

cation. Necessarily, these have had to be passed by, since vernacular names are unavailable for citation.

"It may be urged that vernacular names are citable as well as scientific names. While this is in one sense true, nevertheless it is impracticable, unless the compiler is willing to double his labour and add unnecessarily to the bulk of his book. In other words, since scientific names *must*, for various paramount reasons, be cited, the addition of vernacular names would but increase the labour of the compiler and still further complicate the topography of the synonymy. . . .

"Personally, I am in favour of the use of vernacular names; but by all means let us have the scientific names also" (*Condor*, ii., p. 41).

### Stray Feathers.

INCUBATION AFTER REMOVAL FROM THE NEST.—During the breeding season of 1903 a nest of the Hoary-headed Grebe (*Podiceps poliocephalus*) was found by some friends of mine about 20 miles from Casterton. It contained one egg, and was taken to be sent on to me. The specimen was not blown, and after it had laid in the house for a couple of days a chick within was heard chipping. The egg was kept warm until hatched, and the young replaced in the nest. Soon afterwards the chick was seen, accompanied by its proud mother, swimming about the swamp. Miss Carmichael, who informed me of this, said it was hot weather at the time, but that no special attention was paid to the egg in order to facilitate its incubation.—(DR.) E. A. D'OMBRAIN. Casterton (V.), 18/4/04.

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YELLOW-RUMPED FINCH (*Munia flaviprymna*).—A pair of these bright little birds are in the Melbourne Zoological Gardens, and are just at present busily constructing a bulky dome-shaped nest of grass. The male is of a richer hue than the female; his breast is pale chestnut, back and wings rich dark chestnut, especially on the shoulders; his rump is reddish-yellow, and the tail feathers dark chestnut, with the outer edge of a much lighter hue, the two central feathers have a dark centre and light on each side; all the tail feathers are pointed; top of head and neck greyish-fawn, the centre of each feather slightly darkened, and only indistinctly discernible; just over and below the eye a much lighter shade, almost white; vent white; bill and legs blue. They are altogether very neat and trim little birds in appearance, and seem fairly hardy. This pair came from North-Western Australia, inland from Cossack.—D. LE SOUËF. 11/3/04.

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SWIFTS AND SWALLOWS.—This autumn has been remarkable for the number of times the Spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura cauda-*

*cuta*) has appeared round Launceston. I find that the afternoon of the 13th February was the first occasion on which I noted them. The time was 5 p.m., and the wind from the S.E. The birds came with the wind right behind them and disappeared shortly afterwards in a north-westerly direction. The next birds were not observed until the 18th March, but after that up to the beginning of April they put in many appearances. The time of visit varied from 12.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. The sky was always more or less overcast, and the wind in the same direction, S.E. The birds always came right with the wind, and always disappeared at a great elevation almost due N.W. The flocks never exceeded a couple of dozen birds, and they never wasted much time circling round. On the 20th March Messrs. H. and A. Weedon, both of Launceston, who were spending a holiday at Low Head, counted 600 Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) perched on the telegraph wires. This was at dusk. Next morning not one was to be seen in the neighbourhood. It was on this date the bulk of the Launceston Swallows disappeared. Two or three pairs stayed behind, and were to be seen about the streets of the city until the middle of April. But this was nothing unusual, as last winter a pair stayed with us the whole time.—FRANK M. LITTLER. 10/5/04.

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CLARKE ISLAND (BASS STRAIT) NOTES.—10th September.—The Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus parvirostris*) has just made its appearance here, in the usual small flocks of 6 or 8. Unfortunately they do not nest here to any extent, and I only know of one clutch of eggs being secured. The Black Oyster-catcher and the Pied Oyster-catcher are busy getting ready for nesting, and one can see the various holes in the sand as a preliminary performance before laying.

20th September.—The Wood-Swallow (*Artamus sordidus*) is also visiting here. It is a very pretty bird—colour deep grey above, breast white and grey, with mottled black and white under belly and butt of tail. A few Swifts were seen to-day, but, unlike most years, have not appeared in any numbers. I have just seen a most beautiful Parrakeet, very rare indeed here; colour—green back, breast orange, bright red bands on either side of face; very long tail (bright green); size of a Wood-Swallow.

15th October.—The Painted Quail (*Turnix varia*) have begun to lay. This is remarkably early, as November is the usual time. They simply make a hole in the ground, wherein are deposited four eggs, smaller than those of the Brown Quail, grey-brown, covered with chocolate and grey spots. The White-eye (*Zosterops*) is nesting too. Being of a green colour, they instinctively choose the young twigs of trees to build their nest in, which is quite a work of art, composed of cobwebs and fine hair on the outside, by which it is bound to the branch, and lined inside with black and white hair. They almost always choose the mountain tea-tree.

8th November.—Whilst examining one of the small ponds on Reservation Island, I came across a pair of Mountain-Ducks with five fledglings. This is the first time for years they have bred here. They were about a week old, black and white in colour. The instinct of self-preservation was strong in them, for upon observing me they instantly hid amongst the rushes which bordered their home. Found also some young teal on the same island, but was unable to locate any nest. It is very difficult in any case, as Teal, &c., often lay half a mile from water. The Brown Quail (*Synæcus australis*) is now laying, but not to such an extent as toward the end of the month. On Cape Barren Island the Quail is very scarce, and one can go a day's journey without encountering one bird, except close to the coast, where they are a little more numerous.

14th November.—Wood-Swallows are still here in small flocks, but are not laying. The Black and the Pied Oyster-catchers are nesting in great numbers along the coast. One will often find the nest of the Black Oyster-catcher close to that of the Pacific Gull, with whom he always seems to be on good terms. Perhaps it is for mutual support against intruders. The Gull is most interesting when he has any hard article of food to deal with. One will see him emerge from some cleft with a large whelk in his bill. The cunning fellow will select a flat rock, rise above it to the height of about 40 feet, and then drop his booty. The shock will generally break the shell, but if not, he will fly up again and again, until his efforts are crowned with success. One will see conspicuous flat rocks along the coast littered with the evidences of the bird's pertinacity. The Mutton-Birds are said to be very scarce this year, which shows that they must be steadily getting worked out. I think that the remarkably wet season we are having has drowned thousands of the young birds. This has been the wettest summer down here on record.—J. D. MACLAINE. 4/2/04.

### Forgotten Feathers.

ALLUSIONS TO AUSTRALIAN AVIFAUNA IN THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE OF THE "NIJPTANG."—In an early part of *The Emu* it was suggested that the journals of explorers might be consulted for allusions to Australian birds. The voyage of the squadron under the command of Willem de Vlaming at the end of the 17th century contains some interesting items, which I give, as translated from an anonymous volume published in Amsterdam in 1701 (*"Journaal Wegens een Voyagie na het onbekende Zuid-land en wyders na Batavia."*) The journal records the course taken by the hooker *Nijptang*, of which vessel Gerrit Collart was captain, Theodoris Heermans "adsistant," and Gerrit Gerritszoon first mate. 31° 43' S. is the latitude recorded on the 13th of January, 1697, at which date the vessels were