherwise the plumage is similar to that of the male.

Distribution.—The whole of the mainland of Australia, Kangaroo Island, and accidentally in Tasmania.

Habits.—They are graceful and handsome birds that spend most of their time on the ground at the borders of streams and pools, looking for their food in the soft mud. Damp, grassy flats, paddocks, and lawns are also favourite hunting grounds. They are never found far from water. The gait is walking or running, resembling that of the European starling. During nesting time they are found in pairs, and for some time after go about in small flocks, consisting of the old birds and their young of the year. In later autumn and winter they gather into quite large flocks, which move about their own district, but do not migrate.

Song.—A loud, shrill note, resembling pee-wit or knee-deep. In the nesting season they have a second, more melodious, note, like choo-woop.

Flight.—Slow, heavy, and flapping, often turning the body from one side to the other.

Food.—Insects, grubs, worms, and small snails, generally taken from mud or wet ground. They are said to destroy the fresh water snail, which acts as the intermediate host of sheep fluke. They will eat grain, for many are killed with poisoned wheat every year.

Nesting.—The breeding season lasts from August to December. Three broods are often reared. The nest is placed upon a horizontal branch, nearly always overhanging water. The height from the ground varies from six to 50 feet. The nest is built of mud, strengthened with straw. It

is lined with dry grass, fine twigs, or leaves, and generally a few feathers. Occasionally it is built of wet cow dung. An average sized nest measures $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, cavity 5 inches in diameter by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep.

Eggs.—Two to five are laid for a clutch, usually three, but four is common. They vary much in shape and colour, some being short and rounded, and others much elongated. Two common types are, (1) ground colour, white to pinkish white, with irregular blotches of brick red forming a zone at the larger end; (2) ground colour white, with a zone of dull purplish red spots and splashes at the larger end, sometimes wavy, semicircular or spiral streaks occur in this type.

Average measurement of 17 eggs, 2.90 c.m. x 2.10 c.m.

Largest egg, 3.00 c.m. x 2.15 c.m.

Smallest egg, 2.70 c.m. x 2.15 c.m.

Notes on the Mallee Fowl.

Leipoa ocellata rosinae.

BY T. P. BELLCHAMBERS.

For many years I have taken a special interest in these beautiful birds, and as I have had many opportunities of observing their habits, both in the wild state and in captivity, a few remarks from my note book may be of interest. They are fast disappearing in consequence of the destruction of scrub lands and the keen hunt for their eggs (which are of large size and fine flavour), and the introduction of the fox. During the season 1908-09 I found several mounds, which I examined at intervals. Every one was visited by foxes, and, so far as I could discover, only three chicks hatched out. The eggs are very thin shelled, and when fresh are of a beautiful pink colour. They measure $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by 8 inches in circumference, and weigh about 8 ozs. There is generally an interval of about six days between the laying of each egg. The chicks begin to hatch in about eight weeks. This limits the number of eggs in a mound to about eight or nine, unless, as often happens, some eggs are infertile, when, naturally, there would be more. The birds are of a gentle and playful disposition, but very shy. Their highly developed sense of hearing enables them to catch the least sound, consequently

they are seldom seen. They inhabit dry, waterless tracts of sandy scrub lands; their food consists of seeds, insects, berries, bulbs, and green stuff. Though they require water in captivity, in the wild state they appear to do without it, getting what moisture they require from the dew, wild fruits, &c. I have seen the birds take the drops of dew from the leaves—dew is frequent in the mallee scrub.

The male mates with one female only (Fig. 1), and all the labour of mound building is done by the single pair of birds. They are active in the early morning and in the evening, camping during the heat of the day. Their plumage harmonises well with their surroundings, making them hard to discover when at rest. They will continue to lay in the mound though every egg be taken, and I have known several instances where they have still laid after the mallee round the nest has all been rolled down.

The first preparation for nesting, the opening of the pit, is usually made at the end of the previous summer, the work going on intermittently through the following winter. The filling is generally started some time in May or June. After forming the pit the birds proceed with the gathering of material—leaves, sticks, and bark are all gathered into the most open ways and runs that converge on the nesting place. Starting near the pit the bird stands on one foot, and with powerful but leisurely movements of the other foot, throws the material behind it (Fig. 2), alternating the feet every six or eight strokes, all the time advancing along the line of gathered material. On reaching the end they retrace their steps, working from the pit outwards. Thus all the material is being moved along lines converging on the pit, and eventually is all collected there. (Fig. No. 3 shows lines of movement of material. No. 4 shows mode of forming cone, the material being taken up in easy gradual spiral curves). The mounds are often opened at other than laying time. This is done, I believe, for the purpose of regulating the temperature.

The mounds are always placed in such position as will expose them to the direct rays of the sun during the hottest time of the day. The hot bed provides a bottom heat, but this alone does not seem to satisfy the birds—the mounds are frequently opened to the sun's rays, the hot sand being gradually replaced. This work does not interfere with hatching chicks, as they always emerge at an earlier hour than the birds choose for this work, which is always done by the male.

After laying starts should occasion arise, through change of weather or disturbance of the mound, the male will work by moonlight to rectify matters. This I have seen on several occasions. The completed mound is usually covered over with sticks or rubble, the reason for which I have not been able to ascertain. They lay from 16 to 25 eggs—I have known of 29. The egg is placed on the small end, for the very evident reason that that position is the only one which could give the chick the right position to strike out for liberty. I have known a chick to take 12 hours to reach the surface after the first indication of hatching was seen—this was in a very sandy mound, and the indication was a slight depression above the rising chick. The chick forces its way upwards by levering with feet and wings, the head and neck folded down along the breast, so keeping the sand from the nostrils. It at last emerges, shoulders first, kicks itself free, and lays as if exhausted for some time—a dainty morsel for the first fox or hawk that comes along. Should it escape this fate it at last jumps up and runs quickly to cover. Being fully fledged it has the power of flight, and is quite able to take care of itself. I have noticed in some cases that the female is slightly larger and more pugnacious than the male. This may have been due to the male being a young bird. The plumage of the wing feathers of the female is lighter.

The male and female forage apart, meeting at intervals for mound construction, &c. The male speaks his love and admiration for his consort in a manner peculiarly his own, with head under breast he emits deep hollow notes difficult to describe. like uh, uh, uh, oome, oome, oome, to which the female replies, whaugh, whaugh, long drawn out, and rising in cadence. Their note of danger is ut, ut, ut, softly repeated many times. The call note of the female sounds like whoo how, whoo how.

The longer a mound is in use the larger it is. First season's mounds are much smaller, increasing in bulk each year by reason of fresh material added. An old mound measured three feet in height by 51 feet in circumference. The same mound is not continuously worked by the same pair of birds. Of 31 mounds examined four were rebuilt during the second season and two others during the third, in each case by other birds, as the original owners were captured. In making the mound they do not use the wings, as has been stated. That this was an error I ascertained by examining

the wings of the first bird I captured, and later by cautiously approaching the mound I was able to see the birds working with their powerful claws, throwing material to a considerable distance.

In the season 1911-12 I succeeded in getting these birds to breed in captivity. Since then I have been enabled to keep them under close observation. The material is gathered and placed in position by means of the feet alone. The beak is often used, when opening the egg chamber, to remove sticks that obstruct their work. I was for a long time puzzled as to how they managed to place and keep all the eggs on the small end, but the explanation is very simple. An excavation is made that acts as an egg cup, into which the egg is dropped. (Fig. 5.) The female then leaves the mound, the male taking her place, the egg leaning too far forward he puts it in an upright position. To do this he does not touch the egg, which is very fragile, and easily broken, but, pushing beak and forehead into the loose sand about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the egg, he pushes the sand against it until it is forced into the required upright position. (Fig. 7.)

The chick takes about two years to reach maturity. They make preparation in the third season for nesting during the fourth, such as cleaning out an old mound, or digging a pit for a new one this work being done mostly after rain. The eggs are few the first season, increasing the following season to a considerable number. There is often a difference of four or five months between the first and last chick of a season, which makes them very irregular in their first nesting. Construction of the mound often starts six months before the laying season. The hot bed is ready for eggs about September, though my birds have laid as early as the 25th of October, when laying begins, and continues up to the middle of February.

In excavating the pit the female throws the stuff backwards from the bottom to the male above, who, in his turn, throws it over the rim of the excavation. The hardest work appears to be done by the female, though both appear to take great interest in the work. When the female lays both sexes work at opening the mound, but as soon as the egg is laid the male takes charge, and, after placing the egg in position, refills the mound, the female disappearing practically at once. The female does most of the hard work when constructing the mound, but after laying starts all the hard work falls on the

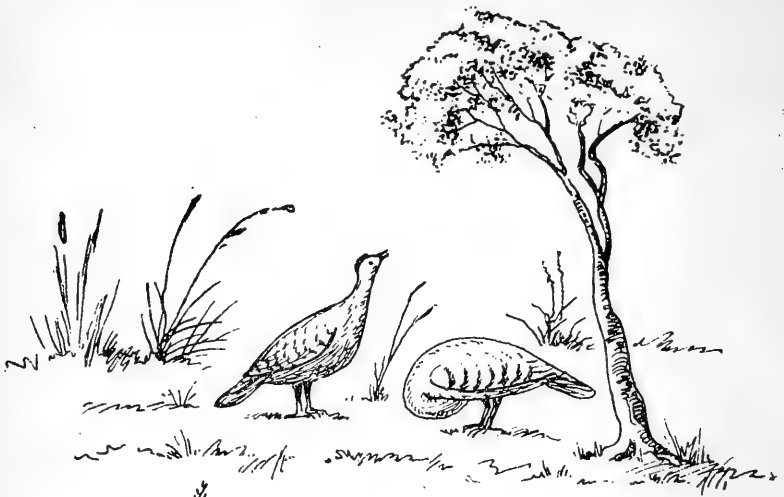


FIG 1.



FIG 3



FIG 2



FIG 4.

Fig. 1.—Courting pair.

Fig. 2.—Excavating pit. Female throwing to Male, who throws over rim.

Fig. 3.—Mode of gathering material for filling pit; scratched into lines in clear routes leading to pit from among surrounding bushes, trees, &c.

Fig. 4.—Spiral track of material in forming cone.

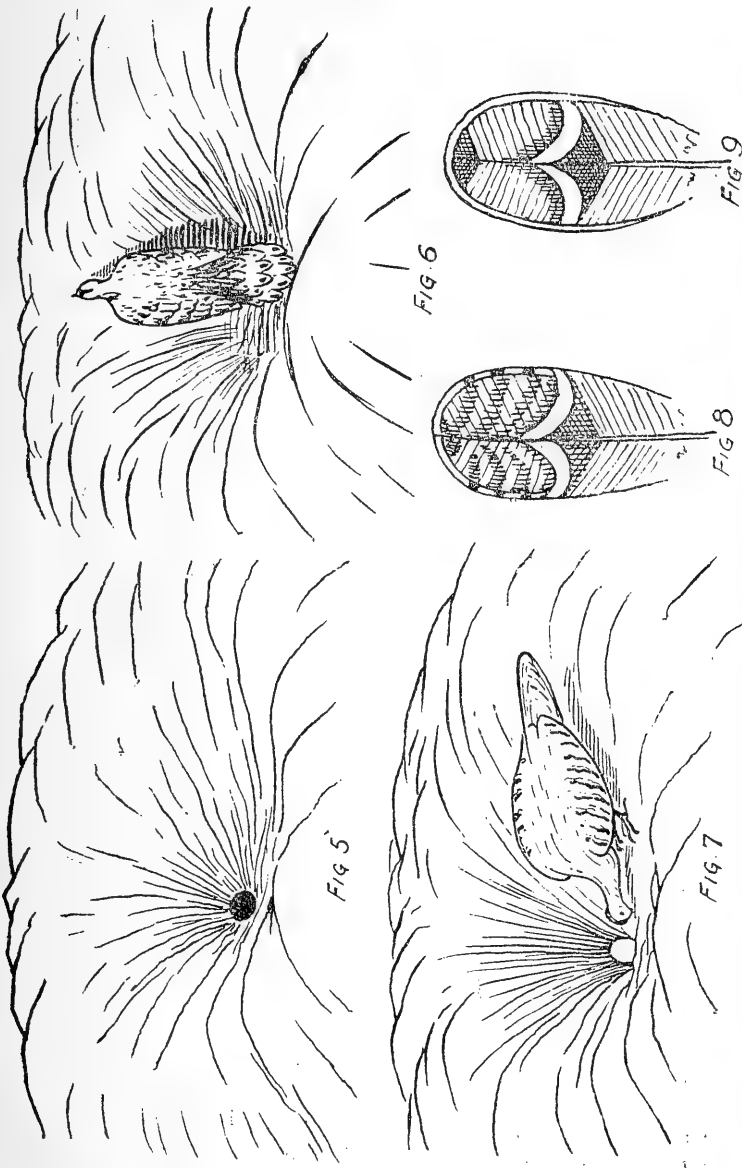


Fig. 5.—Cavity ready for reception of egg.
 Fig. 6.—Position taken by Female in act of laying. When taking up this position, the heel is not in view, but is finally drawn up from between the bird's body and the bank, following which movement the egg is deposited in the cup like hole prepared for its reception.
 Fig. 7.—Male placing egg in upright position, using loose sand as cushion. All filling and forming is done by the Male during the laying season, but in opening the mound the Female assists her mate.
 Fig. 8.—Feather from wing of Female.
 Fig. 9.—Feather from wing of Male. The slight difference noted here is in evidence at two years. The

male. I have seen the female in the act of laying. The sketch (Fig. 6) shows the most peculiar position she takes up to place the egg in the hole prepared for its reception. I was enabled to ascertain definitely the period of incubation by numbering each egg as laid and entering number and date in my note book. As each chick appeared I opened the mound to see which number was gone. I also kept a plan showing position of each egg.

By getting these birds to breed in captivity I have been able to bring to a satisfactory conclusion a study that has already occupied many years and cost much patient labour. Since 1907 I have examined about 31 mounds, and in every instance found only one pair of birds at work.

Mallee Fowl food.—Seed of *Acacia stenophylla*, *A. rigens*, and a new variety of *Acacia*. Identified by Mr. J. M. Black.

Table showing period of incubation, &c., of *Leipoa* in captivity
by T. P. Bellchambers, 1914.

No. of Egg	Date Laid	Date Hatched	Period of Incubation in days
1	Aug. 19	} failed to hatch	
2	Aug. 26		
3	Aug. 31		
4	Sept. 2		
5	Sept. 11		
6	Sept. 17	Dec. 3	77
7	Sept. 23	Dec. 1	69
8	Sept. 28	Dec. 2	65
9	Oct. 6	Dec. 8	63
10	Oct. 11	Dec. 8	58
11	Oct. 18	Dec. 15	58
12	Oct. 21	Dec. 15	55
13	Oct. 25	Dec. 25	61
14	Oct. 30	Jan. 1	63
15	Nov. 4	} removed from mound	
16	Nov. 11		
17	not noted		
18	Nov. 19	failed to hatch	
19	Nov. 24	Jan. 24	61
20	Nov. 29	Feb. 3	66
21	Dec. 5	} failed to hatch	
22	Dec. 12		

An Ornithological Trip in St. Vincent and Spencer Gulfs.

BY A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.

During the early part of this year Capt. S. A. White and myself had an opportunity of visiting some of the islands in St. Vincent's and Spencer's Gulfs. The trip was undertaken at the invitation of Messrs. A. G. and E. S. Rymill, who placed their motor yacht "Avocet" practically at our disposal, and did everything possible to further our aims. The objects of the trip were: To land on the Pages, three small islands at the southern entrance of Backstairs Passage, as yet, as far as we know, not visited by any ornithologist; to secure specimens of a skua, supposed to be the arctic skua; to secure specimens of a white-breasted petrel which neither of us had been able to identify; to investigate the food of cormorants; to take the temperatures of certain sea birds; and the study of the ornithology of isolated islands.

Port Adelaide was left on the afternoon of January 1st, and the yacht anchored for the night at the Outer Harbour. An early start was made next morning for the Pages, but on rounding Rapid Head, near the northern entrance of Backstairs Passage, a strong north-east blow was met, which put landing there out of the question, so a course was made for the Spit, near Kingscote. This is a low sandbank, between two and three miles long and a few feet only above high-water mark. It almost completely closes the entrance to the Bay of Shoals, and is covered with stunted bushes and sea grasses. The afternoon was spent here, and next morning a start made for the Althorpes Islands. These are two small and one large islands in Investigator Straits. The large one, about 300 feet high, has a lighthouse on it. We landed first on one of the small islands, where we found seals plentiful and tame. Several photos. were taken by Capt. White. I regret to say that numbers of dried carcasses were found on the higher parts of the island, the shell of a rifle cartridge showing that some miscreant had been amusing himself by shooting these interesting and harmless animals, and leaving their bodies to rot where they fell. We next visited the big Althorp, and climbed its almost perpendicular sides to visit the great mutton bird rookery on the summit. The next move was

to Pondalowie Bay, at the foot of Yorke's Peninsula. A day was spent here in the scrub of the mainland and on two of the small islands fronting the bay.

On January 6th we made over to Gambier and Wedge Islands, anchoring under the lee of the former, but a change of wind forced us to quit hurriedly, and make for the shelter of the Wedge. We were not subsequently able to make a landing on Gambier, which was regrettable, as mutton birds and possibly other petrels nest there. Wedge Island is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, rising from sea level at the north end to about 700 feet at the south end, which is a perpendicular cliff. It is inhabited by two brothers, Messrs. A. and W. J. Golley, both intelligent and accurate observers, who take an interest in the natural history of their island. They supplied us with much information concerning its bird life. On the afternoon of the 7th January we returned to Pondalowie Bay, and next day made a 60-miles run to Troubridge Island, where a few hours were spent on shore. Troubridge Island has had a lighthouse on it since 1855. Mr. Arthur Searcy (Chairman of the Harbours Board) has courteously informed me that in 1865 the island was reduced to 370 yards in length owing to severe gales shifting the sand. It has been growing slowly ever since, and is now 833 yards long by 292 yards broad. It is covered with scrub and sea grasses. On January 9th a good run, with a fair wind, to Port Adelaide, terminated a most enjoyable and instructive outing. Birds observed:—

1. *Dromiccius novae-hollandiae*—Emu.—Fresh droppings and feathers at Pondalowie Bay.

2. *Eudyptula minor undina*—Little Penguin.—Seen at the Spit, Little Althorpe Island, Big Althorpe Island, Pondalowie Bay, and Wedge Island.

All were moulting. No nests were found. These birds ascend the cliff of the big Althorpe Island up to 250 feet from the sea. They probably climb up the steep pathway, which has been made of recent years. The cliff is so steep that it had formerly to be ascended by a ladder. They also were found on the top of one of the Pondalowie Bay Islands, the sides of which are so steep and rugged that Capt. White and I had some difficulty in getting to the top at the easiest place we could find. The iris is grey, with a lighter ring round the pupil. These birds make a most dismal noise at night. At Wedge Island it sounded like the cries of babies in pain. The temperature of two were taken. No. 1, 108.8° F.; No. 2,

102.6° F. All temperatures were taken in the cloaca, with a Hicks 30-second clinical thermometer—the instrument being left in until the mercury ceased to rise.

3. *Coturnix pectoralis*—Stubble Quail.—A single bird seen at Wedge Island. The Messrs. Golley informed us that in some summers they are very plentiful.

4. *Cosmopelia elegans neglecta*—Brush Bronzewing.—Fairly common at Pondalowie Bay.

5. *Hypotaenidia philippensis australis*—Landrail.—A bird was seen amongst the granite boulders on the beach of a small island at Pondalowie Bay. The Messrs. Golley say that they live amongst the rocks on the beach at Wedge Island, and that they eat their hen and turkey eggs.

6. *Pelagodroma marina howei*—White-fronted Petrel.—A few birds seen skimming the water between Wedge Island and Pondalowie Bay.

7. *Noenectris tenuirostris brevicaudus*—Mutton Bird.—There is a great rookery of these birds on top of the big Althorpe. Every available piece of ground is burrowed right up to the lighthouse and the keepers' cottages, and many of the birds are compelled, for want of room, to lay under the bushes. The acting keeper (Mr. McLean) told us that his wife and children easily collected 16 dozen eggs from under bushes in the neighbourhood of their cottage. We noticed that some of the birds had burrowed beneath the sleepers of the tramline, used to bring stores from the cliff top to the light-house and we were told that last year a bird laid an egg on the top of the big pulley wheel of the "flying fox." The birds of this "rookery" are scarcely disturbed at all, as the light keepers do not use either the eggs or the young for food, so this island should be a haven for them for many years to come. All the birds at the time of our visit were sitting on heavily incubated eggs.

Soft parts.—Iris, dark brown; legs and feet, black. The nails are very sharp, as we found by experience when getting them out of their burrows. Temperatures (all sitting birds)—No. 1, 103.2°; No. 2, 101.2°; No. 3, 100°; No. 4, 101°.

8. Petrel (*sp.*).—The white-breasted petrel of which we were in search was seen only once between Backstairs Passage and the Spit, where a small flock rose from the water well out of range. No specimen was procured. I believe

this petrel to be *Cinathisma cyaneoleuco*, the new petrel lately described by Mr. Bassett Hull (*Emu*, Vol. XV., p. 205). I hope soon to have an opportunity of settling the point.

9. *Hydroprogne tschegrava strenua*—Caspian Tern.—Fairly common and breeding on the Spit. One nest contained three eggs and the other a chick and a chipped egg. These two nests were in the bare sand, within a few yards of one another. The old birds made a great clatter while the nests were being photographed.

10. *Thalasseus bergii poliocercus*—Crested Tern.—Seen at intervals throughout the trip. They had just started to lay on the Spit, one egg being seen on the bare sand.

11. *Sternula nereis*—Little Tern.—Seen at the Spit, Gambier Island, and Wedge Island. They were breeding in numbers on the Spit: on one end they had young able to fly, and on the other were sitting on eggs. The nests were arranged in parallel rows. All the clutches were of two eggs. Many of the old birds were seen carrying small fish for their young.

12. *Bruchigavia novachollandiae ethelae*—Silver Gull.—Not very common; only a few were seen throughout the trip. They were probably away nesting somewhere..

13. *Gabianus pacificus*—Pacific Gull.—Seen at the Spit and Wedge Island. A bird at the Spit behaved as though breeding, but no nest was found. The Messrs. Golley say they breed on Wedge Island in the tussocky grass. On the top of an island at Pondalowie Bay was a flat limestone rock upon which were great numbers of the shells of a large mollusc (*Turbo*, sp.), locally known as "Warrener." We concluded that they were brought up there and dropped by Pacific gulls. The Messrs. Golley confirmed this, as they had often seen the gulls so behave on Wedge Island. They said that the birds sometimes dropped the shells several times before succeeding in breaking them.

14. *Stercorarius parasiticus*—Arctic Skua.—A few birds were seen at intervals from Backstairs Passage to near the Outer Harbour. Two birds were secured near Troubridge Island, one the light, and the other the dark phase. Both were females in a non-breeding condition. Birds, intermediate in plumage, were seen, but none secured. I have often seen these birds following the s.s. Karatta, and picking up any scraps thrown overboard. They also commonly chase

silver gulls. We saw two so doing on this trip. They afterwards descended to the water, but we could not ascertain if they secured any booty. The stomach contents were:—Dark bird—Remains of a small crab, one broken and one unbroken dead sea shell; Light bird—Small piece of crab's claw, one broken and one whole dead sea shell. The stomach contents seem to indicate that they go ashore at night to feed. I have never seen them do so in the daytime, in fact, when following a steamer they usually leave when about two miles from land.

Measurements.—Light bird—Total length, 40.5 c.m.; wing, axilla to tip, 48 c.m.; spread, tip to tip, 108 c.m. Iris, dark brown; legs and feet, black; nails, curved and sharp. Dark bird—Total length, 40.5 c.m.; wing, 50.5 c.m.; spread, 114 c.m. Weight, 1 lb. Soft parts as in the light form.

Temperatures.—Light form 102.4° F; dark bird, 106.2° F. The light bird was the younger, judging by the incomplete ossification of the posterior border of the sternum. The light bird had an extra pair of cervical ribs, making nine in all, to the dark birds's eight pairs.

15. *Haematopus ostraelgus longirostris*—Pied Oyster Catcher.—Seen at the Spit and Troubridge Island. They like mud banks and sand spits rather than rocky coasts. The Messrs. Golley say they rarely come to Wedge Island, where there is only one small stretch of sandy beach. They were not breeding.

16. *Haematopus niger fuliginosus*—Sooty Oyster Catcher.—Seen at the Spit, Althorpe Islands, Pondalowie Bay, Gambier and Wedge Islands. Much more common on rocky coasts than on flats. The Messrs. Golley say they breed on the rocks at Wedge Island.

17. *Lobibyx novaehollandiae*—Spur-winged Plover.—Seen at Pondalowie Bay and Wedge Island.

18. *Zonifer tricolor*—Black-breasted Plover.—A small flock seen on Wedge Island.

19. *Lucopolijs ruficapilla*—Red-capped Dotterel.—Numbers seen on the Spit and Troubridge Island. A few behaved as though nesting, but no eggs or young were seen.

20. *Charadrius cucullatus*—Hooded Dotterel.—Seen at the Spit, Wedge Island, and Troubridge Island. They were in pairs, but not nesting. They were not numerous anywhere.

21. *Numenius cyanops*—Sea Curlew.—A pair seen near the Outer Harbour.

22. *Limnocinclus acuminata*—Sharp-tailed Stint.—Seen at the Spit.

23. *Burhinus maguirostris*—Scrub Curlew.—Very common on Wedge Island.

24. *Notophoxa novaehollandiae*—White-fronted Heron (Blue Crane).—Seen in the Port River only.

25. *Chenopsis atrata*—Black Swan.—A few birds seen on the Spit.

26. *Hypoleucus fuscescens*—White-breasted Cormorant.—This is an open sea bird. They do not seem to care for the calmer water of the upper part of the Gulf. The first birds were met with near Kangaroo Island, and after that at the Spit, Althorpes, Pondalowie Bay, the Wedge and Troubridge Islands. At the Spit, the Althorpes, and the Wedge it was much the commoner of the two species; at Troubridge it was the rarer, and it was not seen at all about the Outer Harbour.

Four birds were shot. They measured:—

No.	Sex	Total Length	Wing	Spread.
No. 1	♂	62.5 c.m.	48 c.m.	104 c.m.
No. 2	♀	61 c.m.	45.5 c.m.	99 c.m.
No. 3	♂	68 c.m.	48 c.m.	111 c.m.
No. 4	?	64.25 c.m.	47 c.m.	97 c.m.

No. 4 was an immature bird, the sex of which could not be ascertained. Two birds, Nos. 2 and 3, weighed respectively $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. and 3 lbs. The others were not weighed.

Iris, sea green; gular pouch, black, except in No. 3, in which it was dark grey; legs and feet, black in all; bare skin in front of and around the eye, black; bill, black.

As all the literature to which I have access gives the bare skin as purple I thought this might be a new sub-species, but to make sure wrote to Mr. F. M. Littler on the subject. He replied as follows:—"I have not handled a white-breasted shag in the flesh for some little time, and there are none about here, but from memory the bare skin is *black*. It is, of course, black in skins, but I have thought over the matter, and feel as sure as I can be that it is black also in the flesh. Mr. H. C. Thompson agrees with me. I asked him his opinion before I told him what I thought."

It would seem that Gould originally described the bare skin as purple in error, and that subsequent writers have copied him without verification.

Stomach contents:—

- No. 1.—Fish remains (unrecognisable).
 No. 2.—One leather jacket, parasitic worms.
 No. 3.—One weed fish, parasitic worms.
 No. 4.—One weed fish.

Nos. 2 and 3 had many white plumules on the back of the neck and sides of the rump. No. 4, a young bird, had a few; No. 1 had none. None was in a breeding condition.

27. *Hypoleucus varius hypoleucus*—Pied Cormorant.—This was the only species met with in the upper part of the Gulf. They were present in smaller numbers than the preceding species at the Spit and Wedge Island. At Troubridge Island they were the more numerous of the two. None was seen at the Althorpes. Five specimens were examined.

Measurements:—

	Sex	Total Length	Wing	Spread
No. 1	♂	81.5 c.m.	55.75 c.m.	124 c.m.
No. 2	?	71 c.m.	48 c.m.	106 c.m.
No. 3	♂	83.5 c.m.	58 c.m.	121.5 c.m.
No. 4	♂	78.25 c.m.	55.5 c.m.	114 c.m.
No. 5	♂	81 c.m.	53 c.m.	116 c.m.

No. 4 was an immature bird.

Soft part.—Adult—Bare space in front of eye, orange; bare skin around eye, blue; lower eyelid, green; gular pouch, flesh colour; bill, black; tip, horn colour; legs, feet, and nails, black; iris, sea green. Young—Skin in front of eye, orange; bare space around eye, light yellow; bill, grey; culmen, brown; legs, feet, and nails, black.

Mr. G. M. Mathews (Birds of Australia) describes the bill in the letterpress as dark horn colour, but figures it light blue. The bill in Gould's figure is much lighter than any we saw, except that of No. 4, which was a young bird.

Weights.—No. 3, 5½ lbs.; No. 4, 4 lbs.; No. 5, 4 lbs.

Stomach contents.—

- No. 1.—Two weed fish.
 No. 2.—Not examined.

No. 3.—One leather jacket, 8 rounded stones (7 granite, 1 sandstone).

No. 4.—One fish, with large black scales (unidentified).

No. 5.—One weed fish.

The stones in the stomach of No. 3 weighed $2\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. They had probably been swallowed deliberately for the purpose of helping to triturate the food; their number precludes the possibility of their being taken accidentally. Seals commonly have pieces of granite in their stomachs. No fish of a marketable species was found in the stomach of any of the birds of either species examined.

Temperature.—

No. 1 (seven minutes dead).— 101.2° F.

No. 2 (ten minutes dead).— 101° F.

28. *Morus serrator*—Gannet.—Seen at sea at intervals after passing Backstairs Passage. They were mostly in immature plumage.

29. *Catoptropelicanus conspicillatus*—Pelican.—A flock of five seen at the Spit.

30. *Circus approximans gouldi*—Marsh Harrier or Swamp Hawk.—Several birds seen on Wedge Island.

31. *Urocaetus audax*—Wedge-tailed Eagle.—A single bird seen on Wedge Island.

32. *Cuncuma leucogaster*—White-bellied Sea Eagle.—A pair were nesting on one of the Pondalowie Bay Islands. The nest was on a ledge near the top of an overhanging cliff, and contained a young bird almost able to fly. On top of the cliff above the nest were the remains of many penguins, a mutton bird, and a large crayfish, evidently the relics of the eagles' meals. An old nest was seen on Wedge Island in a similar position to the first, but the Messrs. Golley say it is now not used, and the birds breed on Gambier Island.

33. *Ieracidea berigora*—Striped Brown Hawk.—Seen at Wedge Island. A bird of the dark form was shot. Stomach contents.—Portions of lizards. Iris, brown; bill, slaty blue; legs and feet, grey blue; nails, dark brown.

34. *Cerchneis cenchroides*—Kestrel.—A bird flew from the light tower at Althorpe Island, and another from the unattended light at Wedge Island.

35. *Pandion haliaetus cristatus*—Osprey.—Seen at Wedge and Gambier Islands. The Messrs. Golley say they nest on both islands. We saw one hawking over the shallow water at Wedge Island, but unfortunately did not see the plumage. The Messrs. Golley say they sometimes disappear beneath the water when striking their fish. The flight when hawking is heavy and flapping.

36. *Spiloglaux*, sp.—A Brown Owl.—Is said by the Messrs. Golley to live in the bushes of Wedge Island, which has not the Boobook note. Capt. White searched for, but did not find it. These owls must nest in the rocks, as there are no hollow trees.

37. *Neonanodes petrophilus*—Rock Parrot.—Seen in small flocks of five or six on the Spit, Althorpes., Wedge, and Troubridge Islands. There are no rocks on either the Spit or Troubridge Island.

38. *Neochalcites basalis mellori*—Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo.—Seen at Pondalowie Bay and Wedge Island. A young bird was shot at the latter place, so they probably breed there. Iris, dull white; legs and feet, dark grey; nails, black; bill, olive brown.

39. *Hirundo neorena*—Welcome Swallow.—Common wherever there were cliffs. It was also seen off the Grange, three miles out at sea, where they were catching insects blown out by the off shore wind. The Messrs. Golley say they stay at Wedge Island throughout the winter.

40. *Hylocheleidon nigricans*—Tree Swallow.—Seen only at sea off the Grange.

41. *Whiteornis goodenovii*—Red-capped Robin.—Seen at Pondalowie Bay and at Wedge Island.

42. *Melanodryas cucullata vigorsi*—Hooded Robin.—Seen at Pondalowie Bay.

43. *Leucocirca tricolor*—Wagtail.—Pondalowie Bay only.

44. *Drymodes brunneopygia*—Scrub Robin.—A specimen collected at Pondalowie Bay.

45. *Epthianura albifrons*—White-fronted Tin-tac.—Seen at the Spit, Troubridge Island, and Wedge Island.

46. *Poodytes gramineus dubius*—Little Grass Bird.—Common at the Spit and Troubridge Island. A single bird seen on one of the Pondalowie Bay Islands.

47. *Sericornis maculata* (sub. sp.)—Spotted Scrub Wren.—Several specimens, secured on Wedge Island, where it is common. It differs from both the Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island bird. Iris, white; bill, dark brown; upper mandible the darker; legs, feet, and nails, brown.

48. *Leggeornis lamberti assimilis*—Purple-backed Wren.—A male collected at Pondalowie Bay.

49. *Pseudoartamus cyanopterus*—Wood Swallow.—Common at Pondalowie Bay.

50. *Colluricincla harmonica victoriae*—Shrike Thrush.—Heard at Pondalowie Bay.

51. *Bulestes torquatus ethelae*—Butcher Bird.—A few birds seen at Pondalowie Bay.

52. *Oreoica cristata ethelae*—Crested Bell Bird.—Fairly common at Pondalowie Bay. A young male collected.

53. *Zosterops lateralis westernensis*—Silver-eye.—Common at Althorpes, Pondalowie Bay, and Wedge Island. Iris, brown; bill, upper mandible, dark brown; lower, grey; legs, feet, and nails, grey brown.

54. *Gliciphila melanops chandleri*—Fulvous-fronted Honey Eater.—A young bird collected at Pondalowie Bay.

55. *Meliphaga sonora*—Singing Honey Eater.—Common at Pondalowie, Wedge, and Althorpes Islands.

56. *Coleia carunculata tragellasi*—Wattle Bird.—Common at Pondalowie Bay.

57. *Acanthogenys rufogularis cygnus*—Spiny-cheeked Honey Eater.—Common at Pondalowie Bay.

58. *Anthus australis adelaidensis*—Ground Lark or Pipit.—Seen at the Spit, Pondalowie Bay, Wedge Island, and Troubridge Island. Common on all, especially Wedge Island. Iris, dark brown; bill, upper mandible, brown; lower, flesh white; legs and feet, yellowish brown; nails, brown.

59. *Corvus coronoides*—Raven.—Seen on Little Althorpe Island, evidently after the dead seals.

60. *Strepera* (sp.).—A bird of this genus was seen at Pondalowie Bay. They were very shy, and no specimen was secured.

Introduced Birds:—

The sparrow has established itself on the big Althorpe, and also on Wedge Island. The nearest point of land to the Wedge is 14 miles distant. The Messrs. Golley say that goldfinches have several times been seen there, but do not stay. On Wedge Island the sparrows have become so numerous as to be a serious nuisance to the barley crop. The starling has also established itself on Althorpe and Wedge Islands.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, S. A. WHITE.

VIII.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST AND SAILOR.

So at noon, Friday, April 9th, 1880, the anchor was weighed, and Samuel White started upon his last voyage.

It is now my intention to try and narrate the principal happenings of this voyage, from memory and from notes, also from the few scanty notes of my father now available.

We drove to Henley Beach about 10 p.m. on the evening of the 8th, and after some delay the yacht's boat took us on board. The decks were so hampered with luggage, gear, stores, &c., that it was impossible to make a start that night. All the next morning was taken up stowing away things and clearing up the decks. About mid-day the "Elsa" started down the Gulf with a very light breeze, which freshened, and later on blew strongly from the S.E. Standing on the one tack we fetched into American Beach, and dropped anchor about midnight in four fathoms of water. A south-easterly breeze blew strongly all next day, so the little ship remained at anchor, and my father took his wife and family ashore in the small boat, and we all enjoyed ourselves after being very seasick the night before. Most of the day was spent searching for shells along the beach, and amongst those collected was a fine pair of paper *Nautilus*. In the evening my father rowed us off to the ship again for another night's roll. We lay about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles off shore, and a good big swell came into the bay from the eastward. Next day, being Sunday, 11th, and the wind blowing very strongly from the S.E., the "Elsa"

lay at anchor, and we spent the day on shore, my father collecting specimens and taking notes of sea birds in the vicinity of the beach, all going on board again in the evening. Next morning, under main and stay sails, we ran in shore within half a mile. The crew then manned the two big boats, and got off a quantity of wood and water, and while this was in progress my father took my brother and sister and myself in a small boat, which he called the "Duck Boat," along the coastline for about five miles in search of *Nautilus* shells, but we had no success.

On Thursday, 13th, about noon sail was set for Antechamber Bay, and we beat round with a light wind, coming to anchor after dark in five fathoms of water, the schooner rolling terrifically on a big swell. All were glad to get away next morning, after rolling about most unpleasantly all night. With only a light and variable wind we were some time making out against a heavy swell. During the afternoon we passed the Pages, where we spoke the "Orient" top-sail schooner, bound for Port Adelaide. The 15th found our little craft plunging into a big head sea, but during the day the wind went round to the north, and the sea went down.

Flying around us were great numbers of sea birds—several species of petrels and albatross, and we hooked a number of large baracoota. Early in the morning we were off Cape Shank. The night set in cold, with driving showers, which became heavier towards midnight, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and we were under double reefed main-sail all night. The little craft was like a duck, and kept wonderfully dry considering the big seas that were running. Just after dark we spoke the schooner "Lady St. Albans," bound for Port Adelaide, and soon afterwards passed Cape Northumberland. The next day (the 16th) we passed Portland Bay, and we again took a great many baracoota. These voracious fish are caught by fastening a piece of wood or coloured rag just above the bare hook, and towing the line astern. When travelling at five to seven knots the fish are invariably caught if any are about. They seem much better flavoured if put in salt and water for 24 hours. Baracoota is rather dry and solid, has few bones, and is moderately well flavoured.

By Saturday, the 17th, we were off Cape Otway, with numbers of sea birds in attendance. The wind blew nice and fresh for a while, but later died out to a calm, and only two

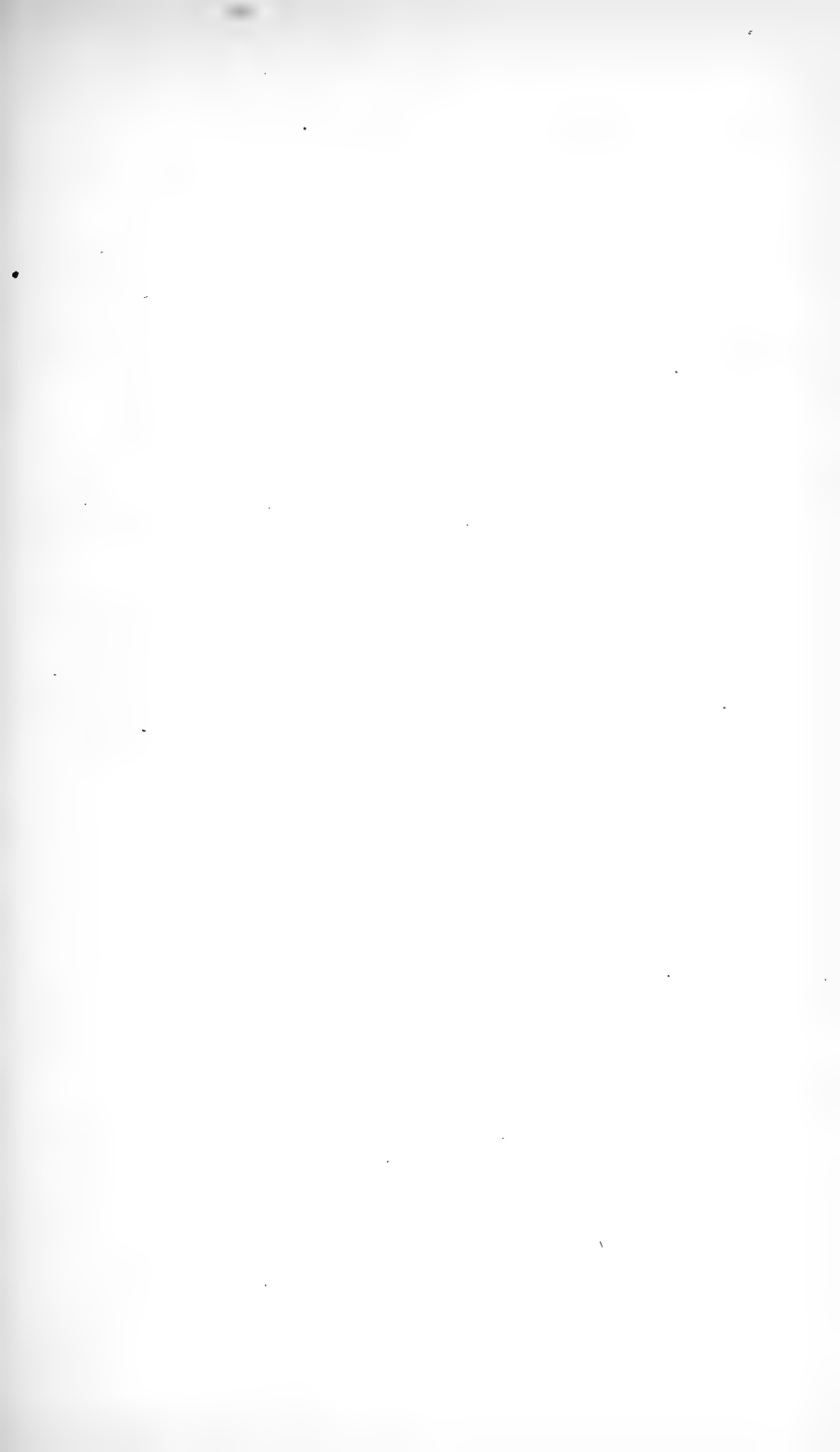
or three baracoota were caught during the day—the pace of the craft being too slow. Often when these large fish were hauled in sea birds chased them, screaming frantically. For the next two days (19th and 20th) the wind was exceedingly light, variable, and baffling. We were off Wilson's Promontory at 2 p.m. on the 20th. Very rough weather, with strong head winds and high seas were experienced on the 22nd and 23rd, and on the 24th we beat past Gabo Island. The wind went down, but the seas were very high, and the sails and gear were very much chafed with the rolling of the vessel. On the 25th it was very wet, heavy rain falling all day and night. Next day was the best run we had since being out, and we did over 90 miles, but when 25 miles off Sydney Heads the wind died away. Several other craft were in company with us. On the 27th we entered Port Jackson. We first dropped anchor in Elizabeth Bay, to send all the powder and some of the arms up to the magazine. Next day we beat up to Lavender Bay, where we lay several days while Samuel White secured a house for his wife and family, and having selected one at Double Bay the yacht was shifted around there, where she lay at anchor until the 15th of May.

My father's first troubles with the master and crew started here, for they became mixed up in a drunken brawl on shore, which hurried the departure. Having shipped a quantity of stores and re-shipped the powder and arms, at 8 a.m. on the 16th of May, 1880, the "Elsea" sailed out of Sydney Harbour, with a light wind from the S.W. The wind continued very light and baffling till the night of the 18th, when a run of 90 miles was made, then light, variable winds and very strong currents were met with. On Monday, 24th, the end of McPherson Range was passed. The country looked exceedingly rugged and broken, Mount Warning looking like a pointed cone above the rest. Later on in the day the end of Strasbrook Island came in sight. The vessel was close enough to the coast for us to see that it was well wooded, and that there was a lighthouse on the rising ground at Point Danger. On the 25th the wind kept steady till daylight, when it fell to a dead calm, and at 2 p.m. the yacht was abreast of Moreton Island. At sunset the sky became overcast, and a series of squalls broke over the craft from the N. by W. About midnight a tremendous squall came up from the W., which lasted several hours, with heavy rain, thunder and lightning. For a time everything was lowered on deck, but

after a while the crew got the vessel under double reef, the little ship behaving wonderfully well under the severe blow. The next day (the 27th) the wind continued strong, blowing very hard at times. The owner of the ship put in a lot of time that day with carpenter's work, for the rolling of the ship the day before upset everything. The storeroom doors and the bulkheads were smashed in, and things were generally tossed about. The master made a complaint about the binnacle light, and a change was made from oil to kerosine, with great success.













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J. H. Riley

Vol. II.

Part 7.

THE
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ORNITHOLOGIST,

A Magazine of Ornithology.

1st JULY, 1916.

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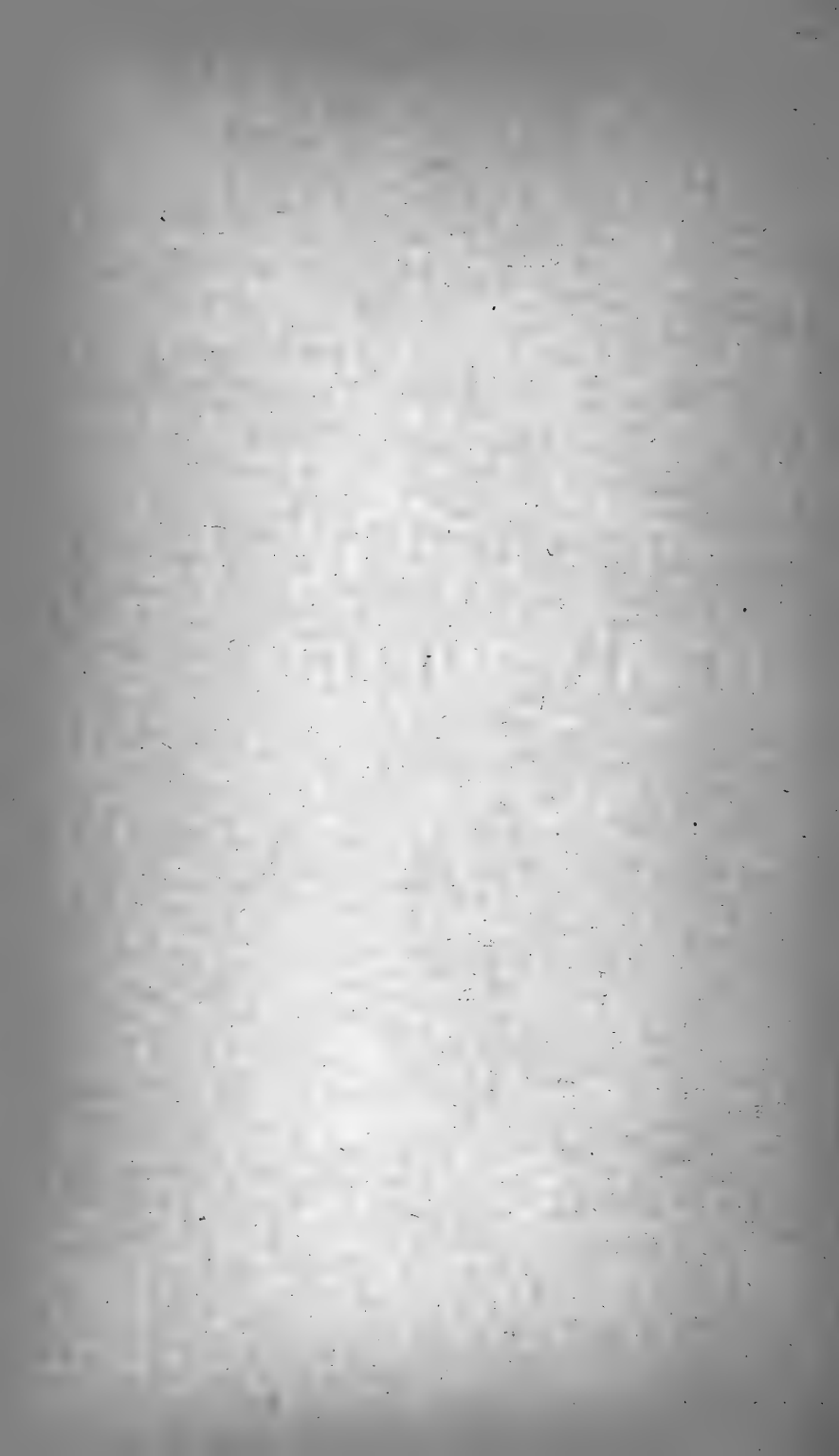
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THE

South Australian

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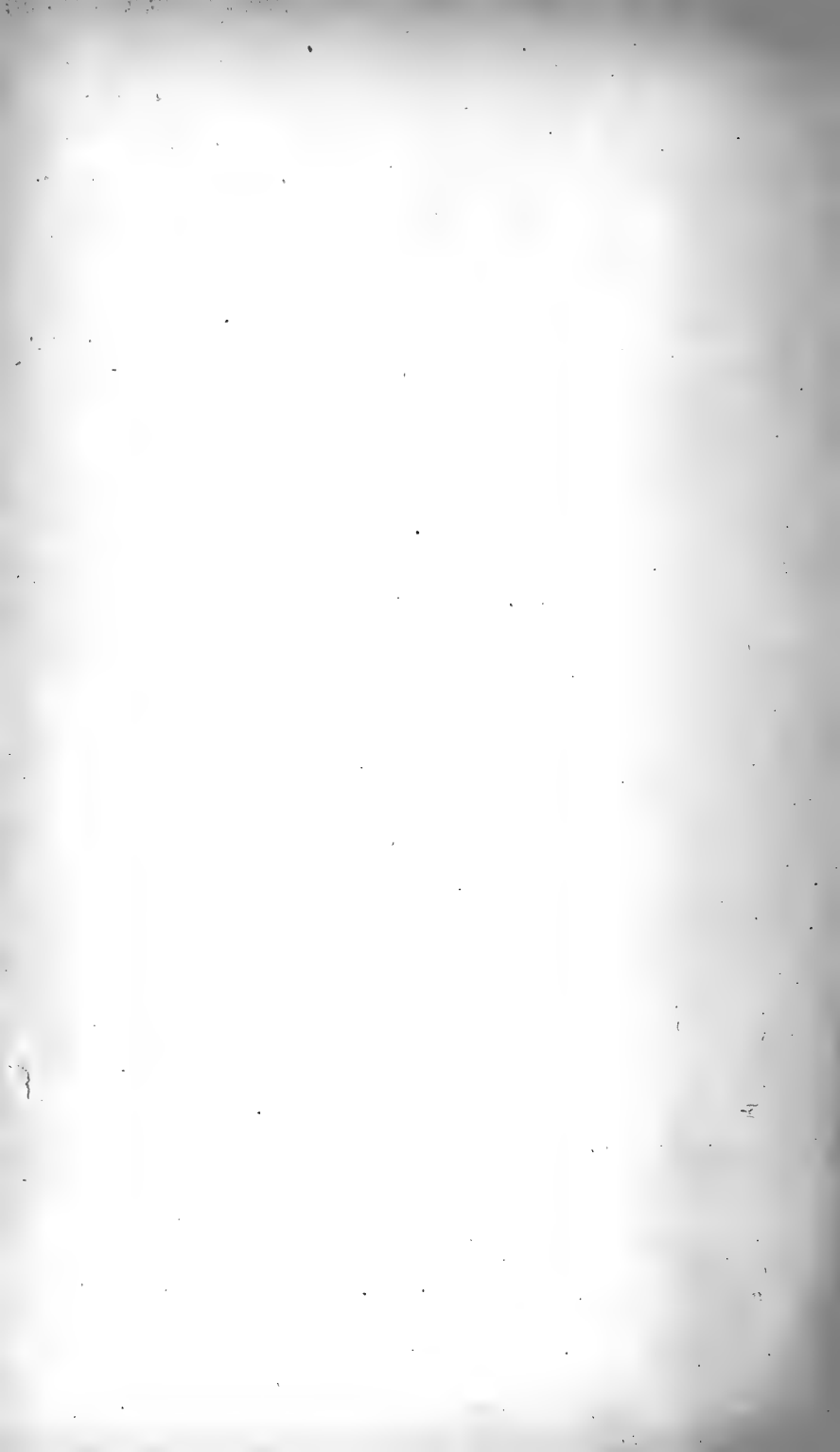
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— THE —

South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

1ST JULY, 1916.

[PART 7.

The South Australian Ornithological Association.

March 31st, 1916.

The Annual Meeting took place, the retiring President (Mr. J. W. Hosking) read a short address upon the work accomplished during the past year. Mr. F. M. Angel was thanked for taking over the secretaryship during the Hon. Secretary's absence on duty at the front. Officers elected.—President, Dr. A. M. Morgan; Vice-President, Mr. A. G. Edquist; Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. Crompton (absent on military duty); Acting Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. M. Angel; Publishing Committee to the "South Australian Ornithologist," Dr. Morgan, F. R. Zietz, Capt. S. A. White, the Hon. and Acting Hon. Secretaries.

A discussion took place in reference to the need of at once approaching the Government, praying that a swamp on the River Murray should be declared a sanctuary for native avifauna and fish. Capt. White was empowered to make a move in that direction at once.

A discussion arose over the Kangaroo Island Reserve, and it was regretted that so much time was being wasted in completing the arrangements in that direction.

Mr. E. Ashby exhibited a photograph of two young Laughing Jacks (*Dacelo gigas*). The parent birds had fed them with a snake each, and a foot or more of the reptile was dangling from their bills, the heads being in the birds'

stomachs. Mr. Ashby's correspondent stated that it took several days for the birds to digest the reptiles. The same member showed several skins of the Lesser Bush Lark (*Mirafra javanica secunda*), taken at Encounter Bay; also a specimen of the Black Bush Lark (*M. j. nigrescens*) from the Northern Territory.

The remainder of the evening was taken up by an account of the birds of the Coorong, given by Capt. White.

A skin of the Tippet Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) was shown; also of the Bristle Bird (*Maccoyornis broadbenti whitei*). Many of their habits were explained. A Scrub Wren was shown by the same member, and was pointed out as quite a new sub-sp. of *Sericornis longirostris*. Capt. White stated that through the great kindness of the Messrs. Rymill he had been able to again pay a visit to the cormorant rookeries in the mangroves, north of the Outer Harbour, and had done a great deal of research work amongst the Cormorants (*Hypoleucus varius hypoleucus*), by examination of stomach contents, etc.

April 28th, 1916.

A meeting was held, at which Mr. Edwin Ashby showed a number of bird skins, collected near Karoonda, in the Mallee, on November 25th, 1915. Amongst others were:—

- Gilbertornis rufogularis* (Eastern Red-throated Thick-head).
- Campbellornis superciliosus* (White-browed Wood Swallow).
- Drymodes brunneopygia* (Scrub Robin).
- Oreoica cristata clelandi* (Southern Crested Bell Bird).
- Hylacola cauta* (Rufous-rumped Ground Wren).
- Acanthiza pusilla hamiltoni* (Red-rumped Tit).
- Smicronis brevirostris viridescens* (Greenish Tree Tit).
- Pardalotus punctatus xanthopygius* (Yellow-rumped Pardalot).
- Leggeornis lamberti assimilis* (Purple-backed Wren).
- Epthianura albifrons* (White-fronted Chat).
- Gliciphila melanops chandleri* (Tawny-crowned Honey-eater).
- Gliciphila albifrons incerta* (Eastern White-fronted Honey-eater).
- Lichenostornus cratitius howci* (Victorian Wattle-cheeked Honey-eater).

The same member also showed:—

Amytornis striatus (Striated Grass Wren).

Gilbertornis rufogularis gilbertii (Red-throated Thick-head).

Eclectus pectoralis macgillivrayi (Red-sided Parrot). From the Pascoe River, North Queensland.

May 26th, 1916.

A monthly meeting was held, at which Capt. S. A. White reported that Carlot Lagoon, nine miles above Mannum, would be gazetted the following week as a Fauna Reserve. Mr. F. R. Zietz drew the notice of members to an article in the N.S.W. Agricultural Gazette, upon poisoning fruit for the destruction of birds. Members strongly condemned this suggestion. An illustration in the same paper showed 600 poisoned galahs. Members were very sorry to see such a sad photograph, and to know that 2,371 parrots were killed at one poisoning. No wonder our native birds were disappearing. Capt. White drew attention to a recent publication of the United States Department of Agriculture upon "The Birds of Porto Rico," by Alex. Wetmore, Assistant Biologist. The work was a very interesting one from the economic point of view alone.

The Chairman (Dr. A. M. Morgan) spoke upon bird life recently observed on the islands and along our coastline, these observations being made through the kindness of the Messrs. Rymill putting their motor yacht, the "Avocet," at the disposal of ornithology again. Two species of shells were shown, *Turbo Stramineus* and *Thais textiliosa*. The doctor explained that these shells were supposed to be carried up into the air by the Pacific Gulls (*Gabinius pacificus*), and dropped upon the rocks, and thus smashed as a means of abstracting the edible contents. He stated that he did not think this possible, as one shell weighed 10½ ozs. He credited the White-headed Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus cristatus*) with the practice.

Some discussion took place for and against the supposition. It was the general opinion that only by observation could this matter be cleared up.

Skins of the Pacific Gull and White-headed Osprey were exhibited by Capt. White, to illustrate the above discussion. The same member also showed the skins of young Short-tailed Petrels (*Neonectris tenuirostris brevicaudus*), and remarked upon the strange growth of the down upon each feather.

Mr. J. W. Mellor exhibited the skins of the Lesser Bush Lark (*Mirafra javanica secunda*). The want of knowledge respecting these birds shown at the late Forestry Conference in Adelaide was discussed.

Order Passeriformes, Family Meliphagidae,
Genus Meliornis.

Meliornis novae-hollandiae subassimilis.

Upper surface—Forehead, crown and occiput black, feathers at the base of the bill tipped with white, hind neck black, each feather with a margin of light brown, line over ear coverts white, ear coverts black, with a tuft of white feathers extending backwards from their lower posterior border, mantle black each feather broadly margined with white, on some of the feathers on one web only, feathers of the back and upper tail coverts black broadly margined with dull brown.

Lower surface—Chin black, bordered on each side at the angles of the mouth by a patch of white, throat black, with the hair-like terminations of the feathers white, feathers of the breast black, broadly margined with white, the border becoming broader and the central streak narrower towards the abdomen which is white, under tail coverts white, with a broad lanceolate streak of black in their centres, thighs brown.

Wing—Primaries and secondaries black, all except the first two primaries and the last secondary, with the outer webs margined with bright yellow forming a yellow patch on the wing, the last two secondaries margined with white at their tips, wing coverts black.

Tail—Two central tail feathers dull black, the outer webs washed with yellow, the rest of the tail feathers black, the outer webs margined with yellow, and largely tipped with white on the inner webs, the two outer ones with a small patch of white on the outer webs as well.

Bill—Black.

Legs and feet—Black.

Iris—White.

The female resembles the male, but is slightly smaller.

The young on leaving the nest resemble the adults.

The chick is hatched with the eyes closed, it is covered with a scanty dark brown down, and has the gape and bill bright yellow.

Average measurement of nine skins. Total length, 163 m.m., wing 77 m.m., bill 17 m.m.

Distribution—It is found in all the southern parts of S.A., and in Kangaroo Island, it does not inhabit the interior. Nearly allied sub-species are found in Victoria, N.S.W., Tasmania, and Western Australia.

Habits—They like country covered with small flowering shrubs, especially banksias, other favourite trees, are gum trees, wattle, heath (*Epacris*), and hakeas. They are familiar birds in all suburban flower gardens, often nesting there, if there be suitable cover. They are non migratory as a rule but sometimes appear for a time in a district and then leave it for a year or two. Generally they go singly or in pairs, unless a good feeding tree be found, when as many as 20 or 30 may be present at a time. They are pugnacious, and will tackle and drive off much larger birds than themselves from the nest, or feeding tree. If the old bird be discovered sitting on eggs, she leaves the nest silently and stealthily, but if the nest contain young, she remains close to and makes a great clatter.

Flight—Swift and somewhat erratic, as a rule limited to quick dashes from one feeding tree to another, but will sometimes chase an intruder for a long distance.

Song—A shrill "tweet," the alarm note is a harsh clatter.

Food—The nectar of flowers, and small insects, the latter often taken upon the wing.

Nest—The nest is built low down, rarely higher than six feet, in some thick bush, such as banksia, hakea, or Kangaroo thorn, in gardens they sometimes build in the fruit trees; the principal breeding season is from July to end of September, but odd nests may be found in any month of the year. They are occasionally the hosts of the pallid cuckoo.

The nest is constructed of fine dry twigs, rootlets or grasses, bound together with wool or cobwebs, occasionally it is unlined, but usually with fluffy seeds, sheep's wool, or rabbit fur, the unfertile seeds of the banksia are a favourite lining. The nest is paced in an upright fork, and not suspended by the rim. Two broods are hatched in the season. The young leave the nest when about three weeks old.

An average nest measured, height $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter x $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep.

Eggs—Ground colour creamy buff, with an irregular zone of diffuse reddish brown spots, intermingled with a few darker sharply defined ones. Average measurement of eight eggs, 1.98 c.m. x 1.54 c.m. Largest egg 2.15 c.m. x 1.55 c.m.

A Note on the Migration of Swallows in South Australia.

BY A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.

This year the tree swallows have returned to their old gathering place on the University Oval. I missed the date of assembly, but they were numerous early in March, and did not break up until the beginning of May. They have now, June 8th, all left the spot, but are still numerous about the houses, river, and park lands.

Welcome swallows are as numerous now as they have been all the summer. I do not think any have left this year, perhaps on account of the mildness of the season. They have however, left the neighbourhood of the houses, and are mostly to be seen skimming the surface of the river and other waters.

A New Scrub Wren.

BY S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

Sericornis longirostris wyldei (subsp. n.)—Coorong Scrub Wren.

All upper surface, warm brown; wings, blackish brown; external margins of primaries, yellowish grey; secondaries, reddish brown; spurious wing feathers, black, with white margins; tail, greyish brown, two central tail feathers strongly washed with rufous; lores, brown; line of white passing across the forehead and over the eyes; throat, white, a few of the feathers having a dark line down the centre; centre of breast and abdomen, pale yellow; sides of breast, grey; flanks and undertail coverts, rufous; iris, dull white; bill, dark brown; feet, reddish brown. Type.—A female taken at the Coorong, March 12th, 1916, and now in the "Wetunga" collection.

These birds were rare, singing morning and evening in the thick masses of lignum, and very seldom showed themselves, being so very timid. The song is very sweet, but of short duration.

This new bird mostly resembles the Victorian form of *Sericornis longirostris*, but differs in having the upper surface of a warm shade of ruddy brown, and in showing little or no striations on the throat, the yellow on the breast and abdomen being much brighter, and in having the flanks and undertail coverts of a deep rufous.

S. l. rosinae shows more striations on the throat, and is a much darker bird throughout.

This new sub-sp. seems to be the smallest of the genus. The Flinders Island bird (*S. flindersi*, White and Mellor) resembles it somewhat, but is much larger. The bird from Flinders Island should be *Sericornis longirostris flindersi*, because it resembles the Victorian bird very much, and is not half the size, or is not at all like *Tasmanornis humilis*. I think Mr. Mathews was quite right in dividing the latter bird into a new genus, but because Flinders Island is closer to Tasmania than Australia does not constitute that *S. flindersi* is a sub-sp. of *T. humilis*.

I have much pleasure in naming the above new bird after Mr. Wylde, sub-editor of the "S.A. Register," who was my companion during the trip, and assisted me much in ornithological research.

Birds of the North and North-West of Australia.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

No. 6.

62. *RECURVIROSTRA NOVÆHOLLANDIÆ.* Red-necked Avocat.

Recurvirostra novaehollandiæ (Vieillot). Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., Vol. III., p. 103, 1816, Victoria.

No. 179—♀. Length, 16.4 inches (25/6/86).

Irides, brown, but not much seen, the pupil being large; bill—upper mandible, black; lower, very dark brown; bases lighter where they are tinged with slate colour, the extreme tips very light brown, almost transparent. Feet and webs, delicate lavender; claws, dark brown. The extreme points of the bill bend downwards.

No. 318—♂. Length, 18 inches.

Irides, reddish-brown; bill, black; feet and legs, lavender.

No. 319—♀. Length, 17.3 inches. Same as above (15/9/86).

No. 320—♀. Length, 16.5 inches. Same as above (15/9/86).

64. *LIMOSA LIMOSA MELANUROIDES.* Eastern Black-tailed Godwit.

Limosa melanuroides (Gould). Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1846, p. 84, Port Essington, Northern Territory.

No. 364—♂. Length, 13.4 inches (25/9/86).

Irides, brown; bill, brown, passing into yellowish white at the base of the lower mandible, and becoming dark horn at the base and tip of the upper; tibia and tarsi, slaty black; feet, fine warm brown of a rich shade.

65. TLIORNIS STAGNATILIS HORSFIELDII. Little Green Shank.

Limosa horsfieldii (Sykes). Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1832, p. 163. Dukhun, India.

No. 358—♀. Length, 8.9 inches (22/9/86).

66. ACTITIS HYPOLEUCUS AURITA. Eastern Common Sandpiper.

Tringa aurita (Latham). Index, Ornith. Suppl., p. LXVI., 1801. New South Wales.

No. 340—♂. Length, 8.2 inches (17/9/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill, olive brown, lightest at the base of lower mandible.

Its habits are identical with its European ally.

68. GLOTTIS NEBULARIUS GLOTTOIDES. Eastern Green Shank.

Totanus glottoides (Vigors). Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.), 1831, p. 173. Himalaya Mountains, India.

No. 173—♀. Length, 13.4 inches (23/6/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill, brown, becoming lighter and tinged with slate colour from half its length to the base; legs and feet, dirty greenish colour, the green being most conspicuous on the tibia.

No. 182— . Length, 13 inches (25/6/86).

No. 183—♂. Length, 12.8 inches (26/6/86).

70. PISOBIA DAMACENSIS. Long-toed Stint.

Totanus damacensis (Horsfield). Trans. Linn. Soc. (Lond.), Vol. XIII., p. 192, 1821. Java.

No. 362—♂. (24/9/86). The length could not be taken as the head was twisted off.

This bird now in my collection is the only record of this species having been shot in Australia.

70. LIMNOCINCLUS ACUMINATUS. Sharp-tailed Stint.

Totanus acuminatus (Horsfield). Trans. Linn. Soc. (Lond.), Vol. XIII., p. 192, 1821. Java.

No. 323—♂. Length, 8.9 inches (15/9/86).

No. 325—♂. Same as above.

No. 365—♀. Length, 8.3 inches (25/9/86).

72. SUBSPILURA MEGALA. Larger Pin-tailed Snipe.

Gallinago megala (Swinhoe). Ibis, 1861, p. 343. Pekin, China.

No. 531—♂. Length, 11.4 inches (9/11/86).

The bird was sitting close to the ground, with his bill touching, and looked much like a piece of dirt. It gave forth no note on rising.

Irides, brown; bill, olive, dark brown on terminal portion; legs and feet, light yellowish olive.

73. ROSTRATULA AUSTRALIS. Painted Snipe.

Rhynchaea australis (Gould). Synops. Birds Austr., Pt. IV., App. p. 6, 1838. New South Wales.

No. 289—♀. Length, 10.8 inches (19/7/86).

Irides, fine brown; eyelid, dark brown; bill, olive on its basal half, shading with brownish yellow, and tipped with horn colour, the skin between the fork of the lower mandible pale green; legs and feet, pale sepia green.

No. 290—♀. Length, 10.7 inches (19/7/86).

Irides, brown; eyelid, brown; bill, olive brown for its basal half, passing into dark brown for the remainder of its length; the skin between the fork of the lower mandible greenish white; legs and feet, greenish white.

74. STILTIA ISABELLA. Australian Pratincole.

Glaucola isabella (Vieillot). Analyse Nouv. Ornith., p. 69, 1816, Australia.

No. 224—♀. Length, 8.7 inches (28/8/86).

No. 225—♂. Length, 8.2 inches (28/8/86).

No. 252—♂. Length, 8.4 inches (31/8/86).

Irides, brown; bill, coral red from the base to pass the nostrils, remainder brown; legs and feet, brown.

Although a regular desert bird, round Derby (Monkey Jarra) it frequented the land adjoining the swamps.

No. 302—♀. Length, 8.1 inches (22/7/86).

Irides, brown; bill, fleshy red for its basal half, black for the remainder of its length; legs and feet, brown.

No. 327—♂. Length, 8.1 inches (16/9/86).

No. 328—♂. Length, 8.4 inches (16/9/86).

76. *BURHINUS MAGNIROSTRIS RUFESCENS.* Little Stone Plover.

Burhinus magnirostris rufescens (Mathews). Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 225, 1912, Parry's Creek, North-west Australia.

No. 439—♂. Length, 21.8 inches (25/10/86).

Irides, yellow, mottled with dark brown or black on the outer circle; bill, black, lighter at the base of the lower mandible; legs and feet, dirty greenish white, with a slight tinge of light brown on the feet.

77. *THRESKIORNIS MOLUCCA STRICTIPENNIS.* White Ibis.

Ibis strictipennis (Gould). Synops. Birds Austr., pl. IV., App. p. 7, 1838, New South Wales.

No. 387—♀. Length, 25.7 inches (8/8/86).

No. 391—♀. Length, 26.9 inches (9/8/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill and the naked skin on the head and neck, black; the sides of the basal portion of the upper and lower mandibles mottled with whitish horn colour, these markings are chiefly noticeable on the upper mandible; tarsi, purplish brown, with some irregular spots of pink at the joint; tibia, pink on the upper portion, with purplish brown marks on the sides and back, lower portions brown, some of the scales showing pinkish; toes, black, with a purplish tint at the base. Younger birds have not the mottled appearance on the bill, and the pink colouring of the tibia is confined to the upper part. They are wild birds and difficult to get within range of. Grasshoppers and beetles form their chief food, and sometimes the fat is a quarter of an inch thick in places.

No. 446—♂. Length, 30.5 inches (26/10/86).

Irides, brown; bill and skin on head and neck, black, across the nape and hind neck are numerous marks of pink, which give those parts the appearance of having been freshly cut between the folds of the skin; on top of the head a number of similiar, but smaller, marks arranged regularly, and of a paler colour; front of tibia, knee joint, back of the tarsus, under surface, and sides of the toes, their joints and at their

junction with the tarsus, slate black, remainder of the tibia, tarsus, and toes, rose pink; skin along the bones of the wings, blood red.

Another bird had irides, dark brown; bill, black, freckled with brown at the base of the upper mandible; naked skin on the face, black; tibia, pink, becoming darker at the joint; tarsus, dark purple; toes, black. The black of the toes seems gradually to pass into the purple of the tarsus, which colour again gradually becomes the pink of the tibia.

78. *CARPILUS SPINICOLLIS*. Straw-necked Ibis.

Ibis spinicollis (Jamerson). Edin. New Philos. Journ., Vol. XIX., p. 213, 1835, New South Wales.

No. 164—♀. Length, 26.8 inches (21/6/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill, face, and feet, black; flesh-coloured spots on the tibia.

On stalking these birds four were noticed posted, to give warnings of danger, on the highest trees. On firing a gun they all rise from the damp grass. It seems to fly easily, often soaring hawk-fashion in the air.

78. *PLEGADIS FALCINELLUS*. Glossy Ibis.

Tantalus falcinellus (Linne). Syst. Nat., ed. XII., p. 241, 1766, Australia.

No. 234—♀. Length, 19 inches (12/7/86).

No. 235—♂. Length, 22.3 inches (12/7/86).

No. 361—♀. Length, 20.5 inches (3/8/86).

Irides, dark brown; lores and eyelids, nearly black, tinged with bluish lead colour where the feathers of the head and cheeks begin; bill—upper mandible, dark brown on the culmen as far as the nostrils, the remainder of the upper mandible light olive brown, which becomes darker at the tip; under mandible, light olive brown, darker at the base, but lighter and tinged with flesh colour on the fork; legs and feet, black, becoming brown on the upper parts of the tibia.

78. *SPATHERODIA REGIA*. Black-billed Spoonbill.

Platalea regia (Gould). Synops. Birds Austr., Pt. IV., App. p. 7, 1838, New South Wales.

No. 148—♂. Length, 30.4 inches (17/6/86).

Irides, scarlet; bill, slate colour, mottled with black as far as the nostrils, above which it is black; lower mandible, black at the base, slate colour at the point; naked skin of the face and throat, black, except a superciliary stripe over each eye and a triangular mark on the top of the head between the eyes, the former marks being bright yellow, and the latter blood red; feet and legs, black.

They walk quickly through the water, with the bill a little more than half under, and at each step sway from side to side somewhat after the style of a sower. The mandibles are for the majority of the time kept a little open. Their flight seems heavy, particularly when turning. They are fairly silent. The windpipe runs the length of the sternum, and turns and then goes forward before entering the lungs. Wounded birds while walking make about in the same way as they do when feeding, constantly putting the tip of the bill down on the ground.

No. 418—♂. Length, 31 inches (21/10/86).

79. ZENORHYNCHUS ASIATICUS AUSTRALIS. Black-necked Stork.

Mysteria australis (Shaw). Trans. Linn. Soc. (Lond.), Vol. V., p. 23, 1800, New South Wales.

No. 174—♀. (23/6/86.)

Length, from tip to tip of wing, 6 feet 8 inches; from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail, 4 feet 2½ inches; from the tip of the bill to the end of the toes, 5 feet 5½ inches; weight, 9 lbs.

Irides, fine yellow; eyelash, black; bill, black; inside of the mouth, salmon colour, deeper towards the front; the skin between the fork of the lower mandible, black, irregularly marked with red, giving it somewhat the appearance of cuts; legs and feet, coral red.

When fishing they catch fair-sized ones, from five to seven inches long. Those that were lengthways soon were swallowed, but those that got across the mandible required more care, and by the opening and closing of the bill and sundry jerks they would be placed head first, and then were swallowed. During the intervals the bird would walk about quietly, but when anything caught its eye it would indulge in a short run, and then stop suddenly. When flying the head, neck, and legs are stretched out to their full extent. They

are a silent bird, and their flight is slow and graceful, taking from four to a dozen flaps it holds its wings out, and sails for a short time. It rises from the water without difficulty, and mounts high in a series of circles, but of not such a size as one would expect.

81. HERODIAS ALBA SYRMATOPHORA. White Egret.

Herodias immaculata (Gould). *Birds Austr.*, Vol. VI., Pt. 58, 1846, Port Essington.

No. 522—♂. Length, 24.5 inches (7/11/86).

Irides, straw-yellow; gape, lore, and cere, light yellow; upper mandible, as far as the posterior margins of the nostrils on the culmen and for a short distance behind them on the sides, black; on the culmen over the nostrils and on the cutting edges just below them are marks of indistinct yellow; lower mandible, with apical third and cutting edges, very dark brown, almost black; remainder pale yellow, brightest posteriorly, and shading into whitish horn anteriorly; inside of tibia, inside and back of tarsus, soles of feet and of toes, pale yellowish green; remainder of feet and legs (except on the outside of the tibia, where there is a short greenish stripe), black; claws, dark brown.

81. HERODIAS ALBA SYRMATOPHORA. White Egret.

Herodias syrmatorphorus (Gould). *Birds Austr.*, Vol. VI., Pt. 56, 1846, New South Wales.

No. 421—♂. Length, 24.9 inches (22/10/86).

Irides, very pale yellow; eyelid, yellow; lores and skin surrounding the eye, yellow, posteriorly shaded with green, which colour is deepest under the eyes; bill, orange, with the tip of the upper mandible horn coloured; legs and feet, black, with a patch of greenish yellow on the inside of the tibia and on the sole of the foot.

No. 429—♂. Length, 38.9 inches (23/10/86).

Similar to the above, but with more yellowish colour on the tibia.

82. NOTOPHOYN NOVAEHOLLANDIAE. White-fronted Heron.

Ardea novae-hollandiae (Latham). *Index, Ornith.*, Vol. II., p. 701, 1790, New South Wales.

No. 201—♀. Length, 24.5 inches. Wings, from tip to tip, 3 feet 4½ inches; from tip of the bill to the end of the toes, 2 feet 6 inches. (27/6/86).

Eyelash, yellowish white; orbital space and lores, bluish lead colour, tinged in front of the eye with mealy yellow; bill—upper mandible, very dark brown; lower mandible, dark brown at the tip and along the cutting edge to the base; sides of lower for two-thirds from the base, whitish horn, shading into the brown of the special third; the skin between the forks of the lower mandible, yellowish white; end of gap, yellow; legs and feet, yellow, with a greenish shade, some of the scales on the lower part of the tarsus and on the top of the middle toe, greenish brown.

No. 210—♀. Length, 24 inches (30/6/86).

Irides, dull yellow tinge; orbital space and eyelash, greenish yellow; lores, ead colour, slightly tinged with yellow posteriorly; bill—upper mandible, black, becoming lighter at the base on the cutting edge; lower mandible, dark brown on th apical third, which colour continues along the cutting edge to the base, remainder of lower mandible, whitish horn colour; legs and feet, dull yellow, with a greenish tinge; some of the scales on the lower part of the tarsus in front and on top of the middle toe, olive brown.

No. 350—♀. Length, 23.3 inches (31/7/06).

82. *MYOLA PACIFICA.* White-necked Heron.

Ardea pacifica (Latham). Index Ornith. Suppl., p. LXV., 1801, New South Wales.

No. 156—♀. Length, 31.8 inches (20/6/86).

Irides, light yellow; bare space round the eye, green; lores, black, with a triangular-shaped mark of green at the base of the upper mandible; bill, black, yellowish white on the under part of the lower mandible.

No. 321—♀. (15/9/86). Irides, light greenish yellow; legs and feet, black.

No. 386—♀. Length, 31 inches (8/8/86).

83. *NYCTICORAX CALEDONICUS AUSTRALASIAE.* Night Heron.

Ardea australasiae (Vieillot). Tabl. Ency. Meth. Ornith., Vol. III., p. 1,130, 1823, New South Wales.

No. 219—♂. Length, 23 inches (26/8/86).

No. 301—♀. Length, 23.5 inches (10/9/86).

86. *DUPETOR FLAVICOLLIS OLIVEI*. Northern Yellow-necked Bittern.

Ardeiralla flavicollis olivei (Mathews). Nov. Zool., Vol. XVIII., p. 234, 1912, Johnston River, Queensland.

No. 428—♂. (23/10/86).

Irides, yellow, brighter next the pupil; lores, brownish olive; upper mandible, dark brown, the lower of the same colour, but tinged in the middle and at the bottom edge with yellowish white; legs and feet, brown above.

No. 452— Length, 25.4 inches (27/10/86).

Further Observation on the Cormorants and Bird Temperatures.

By A. M. Morgan, M.B. Ch. B.

On March 25th, 1916, Capt. S. A. White, on the invitation of Messrs. A. G. and E. S. Rymill, had an opportunity of making extensive observations on the orange faced Cormorant (*Hypolencus varius hypolencus*). I was unfortunately unable to go, but he has kindly handed over his notes to me for publication. The locality visited was a mangrove creek, a few miles north of the Outer Harbour, on the eastern side of St. Vincent's Gulf. Orange-faced cormorants only were found. A large number of birds was measured and dissected.

Stomach contents:—No. 1, Fish bones and seaweed; No. 2, Weedfish; No. 3, 6 Weedfish; No. 4, 2 Flathead; No. 5, 3 Flathead; No. 6, 1 Weedfish; No. 7, 1 Weedfish; No. 8, 1 Flathead; No. 9, 1 Squid; No. 10, 1 Squid; No. 11, 1 Flathead; No. 12, 4 Weedfish, 1 Leatherjacket; No. 13, 1 Toad fish and fish remains; No. 14, 3 Weedfish; No. 15, 1 Weedfish, 1 Flathead; No. 16, 1 Weedfish; No. 17, 1 Weedfish, 1 Tommy Rough; No. 18, 1 Weedfish; No. 19, 1 Flathead; No. 20, 2 Tommy roughs; No. 21, 1 Flathead; No. 22, 2 Squid; No. 24, 1 Flathead, 1

Weedfish; No. 25, 1 Flathead; No. 27, 1 Weedfish, 1 Flathead; No. 28, 1 Weedfish, 1 flathead; No. 29, Fish bones, Cockle shells, and spiral shells; No. 30, 27 Toad fish, and a number of small fish; No. 31, 2 Flathead, 4 Weedfish; No. 32, 1 Leather jacket; No. 33, 1 Flathead and fish bones; No. 34, 1 Flathead; No. 35, 1 Weedfish.

Measurements:— The wing measurement was taken from the axilla to tip of longest primary, for the reason that as this measurement can only be taken on fresh specimens it was considered advisable to take advantage of this opportunity. It would have been better to have taken the measurement from carpus to tip as well, and this will be done if other opportunities occur.

No.	Sex	Total length c.m.	Wing c.m.	Spread c.m.
1	♂	82.25	55.75	121.50
2	♂	76.00	55.75	124.00
3	♀	77.25	53.25	121.50
14	♂	83.50	53.25	121.50
17	♂	73.25	54.50	116.50
19	♀	77.25	55.75	121.50
20	♂	81.00	59.50	124.00
21	♂	82.25	55.75	121.50
22	♂	86.00	55.75	121.50
24	♀	76.00	53.25	114.00
25	♂	82.25	55.75	121.50
27	♀	79.75	51.25	119.00
28	♀	78.25	50.50	112.00

The average measurement of five females is:—Total length, 77.70 c.m.; wing, 52.60 c.m.; spread, 117.60 c.m.; and the average of eight males—Total length, 80.80 c.m.; wing, 55.75 c.m.; spread, 122.80 c.m. The average size of the males is therefore slightly greater than that of the females.

Of the 35 stomachs examined, sixteen contained fish of a marketable species. Two of these contained Tommy roughs (*Arripis georgianus*). As in my experience the Cormorant is a bottom fisher, and the tommy rough only occasionally a bottom feeder, these two may be regarded as accidental. The flathead (*Platycephalus fuscus*), lives entirely upon sandy bottoms. I have but rarely seen cormorants fishing, except over

a weedy bottom, so either the flatheads must sometimes invade the weeds, or the cormorants establish a special fishery where they are numerous. The other nineteen stomachs contained only vermin.

The comparative rarity of females is rather remarkable. Of the 35 birds dissected, only seven were females, and a previous trip of four birds dissected all were males.

—Colours of Soft Parts.—

No. 1 ♂, Spot in front of eye, orange; space around eye, blue; bill, upper mandible, yellowish white; ridge horn colour becoming almost black at base; curved tip, brownish yellow; lower mandible, light yellow; gular pouch, yellowish white. This bird showed slight signs of breeding.

No. 2 ♂, Iris sea green; spot in front of eye, orange; space around eye, pale yellow; top mandible, dark brown; lower, yellowish, gular pouch, pale yellow. Showed no signs of breeding.

Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6 same as No. 2.

No. 8 ♂, bare space in front of eye, orange; bare space around eye, blue; lower eyelid, green; gular pouch, pink; bill, bluish black tip horn colour.

No. 7 and 9 same as 8; No. 10 to 15, same as No. 2; No. 16 to 18 same as 8.

Nos. 16 to 18 same as 8.

No. 19 ♀, Bare spot in front of eye, orange, extending round to the back of the eye; bare space below eye, very bright iridescent shades of blue and green; gular pouch, purplish red; bill, dark bluish black. This bird would have laid within a fortnight.

No. 20, 24, 25, 27, and 28 were the same as No. 8; No. 21 and 22 the same as No. 7. The iris was sea green, and the legs and feet black in all the specimens. The reason for the variation in the soft parts is obscure. Nos. 1 and 19 had very brightly coloured soft parts with black bills, and No. 1 showed slight signs of breeding; No. 2, distinct signs, this would seem to show that it was a breeding phase, but three males examined by us in January last, had brilliant blue periorbital spaces without showing any signs of breeding.

Again, a young bird examined in January had the bill light coloured, and the space about the eye yellow, while two of the birds with yellow eye spaces taken on this trip proved on dissection to be fully adult. The whole subject requires further investigation.

Last Easter, Messrs. A. G. and E. S. Rymill again kindly invited Capt. White and myself to accompany them on another trip into Spencer's Gulf, with the object of examining the cormorant rookery on Dangerous Reef, and visiting the Islands of Sir Joseph Banks group. Unfortunately the weather turned out stormy so that very little work was done, and we were unable to reach either of our objectives. We left Adelaide on the morning of Good Friday, and made straight across the gulf to Stansbury. Here a little dredging was done by Mr. Edgar Waite, Curator of the S.A. Museum, who accompanied us for Ichthyological purposes. On the following day we moved along the coast of the Peninsula to Foul Bay, where a landing was made. This part of the peninsula is almost destitute of bird life, the only specimens procured were a pair of Hooded Dotterels. Early next morning we made for Pondalowie Bay, but were obliged to put into Althorps light for shelter, where we were weather bound for three days. Advantage was taken of our enforced stay here to take the temperatures of Penguins and Mutton birds. The majority of the young mutton birds had left the island, but a few still showing signs of down, remained in the burrows. No old birds were present on the island, but numbers were skimming the waters in its vicinity. On April 27th the weather being somewhat calmer, we made for Pondalowie Bay, where a day and a half was spent. We here investigated the broken shells on top of one of the islands. They are chiefly of four species, viz. *Turbo stramineus*, *Turbo undulatus*, *Purpura succincta*, *Fusus undulatus* and *Haliothis sp.* Three live specimens of *Turbo stramineus* which Mr. Rymill collected from the rocks weighed from eight ounces to 10½ ounces, so that I am of opinion that they could not have been carried up by Pacific gulls, for at Althorpe, one of these birds tried and failed to carry off a piece of fat which at a liberal estimate did not weigh more than 4 ounces. Two other birds which might have been responsible, are the Osprey, and the Sea Eagle, both of which inhabit the islands, and there were at the time of our visit, no Pacific gulls about. This is however not evidence of much value, as none of the shells had

been recently dropped. I noticed that, though the shells were scattered about any suitable rock, the opercula were in heaps at the edge of the cliff, the bird had therefore extracted the mollusc where the shell was broken, and carried it to the edge of the cliff to eat it, this would point to either the Osprey or Sea Eagle being the carrying agent, for both these birds select prominent spots, from which they can see all round, for their feeding places. While at Pondalowie we saw an Osprey pick up something from the sea in its talons, and fly off to the beach to devour it. On Saturday, April 29th, we started on our return, as time would not now allow of our visiting Dangerous Reef, or the Banks Island. Saturday afternoon was spent ashore on Troubridge Island, and four cormerants secured. Capt. White also collected a specimen in immature plumage of the Double banded Dotterel (*Cirrepedesmus bicinctus*).

The cormorants were all of the orange faced species (*H. V. hypoleucus*).

No.	Sex	Total length	Wing axilla to tip	Carpus to tip	Spread	Culmen	Wt.
		c.m.	c.m.	c.m.	c.m.	c.m.	lbs.
1	♂	78.25	47.00	29.25	111.25	7.90	4½
2	♀	74.50	50.50	29.25	117.25	7.00	2½
3	♀	73.25	48.25	29.25	116.50	6.60	3¼
4	♂	83.75	54.25	30.50	124.00	7.20	6½

—Stomach Contents.—

No. 1, Large Leather jacket; No. 2, 1 Small Cuttle fish, fishbones; No. 3, Fish bones, 8 shells of 4 species, mostly cockles; No. 4, 2 Flathead, fish bones.

The shells found in the stomach of No. 4 and No. 29 of the first series were possibly swallowed to assist in the disintegration of the food. Both birds were shot in localities where there were no stones available.

—Temperatures.—

The temperatures of six penguins (*Eudyptula minor undina*) were taken. No. 1, 104.2 F.; No. 2, 100.2 F.; No. 3, 100.2 F.; No. 4, 100.0 F.; No. 5, 100.0 F.; No. 6, 103.0 F.

All were adult birds in full plumage, and all the temperatures were taken in the same manner, and under the same conditions.

Mutton birds (*Neonectris Tenuirostris brevicaudus*). The temperature of eight birds was taken. They were all young birds still showing traces of down, they were all taken under the same conditions:—No. 1, 99.8 F.; No. 2, 99.4 F.; No. 3, 100.2 F.; No. 5, 100.4 F. No. 6, 100.0 F.; No. 7, 101.0 F.; No. 8, 100.8 F. The record of No. 4 has been mislaid. I am unable to account for the variation in the temperatures of the penguins, and to a less degree on the mutton birds; all the birds naturally struggled when captured, but none appreciably more than another.

The temperatures of three leghorn laying hens were taken for comparison. They are in the order taken:—No. 1, 107 F.; No. 2, 107.8 F.; No. 3, 108.4 F. The birds had to be caught in a small yard, so that the one that was chased the most had the highest temperature. This would seem to show that the thermo-taxic mechanism of these birds was unstable, and readily upset by exercise or excitement. The temperature of a Hooded Dotterel, about one minute dead, was 107.

I have not access to any literature on this subject, nor do I know where any is to be obtained, so would be glad if any reader could tell me where such is to be had.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, (Capt.) S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

IX.—THE ORNITHOLOGIST AND SAILOR.

Sandy Cape was rounded before daylight of May 28. The wind during the night had been light, and very little headway had been made. A little after sunrise Lady Elliots Island was abeam of the vessel, and soon afterwards the wind dropped. At 2 p.m. the yacht was rolling about in a dead

calm. Very soon a great many sharks put in an appearance, and came quite close to the sides of the yacht. They sailed round lazily, but would not take a piece of beef which baited a hook for them. It was interesting to watch such a number of these blunt-nosed huge creatures swimming about, with several sucking fish attached to the body of each monster, hanging on to every part—above, beneath, and on the fins. The sharks appeared not to take the slightest notice of them. The suckers attach themselves by the flat tops of their heads, which are provided with a broad, flat top and a flexible rim, which acts in the same manner as a piece of wet leather when applied to a wet surface. When the sucker attaches itself to the upper surface of the shark the backs of the two fish are presented to each other, and the light under surface of the sucker gleams in the water against the dark background formed by the upper surface of the shark. One or two sucking fish were caught with hooks, and measured from 18 to 24 inches in length. Several sharks were struck with harpoons, and they were seen swimming about with great white gashes in their bodies where the iron had struck them, but seemed to take little heed of it. The wind kept very light for the next forty-eight hours, there being just a light air from the N, which enabled the craft to dodge on a little, although she was close up to it.

At noon on the 29th Bustard Head lay right abeam. The sun was beginning to make itself felt as a gentle reminder that the tropics were being approached. The light breeze died away again, and the vessel was becalmed till the afternoon of the 30th, when a light breeze sprang up from the N.E., and later freshened considerably. The captain fastened on to a porpoise, and he was hauled on board. Several sea snakes about five feet long were seen during the morning, and also a very large turtle. During the night the wind died away again, but at daylight next morning it came up from the S.

The nights had been clear and cold, with heavy dews, and the mornings cloudy. By the evening of the 31st the yacht was off Cape Clinton, and the breeze keeping up all night, by daylight the next morning we were among the Cumberland Islands. The wind shifted backwards and forwards from the S. to the S.E., but blew fresh, the weather being typical for the winter in the South Tropics.* The sky was overcast and gloomy all day, and the sea dark and angry looking—this was the first of the trade winds' influence. The vessel

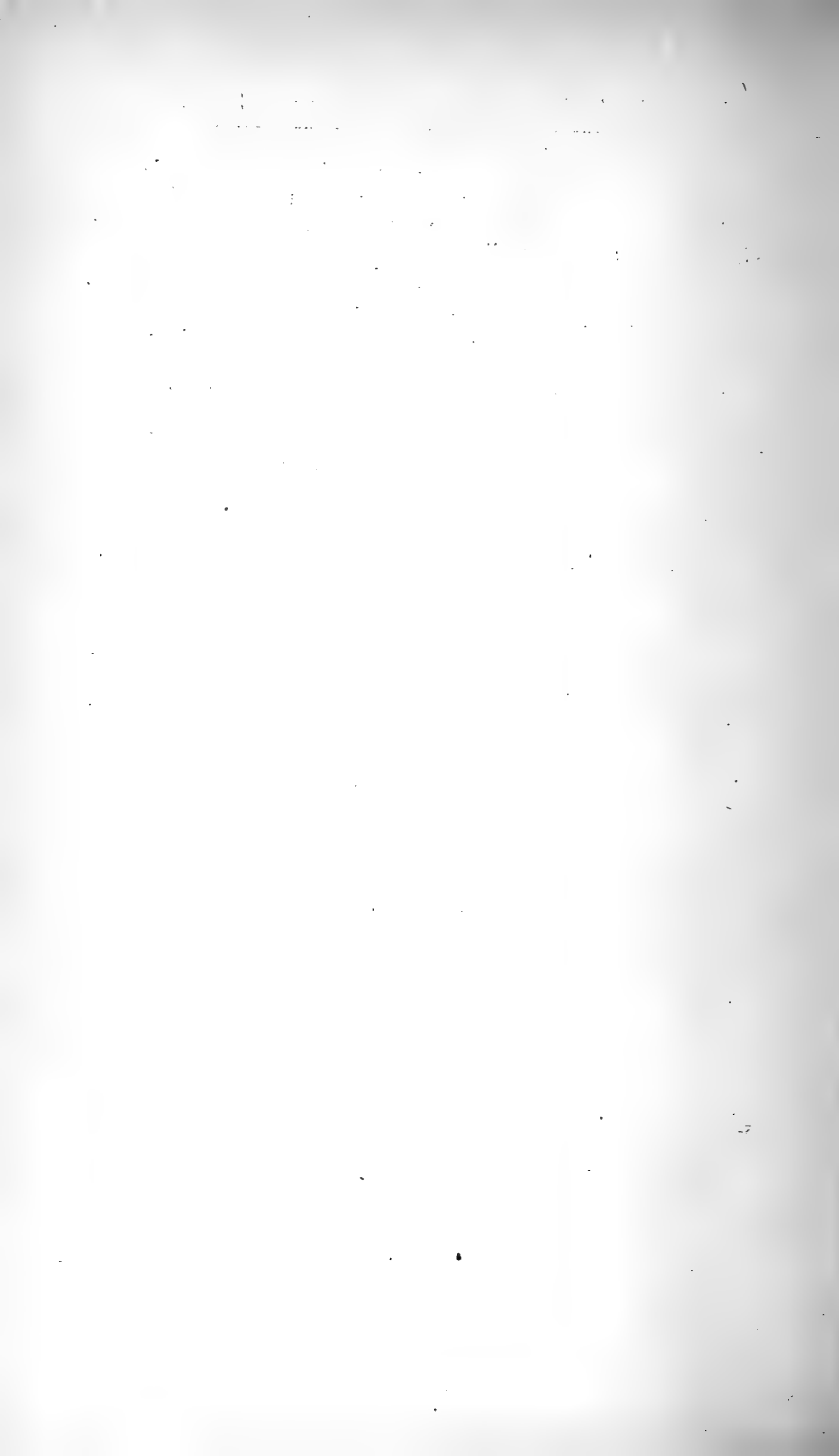
threaded her way all day among the islands, at first through the Percy Islands, and then others. They were desolate looking places; some mere rocks jutting out of the sea, with many sea birds upon them, bearing an inhospitable and barren appearance, and seemingly of an ironstone formation, without timber of any description, but during the afternoon they improved in appearance, and some looked green on the slopes, and it was noticeable that some of the gullies were timbered with pines (*Araucaria*). Later we noticed that dense vegetation of pines and other trees covered the sides of the gullies nearly to the top, and that the islands bore a volcanic appearance. At sundown the yacht, under the orders of the owner, brought up under an island—one of the Cumberland, marked "M Island" on the chart—in five fathoms of water over a sandy bottom, where she lay fairly quietly, it being an inlet on the western side of the island. There was no time to go ashore that night, and next morning the wind blowing strongly made the anchorage unsafe, so there was no alternative but to get under weigh again. During the night it was seen that the scrub and grass on the island was burning in several places, which clearly indicated that there were natives upon it. After getting away at daylight the captain made some mistake in his bearings, and ran into Repulse Bay, but, discovering his mistake in time, hauled to the wind, and weathered Cape Conway. At 2 p.m. we passed the lighthouse and Dent Island, and as two natives came off in a canoe the captain sent a slip to the light keeper to report the boat. After passing the light a course was made around Whitsunday Island, to a nook on the N. side, where Samuel White landed three guns, and went into the scrub, but he was much disappointed, for they saw nothing to collect. Some of the crew landed, and tried out some oil from the blubber of a porpoise which had been harpooned a few days previously. It was late before the men came off, and in the meantime several natives had come on board with some fish, which were gladly purchased, and made a welcome change to the menu. During the evening some of the crew busied themselves fishing, and caught a few very nice fish of several species, some like the red snapper found in the vicinity of Kangaroo Island, S.A. Whitsunday Island is a large one, situated near the mainland, and divided from it by a passage of a few miles. This, like all the islands around it, was of exceeding beauty—like fairylands opening out on every side. Some presented green, grassy slopes, with

wooded gullies, pine-clad hills, clothed with *Araucaria cunninghamii* to the top, and others little sandy beaches, with small flats at the back, over which are scattered beautiful green ornamental trees, like a park. Others again were thickly clothed with jungle and palms. The landing place at Whitsunday Island was very picturesque. After running through a narrow passage between two islands for about two or three miles a sandy beach was seen, and Samuel White gave orders to bring the yacht up, and the anchor was dropped in four fathoms of water, smooth as a lagoon, over a bottom of soft ooze. A landing was made upon a small patch of sandy beach, near a rocky gorge, up which Samuel White and his collectors scrambled for about a mile. On either hand stood points of land or elevated knolls, thickly covered in pines (*Araucaria*), with here and there a slope of golden-green grass, which, from the ship, looked most charming, but on reaching it we found it to be steep and stony, the grass, although green, long and coarse. The place was very bare of bird life, all that were seen were fruit pigeons, pittas, *colluricincla*, *rhypidura*, *campephaga*, and *sericornis*. Next morning at daylight this most energetic ornithologist landed again with his collectors, and in his notes he says: "This morning at daylight three of us landed with guns, and proceeded up the stony gorge to the top of the island, but saw little in bird life. One of my collectors procured a fine White Gosshawk, and two other small birds were taken. I found two species of *Helix*, one about the size of a large marble, marked with light and dark rings, and a small one, which I found attached to the under surface of leaves. We were on board and under weigh again before noon, and the birds collected were preserved. With a strong breeze Port Denison was passed at 2 p.m. We are fairly in the trades now; the weather is not cloudy, but hazy." The yacht was kept under weigh all night, owing to the coast being fairly clear of islands. At eight o'clock Cape Bowling Green was passed, and at four in the morning Cleveland Light; at 2 p.m. the south end of Hinchinbrook Island was abeam. In Samuel White's notes under June 4th he says: "I expect to be at the Barnard Islands early to-morrow; the run yesterday was 157 miles. It is rather remarkable we passed through the Whitsunday Passages on the 111th anniversary of Cook's discovery, he having passed through it on the 3rd of June, 1769. Navigation is much simplified since Cook's time; there are now soundings in every direction,

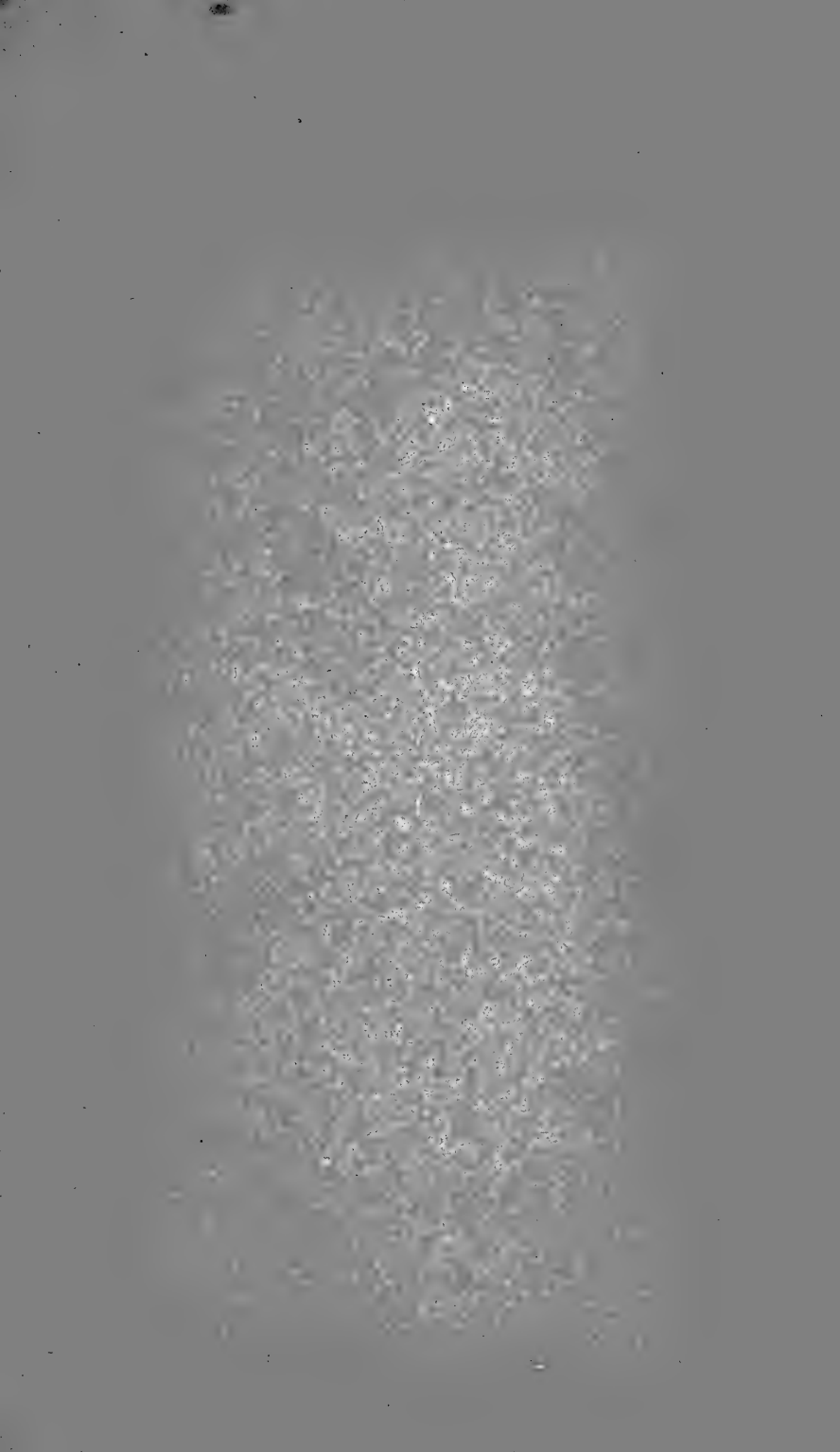
with lights on every dangerous or convenient point. To-day I made up a lot of cartridges, ready for operations on the Barnard Islands, where I expect to find the beautiful and rare rifle bird (*Ptiloris victoriae*.)”

Dunk Island was reached on the 4th, but it was after 11 p.m. before the N.W. side was reached, owing to the wind dying right away. Anchor was dropped under a big rock at the N.W. side of Dunk Island, where the *Elsa* rolled about till four o'clock next morning, when she was under weigh again, with the Barnard Islands in sight. The wind freshened, and the islands were made about eight o'clock, but an anchorage was not reached till after 10 a.m., owing to sailing around two or three times, so as to pick up a smooth one, and it was at last decided that the north-west corner of the middle island, where it was moderately smooth, would answer the best for landing.









A decorative horizontal border with ornate scrollwork and floral motifs at each end, enclosing the text.

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J. H. Riley

Vol. II.

Part 8.

THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
ORNITHOLOGIST,

A Magazine of Ornithology.

1st OCTOBER, 1916.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

R. CROMPTON, R.A.O.U.
A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.
S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.
F. R. ZIETZ, R.A.O.U.

Price, 2/-



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— THE —
South Australian Ornithologist.

VOL. II.]

1ST OCTOBER, 1916.

[PART 8.

The South Australian Ornithological
Association.

JUNE 30, 1916.

A monthly meeting was held. Dr. A. M. Morgan presided over a large attendance. The Hon. Secretary (Mr. F. M. Angel), read an extract from the Government Gazette of June 8, stating that Carlot Lagoon, situated upon the River Murray, above Mannum, was now a bird sanctuary.

Capt. White read interesting notes upon the shell carrying propensity of the Pacific gulls, which had been sent to him by Capt. W. G. Randall of Port Lincoln. A lively discussion took place upon this subject again, and some members were still not convinced that the Pacific gull could carry a live "warrener" (*Turbo stramineus*). Capt. White was requested to make further enquiries. Many bird notes were recorded by members. Mr. J. W. Mellor recorded having seen the young of the white-browed babblers at the Reedbeds early in June. Dr. Morgan stated he had seen two bronze cuckoos hopping about upon the ground after food at Seaton recently. Mr. E. Ashby gave notes upon unusual occurrences of birds at Blackwood. Capt. White stated he had seen the first fan-tailed or brush cuckoos for the season on June 8, and also drew attention to the unusual numbers of Australian orioles this winter upon the Adelaide Plains. Mr. F. Parsons showed bird skins taken at Buckland Park. Amongst them were the allied scrub wren, sacred kingfisher, southern

grass bird, and southern white-eye. Mr. Ashby also exhibited birds from the same district, and gave a short account of the bird life. He also displayed a small collection of bird skins from Western Australia, many of which were rare and interesting. Amongst others were the red-plumed pigeon, Oriental dotterel, rock field-wren, rufous desert-wren. Mr. F. R. Zietz showed a number of bird skins from the museum collection for comparison.

JULY 28, 1916.

A monthly meeting was held, at which Dr. A. M. Morgan presided. Mr. M. Saunders, was elected a member.

Capt. White reported the destruction of swans by the so called aboriginals at the lakes passage, and that action had been taken. A resolution was passed that the Hon. Secretary should write to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and requested him to lose no time in preventing the swans from being killed.

Mr. J. W. Mellor reported having seen a black-backed magpie at Lockleys, and having seen and heard the pallid cuckoo for the first time this season. He also reported the nesting of pied grallinas and white fronted herons at Lockleys. Capt. W. G. Randall was welcomed as a visitor, and he gave some valuable information in reference to the Pacific gulls carrying up shells and letting them fall to abstract the contents. Mr. J. W. Mellor gave an account of a trip he made to Yorke Peninsula in May last, and remarked that all the waders had left the shores and flats, evidently migrating to their nesting haunts. Mr. Mellor showed some bird skins. Capt. White showed bird skins from Yorke Peninsula, and a skin of the Australian fairy prion (*Pseudoprion turtur*), which had been picked up in the paddocks at the Reedbeds after record rough weather. Mr. F. R. Zietz drew attention to the great number of silver gulls which had congregated about the Torrens Weir.

AUGUST 25, 1916.

Dr. A. M. Morgan presided over a monthly meeting. Notice was drawn to a letter from Mr. A. F. Furniss of Morphett Vale, suggesting the destruction of sparrows by means of poisonous gases. Members were of opinion that the experiment would be dangerous, and if successful, would not have much effect upon the vast numbers of these birds.

Mr. T. P. Bellchambers had written stating that the black-throated grebe was nesting upon his dam, and they would not allow the hoary-headed species to alight upon the same water, also that the mallee fowl were nesting very early this season.

Mr. Zietz submitted a list of generic names fixed by the International Zoological Nomenclature Congress.

Discussion took place upon the preservation of bird life especially around the newly gazetted reserve at Carlot Lagoon, on the River Murray. The position in regard to their leased lands was explained by Capt. White.

Mr. S. Sanders exhibited a case of mounted birds, and his work was greatly admired. Mr. E. Ashby showed two rare crimson finches (*Neochmia phaeton* and *N. phaeton albiventris*). The following species came in for discussion during the evening:—*Myiagra rubecula* (leaden flycatcher), *M. rubecula ringwoodi* (Victorian leaden flycatcher), *M. rubecula yorkei* (Northern leaden flycatcher), *M. rubecula broomi* (Western blue flycatcher), *M. nitida* (Satin flycatcher), *M. latirostris* (broad-billed flycatcher), *M. latirostris kempii* (Cape York broad-billed flycatcher), *Machaerirhynchus flaviventer* (Yellow-breasted flycatcher), *M. flaviventer secundus* (Cairns yellow-breasted flycatcher). Mr. F. R. Zietz showed specimens of these birds from the S.A. Museum collection, Mr. Ashby and Capt. White from their private collections.

Order Passeriformes, Family Prionopidae, Genus *Colluricincla*.

Colluricincla harmonica.—The grey shrike thrush.

Description. Adult male.—Upper surface.—Forehead, crown, and back of the neck, dark grey, the feathers of the forehead and crown with a dark line down the centre; back and shoulders, olive brown; upper tail coverts and tail, grey; lores, white.

Under Surface.—Throat, greyish white; breast, light grey, gradually fading to greyish white on the abdomen and under tail coverts; thighs, grey.

Wing.—Upper wing coverts, grey; primaries, dark brown, the outer webs fringed with grey, and the basal portions of the inner webs broadly fringed with white.

Bill.—Black.

Legs and Feet.—Black.

Iris.—Dark Brown.

Adult Female.—Differs from the male in having the throat striped longitudinally, in the absence of the white lores, and in having an ill-defined, whitish, superciliary stripe.

Bill.—Upper mandible very dark brown; lower mandible, horn colour.

Young.—Resembles the female, but the whole of the under surface is striped, the superciliary stripe is more defined, and of a light buff colour—there is a ring of white feathers surrounding the eye, and the upper wing coverts and secondaries are fringed with olive brown on their outer webs.

Total length (of skin), 230 m.m.; bill, 22 m.m.; wing 123 m.m.; tail, 97 m.m.; tarsus, 31 m.m

In Mr. Ashby's collection is a female in male plumage, and a male in female plumage, both from the Black Spur, Victoria. The male is probably an immature bird. The female may be one of those exceptional cases in which the male plumage has been assumed, or it may be the rule for very old females to assume it. Unfortunately, as is so often the case with common birds, there is not enough material available in Adelaide to settle the point.

Distribution.—This bird, or one of its sub-species, inhabits the whole of the eastern portion of Australia, including Tasmania and Kangaroo Island; the bird inhabiting South Australia being known as *Colluricincla harmonica victoriæ*. West of Spencer's Gulf its place is taken by an allied species *Colluricincla rufiventris*. The range of the present bird extends to the northern extremity of the Flinders' Range.

Habits.—They are found in pairs in fairly thick scrub country or forest land; in the interior they live mostly in the gum creeks or rocky gullies of the ranges. About Adelaide they are still common in the public parks and gardens, and in many private gardens if there be cover for them. They do not migrate, and a pair will remain and nest for years

about the same spot. They are quiet and retiring in their habits, and were it not for their pretty whistle, they would often be missed.

Flight.—Undulating and not very swift—they seldom do more than fly from tree to tree, or from tree to ground.

Song.—A melodious whistle, very clear and loud. It can hardly be called a song, as it consists generally of only six or seven notes. A common sequence is three notes whistled slowly, then two lower pitched uttered quickly, ending with a final high pitched note. The young for some time after leaving the nest utter a single mournful “squark.”

Food.—Entirely animal, consisting of insects of all orders, spiders, and worms. Much of the food is taken upon the ground, where they can often be seen quietly scratching amongst the dead leaves and fallen bark, etc.

Nest.—The nest is built in a variety of situations, such as the top of an old stump, the bole of a mistletoe, a thick clump of leaves, on the top of an old babbler's (*Pomatostomus*) nest, niches in cliffs, and nests have been found near houses on a window sill, and in an old billycan in a shed. The nest is generally not more than ten feet from the ground, often within reach of the hand, but they occasionally build much higher—a pair is at present building in a pine tree in the park lands at a height of 30 feet. The building material is generally strips of bark throughout, the lining strips being finer and nicely smoothed down. Sometimes grass is used for a lining; when near habitation, pieces of waste paper, rags, and string are largely used. They are very particular about the nest being touched or even looked at. It is often deserted and sometimes pulled to pieces after such an occurrence. The breeding season extends from the middle of August to the end of November, two broods being reared in the season. Young have been known to be hatched as early as June.

Eggs.—Usually three in number, occasionally four, and rarely only two. The ground colour of the eggs is white, sometimes with a faint tinge of cream, the spots are of a very dark brown to purplish black colour; they are large and sparsely distributed, sometimes forming an irregular zone at the larger end; they are irregular in shape, but in some eggs have a tendency to become longitudinally streaks, and occasionally zig-zag lines are seen.

Average measurement of 14 eggs, 2.92 c.m. x 2.06 c.m.; largest egg, 2.90 c.m. x 2.20 c.m.; smallest egg, 2.80 c.m. x 2.15 c.m.

Birds of the North and North-West of Australia.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E., F.L.S., M.B.O.U.

No. 7.

88. CHENISCUS PULCHELLUS. Green Goose Teal.

Nettapus pulchellus Gould, Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.) 1841, p. 89, Port Essington.

No. 242—♀. Length, 12 inches (13/7/86).

No. 244—♀. Length, 13.2 inches (13/7/86).

No. 273—♂. Length, 13.4 inches (11/7/86).

Irides, fine brown; eyelid, black. Bill, upper mandible, black, becoming very dark brown towards the point; nail, flesh-coloured, tinged with brown, chiefly on top; edge of upper mandible for two-thirds its length from the base and a small spot about half way down the bill and near the edge, fleshy-white; lower mandible, flesh-colour, with two spots at the back of the nail; base of mandible and some irregular spots between the lores of the bill, brown; legs, feet and webs very dark brown with a stripe on the outside of the tarsus, a spot on the inside of the tibia, a line on each side of the middle toe and on the outside of the inner toe, light olive.

They are very lively swimmers in their quick movements over the water, and somewhat resemble the *Grebes* in this respect. Wounded birds do not dive to escape being taken. They do not leave the water, but feed along the edge.

No. 256—♂. Length, 13.1 inches (2/8/86).

No. 279—♀. Length, 13.2 inches (18/7/86).

No. 312—♂. Length, 12.7 inches (26/7/86).

88. CHENONETTA JUBATA. Wood Duck.

Anas Jubata Latham. Index, Ornith. Suppl., p. LXIX 1801, New South Wales,

No. 416—♂. Length, 19.4 inches (20/10/86).

Irides, dark brown; bill, black; legs and feet, ochre.

No. 417—♀. Length, 18.2 inches.

Irides, dark brown; bill, olive; legs and feet, lightest lead.

No. 532—♀. Length, 18.7 inches (9/11/86).

No. 533—♀. (9/11/86).

89. DENDROCYGNA JAVANICA GOULDI. Whistling Duck.

Dendrocygna Gouldi Gould. Handb. Birds Austr. Vol. II., p. 374, 1865, Port Essington.

No. 285—♀. Length, 16.6 inches (19/7/86).

Irides, brown; bill, black; lower mandible of a lighter colour; the basal portion of the cutting edge of the upper mandible, light slate colour; legs and feet, bluish slate.

89. LEPTOTARSIS EYTONI. Plumed Whistling Duck.

Leptotarsis eytoni. Eyton. Monogr. Anat., p. III., 1838, North-west Australia.

No. 142—♂. Length, 17.3 inches (17/6/86).

Irides, orange, shading into yellow round the pupil; eyelashes, yellow; bill, upper mandible, pink splashed with black in an irregular form, lower mandible, pink, spotted here and there with black; nail, horn colour; feet, webs and legs pale pink; nails, light brown.

No. 144—♂. Length, 17.3 inches (17/6/86).

No. 146—♂. Length, 17.3 inches (17/6/86).

Young. Irides, dull yellow; eyelashes, greenish yellow; bill, upper mandible, bluish flesh-colour, splashed with brown, where in the adult it is black, and showing small spots of black; lower mandible, bluish flesh-colour; nails, horn colour; feet, webs and legs, dirty yellowish flesh colour.

When approached they stretch out their necks, after the manner of the goose tribe, and move it slowly backwards and forwards, occasionally giving a whistle as they walk off.

No. 147—♀. Length, 17.1 inches (same as No. 146).

No. 262—♂. Length, 17.9 inches (2/9/86).

No. 265—♂. Length, 18 inches (16/7/86).

No. 267—♀. Length, 18.5 inches (16/7/86).

91. *ANAS SUPERCILIOSA* ROGERSI. Black Duck.

Anas superciliosa rogersi Mathews. Austral. Av. Rec. Vol. I., p. 33, 1912, Augusta, South-west Australia.

No. 249—♂. Length, 19 inches (14/7/86).

No. 260—♂. Length, 21.7 inches (2/9/86).

Irides, clear brown; bill, upper mandible, leaden olive, clive on basal portion of culmen; a spot over each nostril, and the nail black; lower mandible, olive brown, the bill bordered near the feathers with a black line; legs and feet, brown ochre; webs, darker.

No. 264—♀. Length, 20.7 inches (3/9/86).

Irides, brown; bill, upper mandible, leaden olive, stripe on the cutting edge, a spot under each nostril, and the nail, black; lower mandible, lead colour, the basal half and the skin black; legs and feet, ochre brown, tinged with blue on the front of the tarsus.

91. *VIRAGO CASTANEA* ROGERSI. Western Teal.

Nettion castaneum rogersi Mathews. Austral. Av. Rec. Vol. I., p. 86, 1912, North-West Australia.

No. 263—♀. Length, 15.9 inches (16/7/86).

No. 333—♂. Length 17.3 inches (16/9/86).

92. *MALACORHYNCHUS MEMBRANACEUS*. Pink-eared Duck.

Anas membranacea Latham. Index. Ornith, Suppl. p. LXIX, 1801, New South Wales.

No. 479—♀. Length, 15.3 inches (31/10/86).

Irides, brown; bill, lead, becoming lighter at the base of the upper mandible; lower mandible, light lead, with the apical third, whitish, the membrane black; tarsi and toes, light lead, darker on the joints, the webs, except just near the toes, dark lead.

No. 480—♂. Length, 16.5 inches (31/10/86).

No. 481—♀. Length, 15.4 inches (31/10/86).

No. 483—♂. Length, 15.9 inches 31/10/06).

Its flight is very powerful and swift, and it has a peculiar whistling note while flying or when disturbed. They are easily procured, being by no means wary. They are excellent eating. They are very fat, but their crops contained nothing

but gravel. The extent of white at the tip of the lower mandible varies much; in some it forms a narrow line round the apical third, in others it extends almost quite across; in others this part has a fleshy tint.

No. 523—♂. Length, 16.4 inches (7/11/86).

No. 525—♂; Length, 16.5 inches (7/11/86).

No. 534—♂. Length, 16.2 inches (9/11/86).

93. *NYROCA AUSTRALIS*. White-eyed Duck.

Nyroca australis Eyton. Monogr. Anat. p. 160, 1838, New South Wales.

No. 292—♀. Length, 19 inches (20/7/86).

Irides, with three rings, the inner and outer of light brown, the middle one white; bill, upper mandible, black for about two-thirds of its length, where it is crossed by an irregular bluish-slate coloured band, tip, freckled brown and slate; nail, brown; lower mandible, slate, irregularly spotted with brown; tarsi and toes, light slate, splashed here and there with a darker tint; webs of a darker slate than the toes, but a line on each side of the toes on the web of the same colour as the tarsi.

No. 385—♀. Length, 18.5 inches (16/7/86).

Irides, white; upper mandible with the basal portion, black; anterior portion, pale bluish-white, and a margin of the same colour round the lower edge of the nostrils; nail, black; lower mandible and nail, very dark brown, crossed by a band of bluish-white; tarsi, slaty brown, with a large patch in front, dirty white; toes, dirty white shaded with brown at their points; webs, black, but with a stripe adjoining and running along the middle and outer toes, dirty white; inner web of the inner toe, dirty white, edged with black; tarsal, toe, dirty white; its web, black; nails, dark brown, lighter at the base.

95. *MESOCARBO ATER ATER*. Little Black Cormorant.

Carbo ater Lesson Traite d'Orn. p. 604, 1831, Shark's Bay, West Australia.

No. 248—♂. Length, 26.1 inches (31/8/86).

Irides, fine green; bill, white horn, becoming brown on and all along the culmen, and showing bluish lines on the sides of the lower mandible, skin at the base of the bill and gular pouch, lead colour; feet and webs, black.

Twenty or so of these birds fish, and as soon as one secures a fish, the others chase him and sometimes force him to drop it, when it is immediately seized by another.

No. 250—♀. Length, 24.4 inches (31/8/86).

No. 251—♀. Length, 24.3 inches (21/8/86).

No. 423—♀. Length, 23.6 inches (22/10/86).

Irides, green; bill, lead colour, with the culmen black and lower mandible finely lined irregularly with a darker shade of lead; legs and feet, black.

97. *MICROCARBO MELANOLEUCUS MELVILLENSIS*. Northern Little Cormorant.

Carbo melanoleucus melvillensis Mathews. Austral Av. Rec. Vol. 1., p. 74, 1912, Melville Island.

No. 422—♂. Length, 23 inches (22/10/86).

Irides, very dark brown; bill, ochre, with the culmen and tip dark brown, inside of the bill, orange, and of mouth, pale lead; lores and the skin surrounding the eye, dull olive.

No. 450—♀. Length, 22.6 inches (27/10/86).

Notes on the Genus *Epthianura*.

BY A. M. MORGAN, M.B., Ch.B.

In the Emu (Vol. XII., p. 205) Mr. Gregory M. Mathews proposed the division of the genus *Epthianura* into three genera.

To a field ornithologist the three common species *E. albifrons*, *E. tricolor*, and *E. aurifrons* form so compact and natural a genus, that it is difficult to believe they can be separated on structural grounds. These birds all inhabit similar situations, the nests are indistinguishable from one another, as are the eggs, and their flight, food, and habits are the same. Mr. Mathews' reasons for the separation are:—

1. Difference in colour. This is his principal reason. Structural differences were searched for for confirmation.

2. *E. tricolor* has a longer and more slender bill than *E. albifrons*, shorter claws, and a shorter first primary.

3. *E. aurifrons* has a more curved bill, shorter and more rounded wings, with comparatively longer first primaries, and more slender legs.

He includes in the last group *E. lovensis* (Ashby) and *E. crocea* (Gould), though agreeing with Mr. North in the separation of *E. lovensis* as *ishbia*, with this last I also agree, on structural grounds. With *E. crocea* I have no field, and very little cabinet experience, so I offer no opinion as to its position. Mr. Mathews' observations are somewhat difficult to criticise as he, as usual, neither gives measurements, nor states number of specimens examined. To take Mr. Mathews' first reason for separation, viz.—colour. It is quite true that the colours are different, but the colour pattern is not, with the exception of the black pectoral band in *E. albifrons* it is almost identical. Curiously enough, this black band is present, in a modified form, in *E. crocea*, the colour pattern of which is otherwise markedly different. As Mr. Mathews has abandoned colour *per se* as of generic taxonomic value, in favour of colour pattern, I presume he will not himself insist upon this reason for separation.

To find out how far his alleged structural differences, trivial as they are, existed I measured nine specimens of *E. albifrons*, and fifteen each of *E. tricolor*, and *E. aurifrons*, with the following results:—*E. tricolor* has a longer bill. This is correct; The measurements were taken from the junction of the feathers and horny bill to the tip. The average length of the bill of *E. albifrons* is 10.32 m.m., and that of *E. tricolor*, 11.41 m.m.—there is therefore a difference of 1.09 m.m. in favour of *E. tricolor*. The individual variation in *E. albifrons* is 10 to 11 m.m., and in *E. tricolor*, 11 to 13 m.m. *E. tricolor* has a more slender bill. This is wrong. The average width of the horny bill in *E. albifrons* is 3.75 m.m., and in *E. tricolor* it is 3.80 m.m., so that the bill in the latter is somewhat broader. If Mr. Mathews means relatively more slender, though he does not say so, he is right to a limited extent, the proportion of width to length in *E. albifrons* is 1 to 2.75, and in *E. tricolor*, 1 to 3. This is less than the individual variation, which in each species is 1 to 2.50 to 1 to 4. The bill of *E. tricolor* is in fact, slightly larger in all dimensions than that of *E. albifrons*.

E. tricolor has shorter claws. This is wrong. The average length of the middle claw of *E. albifrons* is 4.28 m.m., and that of *E. tricolor*, 4.42 m.m., or 0.14 m.m. longer. The

individual variation in *E. albifrons* is from 3.50 m.m. to 6 m.m., and in *E. tricolor*, 4 to 5 m.m.

E. tricolor has shorter first primaries. The first primary was measured with compasses from insertion to tip. It varies in *E. albifrons* from 11.50 to 17 m.m., and in *E. tricolor*, from 8 to 16. The average of *E. albifrons* being 13.83, and in *E. tricolor*, 11.75—a difference of 2.12 m.m. in favour of *E. albifrons*. This difference is much less than the individual variation, and a longer series might easily reverse the order, as it is quite easy to pick out specimens of *E. albifrons* with much shorter primaries than others of *E. tricolor*.

E. aurifrons has a more curved bill. This is wrong. The curvature of the bills was estimated by making a tracing of the culmen on paper, joining the ends of the curve by a straight line, and measuring the height of the arc. There is no difference in the curvature of the bills.

E. aurifrons has a shorter wing. This is correct. The average length of the wing measured from carpus to tip is in *E. albifrons*, 68.5 m.m., in *E. tricolor*, 66.90 m.m., and in *E. aurifrons*, 62.91 m.m., or 5.61 m.m. in favour of *E. albifrons*.

E. aurifrons has a more rounded wing. This is a matter of opinion. Personally, I think it is somewhat more rounded, while others whose opinion I have asked think that there is no difference. The difference at any rate is very slight, and if present, is brought about by the relative greater length of the seventh primary. The wing formula of the three species is otherwise identical, viz.—third, fourth, and fifth primaries longest and practically co-equal, 2nd and 6th co-equal, and slightly shorter. It is, however, not constant. In some specimens, the third, and in some the fourth is absolutely the longest by the fraction of a m.m. It even differs in the two wings in some skins.

E. aurifrons has comparatively longer first primaries. This is correct. The average length of the first primary is 12.84 m.m., varying from 11 to 16 m.m. There is therefore, no material difference in the actual length from the other two species, but as the wing is shorter, the first primary is necessarily relatively longer than in them.

E. aurifrons has more slender legs. This is wrong. There is no difference in the thickness of the legs in the three species. These parts do not admit of accurate measurement in skins, as the epidermis dries in wrinkles, and the legs are not of equal diameter throughout their length.

Two only of Mr. Mathews' differences are constant—a slightly larger bill in *E. tricolor*, and a shorter wing in *E. aurifrons*.

If new genera are to be accepted on such grounds as these, species will have to be abolished as a division in ornithology, and what we now call species will become genera—for I should think there are very few species in which such differences could not be discovered by careful search.

A Sketch of the Life of Samuel White— Ornithologist, Soldier, Sailor, and Explorer.

BY HIS SON, (Capt.) S. A. WHITE, M.B.O.U.

X. THE ORNITHOLOGIST AND SAILOR.

So soon as possible after the yacht came to anchor a boat was put off, and Samuel White with two of his collectors landed on the eastern island, and to the ornithologists' great delight, they secured several rifle birds (*Ptiloris paradisea victoriae*) all in good plumage. One can understand the keen delight these lovely birds gave my father, especially to capture them in their natural habitat. The collectors came off to the vessel at sunset, and the owner gave orders to lay at anchor for a few days. Samuel White in his notes says, "The island I was on was a small one about half a mile long, very scrubby, from the sea to top, and thickly matted with vines, and almost impregnable in places. The birds were few, there being but three or four species, the rifle birds were moderately numerous for that family of birds on such a small island. The whole island was scratched over by megapodes, consequently there were no land shells seen. I saw several large logs of cedar lying on the beach. The weather was very unpleasant. Squalls of rain began after dark last night, and continued all day."

The next day Samuel White remained on board, and served out the week's stores, and skinned a dozen or more birds. Some of the crew went on shore. The collectors landed on one of the islands, but came off at midday without

having secured anything. They went off again in the afternoon and returned after dark with only one bird between them and complained most bitterly of the roughness of the place. In his notes under the heading of June 7th, 1880, Samuel White says, "This morning three of us landed on separate islands, I went on No. 1, and secured five birds, Messrs. Cockerell and Andrews only procured one each off the two main islands. We returned in the afternoon, and went out again, but got nothing. This is our last day here. We have worked all the islands, and I have secured some good skins for my collection. The Barnard Islands lay in a line off shore in a direction a little N. of E. The middle island is the smallest. All three are very steep on the sides and stony, and covered to the top with small timber of various kinds, including *Castanospermum*, and other trees with dense undergrowth all matted together with vines and "Lawyers." In some places I saw the tree hibiscus with large yellow flowers, cabbage palms pandanus, and some fine specimens of native banana. The leaves of this plant would measure two feet broad, and ten to fifteen feet long. On the South side of No. 1 island I found a nice spring of fresh water with a kind of couch grass growing around it, this spring appeared to me to be permanent. The soil seems to be a clay of a dark red or grey brown, which turns up in small nodules as the megapodes scratch it about. Although all three islands are covered in a dense mass of vegetation, the fauna was meagre, the scrubs were dark and noiseless, with the exception of the occasional call of a megapode, the rifle bird being the only thing that was attractive to me. Of butterflies I only saw two species, and few of those, land shells and beetles I saw none, a few dead marine shells were collected with a few crabs. The Barnard Islands were places I had long wished to see, and my visit has been a successful one, for I have secured some splendid specimens of the rare rifle bird. The master had the men bringing off firewood this afternoon, and we are ready for a start in the morning. The weather to-day, although cloudy, was free from rain." After having been at anchor for three days under the small middle island in six fathoms of water over sand mud the yacht was got under weigh again at an early hour on the morning of the 8th with a light wind which soon freshened, and by two p.m. the vessel was between Cape Grafton and Fitzroy Island. One of the collectors, Mr. Andrews, was very unwell from the effects of fatigue and exposure on the Barnard Islands, the work from

all appearances seemed too much for him. At this stage Samuel White makes the following note, "I am now sorry that I brought Andrews. None but very hardy men are fit for this work, some of the crew are complaining." When passing Cape Grafton several natives were seen running along the beach, and their camp fires were plainly seen. A few minutes before sunset the yacht brought up on the N.W. side of Double Island. Samuel White took a boat, and pulled on to the island to the S.W. where there was a sand spit. Many sea birds were seen, and *Ptilotis versicolor* heard, but it was too dark to do any collecting, and it was long after dark before he returned. The land passed during the day appeared mountainous, wild, and rugged, thinly timbered, and very rocky, rocks or bare earth appeared in every direction, the whole country bore a cheerless and inhospitable appearance. Upon passing Fitzroy Island to the West a nice sandy bay appeared on the N. side well sheltered from the S.E. "trades." The island is of considerable extent, very stony, and but lightly wooded. After passing Fitzroy Island, Green Island appeared on the starboard side—a low sandy islet of coral formation, covered with bush and a few small trees. Here the Torres straits pigeons assemble in the breeding season (which is about November) in vast flocks until the whole island is a mass of white birds, and a stick thrown amongst them cannot fail to bring down several. The flesh of this pigeon is good food, but not equal in delicacy to the ground pigeons, the pigeons in question being strictly a fruit eater, living in the trees, and never descending to the ground. Next morning before dawn the yacht was under weigh again with a light wind, and soon after daylight the curious and remarkable peak which attracted the attention of that great navigator Capt. Cook over a hundred years ago about this time of the year which was named the "Peter Bottle" came in sight with a coil of mist around its neck. The wind continued light. At 10 a.m. Cape Tribulation showed up, and a large steamer passed (one of the Dutch boats) and the officers seemingly knew the yacht for they waved their caps for some time. It was hoped that Cook Town would have been reached before dark, but this was impossible for there were 50 miles to go, and the wind was very light. The weather was beautiful and fine with the wind very light. Later on the wind freshened, so Cook Town was made that evening. The anchorage was not picked up very easily, so a pilot came out and boarded the yacht, and brought her up to her moorings.

Next morning when daylight broke it was found the yacht was brought up near the powder magazine under the hill. The tradespeople brought off fresh stores, and Samuel White went on shore to see the customs, pay for pilot, etc. In his notes Samuel White says "I was not interested in the town, where I saw a number of Chinamen, and was told they made good citizens, and that I could procure Chinese labour for 20/ per month. Although I wanted six more men I did not venture to fill up with Chinamen, for I wanted collectors, and according to my experience of the mongolian race they are too meek and averse to shedding blood to make good collectors, and seem to lack the savage pleasure of hunting and taking life which is so strongly shown in the "Britisher." The country about Cook Town at the time was hilly, forest country, in places coarse grass was growing, and many of the deep gullies further inland were filled with dense dark scrub. The country along the seashore improved as one proceeded to Trinity Bay. The hills were clothed in dense green vegetation. The harbour of Cook Town is well situated when once a vessel is over the bar, but here the water shoals to one fathom at low water tide, but at high-water there is about 20 ft. on it. Where the yacht lay at anchor there were two fathoms over mud. Telegrams having been sent, and answers received, Samuel White went on board, and next morning about 6.30 the *Elsa* was under weigh again, some delay having been caused through fouling the moorings when the anchor was heaved. The pilot came on board, and with a strong breeze the yacht was soon out of his jurisdiction. After weathering Cape Bedford, the vessel was eased off, and at 2 p.m. had passed Lizard Island and stood over to the Howick Group. The wind was very fresh from S. of E., and No. 3 Island of the Howick Group was reached half an hour before sunset; the anchor was dropped in seven fathoms of water when the vessel lay moderately still.

Samuel White had a boat lowered, and accompanied by Messrs. Cockerell and Andrews, landed on the N.W. end of the island, which lies low and sandy. There was little to collect, and by dark the two collectors had not secured a thing, while their chief had secured half a dozen honey eaters. They were mostly *Ptilotis versicolor*. They were procured in a broad leaved bush which was growing very thickly on the extreme N.W. end of the island. Next day, the 12th, sail was again made at an early hour, but the wind was not so good as

on the previous day, and only 90 miles were made. At noon Flinders Group was passed, and just then there arose a dense cloud of mist or smoke, and Samuel White remarking upon it in his notes, says:—"The officers thought it was dust and that they smelt dust, but it appeared to me like smoke; however, they, fearing a 'buster,' lowered the topsails and stood by for a general take in. Soon an unmistakable smell of smoke and pieces of ashes dispelled the delusion, when up went the topsails again. Towards mid-day, the wind freshened, and we are in hopes of reaching No. 1 Clermond Island to-night where I intend staying to visit the great Egret's rookeries. The wind has been a good deal easterly which has caused us to jibe several times. At 2 p.m. to-day I reckon we are about 15 miles from No. 1 Island." Just before sunset the island was reached, and the yacht brought up in eight fathoms over sand and mud, about the fifth of a mile from the shore. A boat was swung out, and Samuel White was pulled ashore, landing on a sand bank on the N.W. corner of the island. Between this and the high land lay a broad flat the whole length of the island, covered at high water, and on which grew mangrove trees in large and thick masses, their roots intertwining into great impenetrable barriers. The mangrove tree when growing singly presents the appearance of growing, or standing on numerous legs like a gigantic spider, but when growing in thick belts, the trees appear to be standing on a vast bed of brushwood to which are attached thousands of oysters and other shell-fish, and underneath crawl a variety of crustaceae over mud that would in places sink a man to the middle in black stinking ooze. While overhead in the tall mangroves (some up to 40 feet in height) large rookeries of Ibis Spoon-bill Cranes and Egrets, with their families in all stages were seen, producing a deafening clatter, and babel of voices which varied from the harsh croak of the adult bird to the faint squeak of the featherless "squab." Their rough nests composed of sticks were stuck about carelessly in every direction, and the repulsive looking slimy excreta which covered every leaf and branch could be smelt a mile away to leeward. It was noticed that each species had its own rookery separate from the others, with here and there a colony of flying foxes which kept up an incessant chattering and squeaking—a noise something between the chattering of a monkey and the harsh squeak of an opossum. They hung in hundreds to the branches by their hind claws, with their heads downwards, and snapped at each

other. These animals have a repulsive appearance and disagreeable odour in their fur; they live entirely upon fruit and vegetable diet, and to those who are not prejudiced against them they form an excellent article of food, they are in fact, delicious. The flesh is white, tender, and exceedingly fat; the carcase would weigh several pounds, and a stretch of wing up to four feet. Little more could be done than a look round for darkness came on, and the wind began to rise, so the party went on board again.

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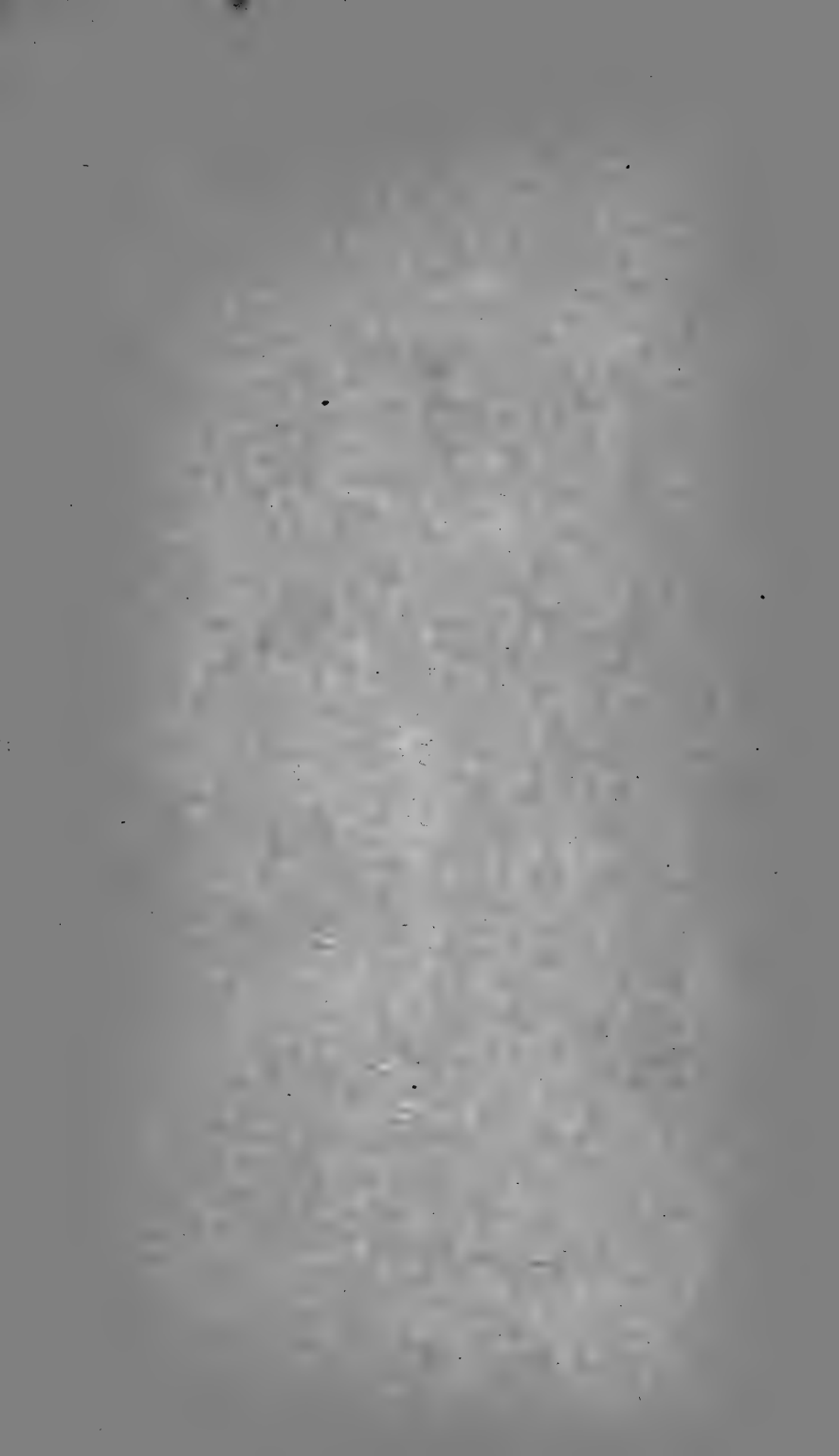
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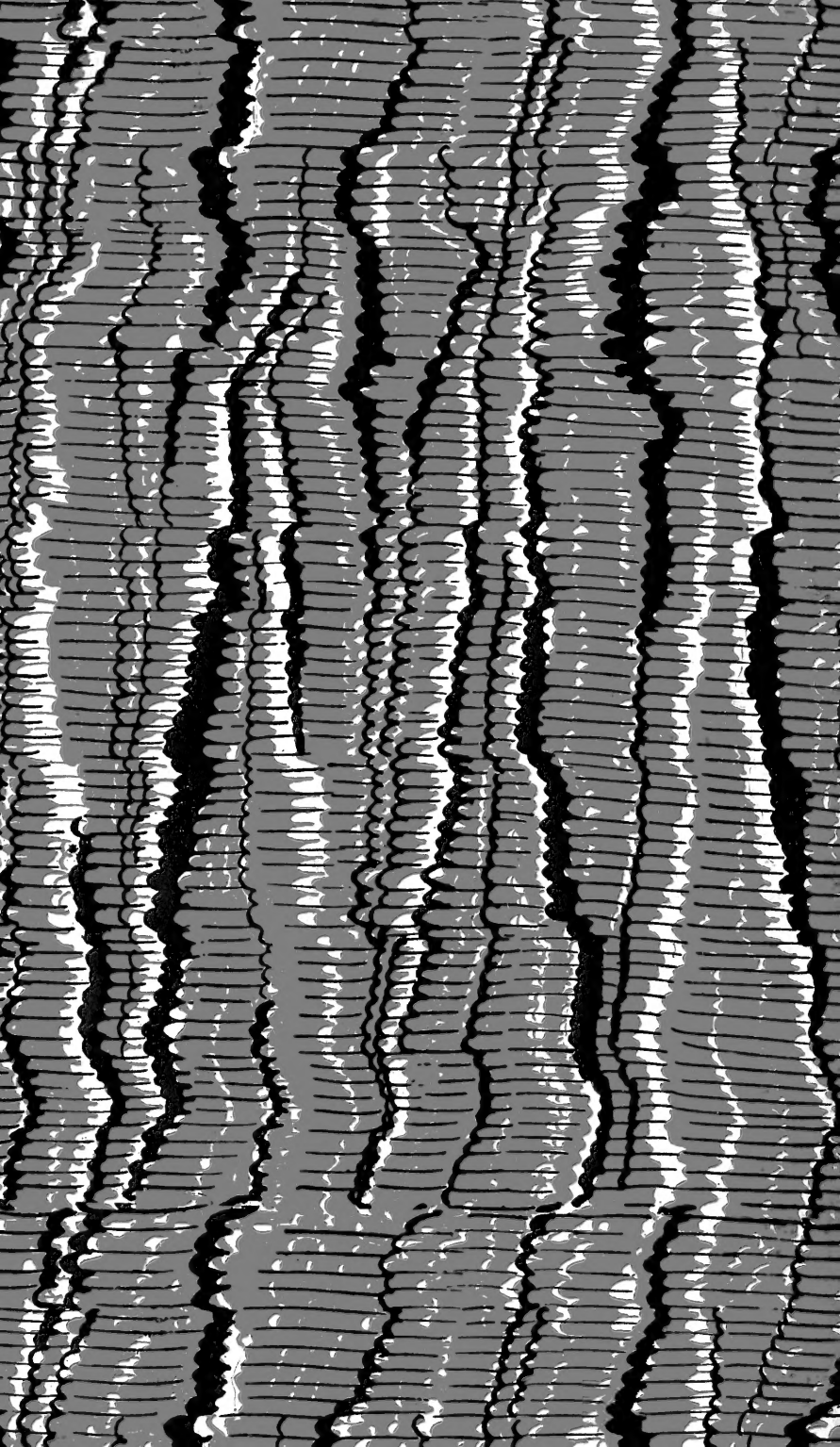
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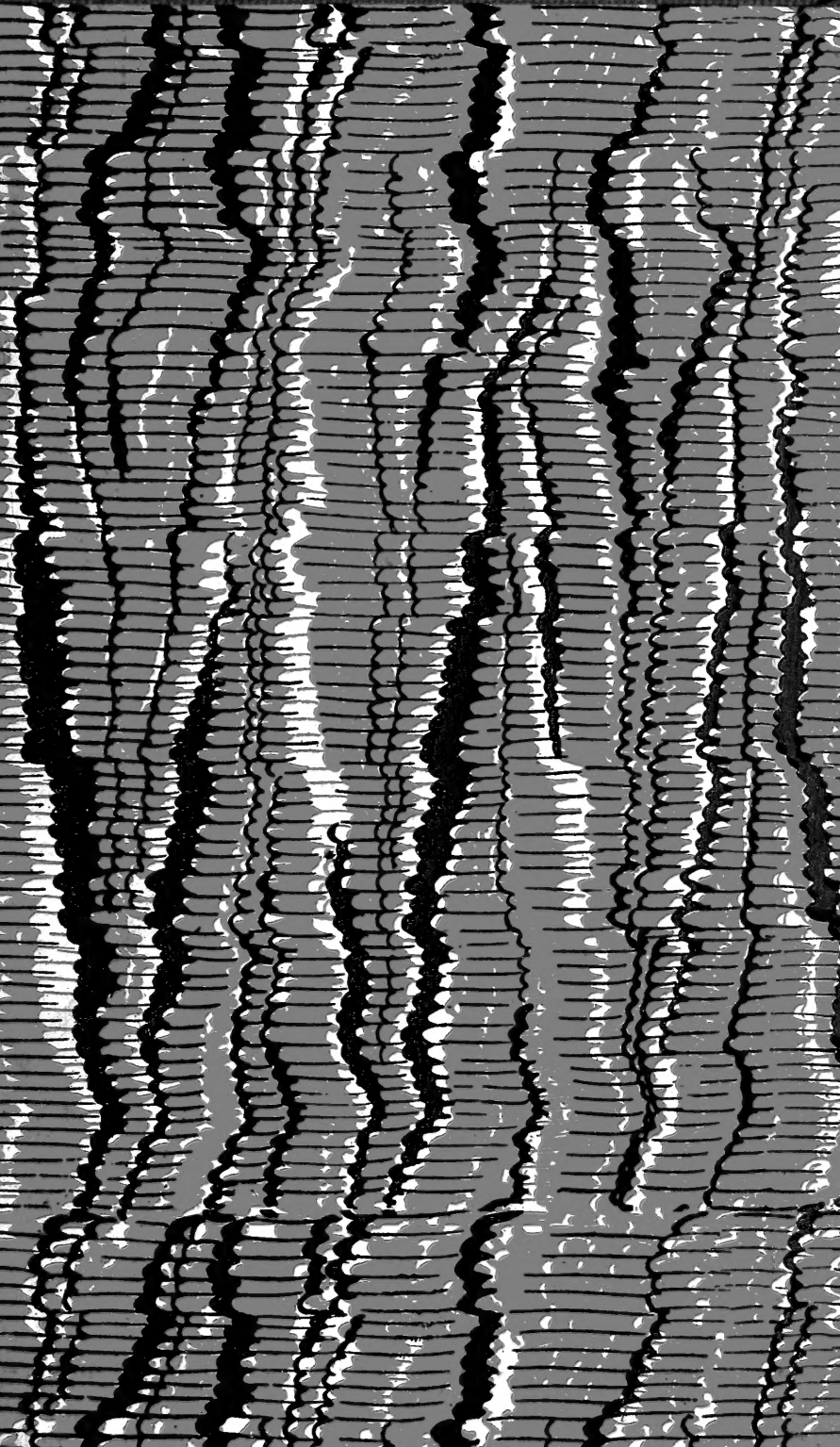
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