

*Stubble Quail	..	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>
*Stone-Plover	..	<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>
*Black Oyster-catcher	..	<i>Hæmatopus unicolor</i>
Spur-winged Plover	..	<i>Lobivanellus lobatus</i>
Black-breasted Plover	..	<i>Zonifer tricolor</i>
*Golden Plover	..	<i>Charadrius dominicus</i>
*Hooded Dottrel	..	<i>Ægialitis cucullata</i>
*Black-fronted Dottrel	..	" <i>melanops</i>
*Red-capped Dottrel	..	" <i>ruficapilla</i>
*White-headed Stilt	..	<i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>
*Sharp-tailed Stint	..	<i>Heteropygia acuminata</i>
*Sea Curlew	..	<i>Numenius cyanopus</i>
*Whimbrel	..	" <i>variegatus</i>
*Straw-necked Ibis	..	<i>Carphibis spinicollis</i>
*White-necked Heron	..	<i>Notophox pacifica</i>
*White-fronted Heron	..	" <i>novæ-hollandiæ</i>
*Night-Heron	..	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>
*Bittern	..	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>
*Yellow-necked Mangrove-Bittern	..	<i>Dupetor gouldi</i>
*Little Mangrove-Bittern	..	<i>Butorides stagnatilis</i>
*Land Rail	..	<i>Hypotaenidia philippinensis</i>
Black Duck	..	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>
*Grey Teal	..	<i>Nettion gibberifrons</i>
*Musk-Duck	..	<i>Biziura lobata</i>
*Pacific Gull	..	<i>Gabianus pacificus</i>
*Silver Gull	..	<i>Larus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
*Caspian Tern	..	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
*Crested Tern	..	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
*Little Tern	..	" <i>nereis</i>
*Mutton-Bird	..	<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>
*Pelican	..	<i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>
*Black Cormorant	..	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Pied Cormorant	..	" <i>hypoleucus</i>
*Little Cormorant	..	" <i>melanoleucus</i>
*Little Black Cormorant	..	" <i>subirostris</i>
*Darter	..	<i>Plotus novæ-hollandiæ</i>

[In a "flying" visit, Mr. Mellor has done good work in identifying so many New South Wales birds. If his identification be complete, the Varied Honey-eater (*Ptilotis versicolor*) is "new" for that State; but probably the "Little Tern" he observed at the Tweed River is *Sterna sinensis* (White-shafted Ternlet) and not *S. nereis*.—Eds.]

Stray Feathers.

NIGHTJAR WITH TICKS.—This morning I picked up an Owlet Nightjar (*Ægotheles novæ-hollandiæ*) that had evidently been killed by a cat, and was surprised to notice a lot of ticks under the chin and round the eyes and ears. At first sight I thought they were the cattle tick (*Exodes bovis*), but on examination they proved to have brown legs instead of white as in the cattle tick. There were twelve well-filled ticks, the largest being fully $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch long.—CHAS. A. BARNARD. Coomoo-boolaroo, Duaringa, 16/2/08.

MUTTON-BIRDS.—On the 2nd November, 1907, in 45.30 deg. south lat. and 108.0 deg. east long. (Southern Ocean), Capt. A. Simpson, of the s.s. *Moravian*, observed large flocks of "Sooty Petrels" (possibly *Puffinus sphenurus* or *P. carneipes*) flying S.W. He expressed surprise at finding these birds so far from land—about 720 miles S.W. of Cape Leeuwin. According to Bartholomew's "Commercial Chart," in these latitudes there extends upon the ocean for almost the breadth of Australia a belt of drift sea-weed. Possibly the birds were foraging for food—small crustaceans, molluscs, &c.—among these floating meadows.—A.J.C.

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MELBOURNE ZOO NOTES.—On the evening of 6th February I saw hundreds of Starlings catching insects on the wing. It had been a warm day, and the air seemed full of insects. The Starlings noticed it too, evidently, so were hawking in the air by hundreds after their winged prey. When they caught one, they flew to a neighbouring perch on a tree, and swallowed the insect at leisure, and then started off again. The following evening a fine specimen of a Grey Goshawk (*Astur cinereus*) flew slowly past me. It is some years now since we have seen a specimen of this bird here. It only remained about two days in the Gardens, and then left, much to the relief of the wild birds that make these Gardens their home.—D. LE SOUËF. 11/3/08.

* * *

OWLS AND THEIR PREY.—When walking along the edge of a scrub some months ago, about mid-day, a Winking Owl (*Ninox connivens*) flapped out of the branches of a scrub oak just over my head and dropped a half-eaten *Podargus* almost at my feet. I have frequently noticed this habit of the Owls, of keeping their night-killed prey with them in their daytime roosting places. Flying squirrels seem to be their favourite meal, but I have flushed them, at various times in the day, carrying half-eaten ring-tailed opossums, and once a flying fox; the latter, by the way, was the capture of a Powerful Owl (*N. strenua*).—CHAS. A. BARNARD. Coomooboolaroo, Duaringa (Q.)

[These field observations of Mr. Barnard are exceedingly interesting. It is possible that the members of the genera *Ninox*, being partially diurnal in habits, occasionally take their prey during day.—EDS.]

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FINCHES AND CUCKOOS.—It has been generally remarked that never have Cuckoos been so plentiful near Melbourne as during the present season. As a result of the unusual visitation a large number of eggs and young have been observed in the nests of the respective foster-parents. I have found as many as

six abandoned nests of the Red-browed Finch (*Aegintha temporalis*), containing a dead young Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx*) and a clutch of nearly incubated eggs. In every case the young Cuckoo was no more than a day or two old, and the thought suggested itself that the Cuckoo had either been poisoned by the seed supplied by the Finch (the Cuckoo being an insectivorous bird), or the Finches had discovered the fraud perpetrated on them and refused to feed the stranger. In four of the cases the Finch had built again in close proximity to the abandoned nest, and each nest contained a fresh set of eggs, but no egg of the Cuckoo.—T. H. TREGALLAS.

* * *

RECORD CLUTCH OF STRUTHIDEA'S EGGS.—On the 14th December, 1907, I found a Jumper's nest in a small brigalow (Acacia), and, on climbing up found to my surprise and pleasure that it contained no less than twelve eggs, all fresh or slightly incubated. The eggs differ considerably, and I think three if not four females must have laid in the nest. Three of the eggs are very long, and taper much to the smaller end. Three others, again, are similar—they are short, blunt-ended eggs, the markings on two being extremely small and faint, while the third egg is quite white. I have never seen an entirely white Struthidea's egg before. The remaining six are all much alike, and may be the production of one bird or two—most probably two. Observing that the eggs were fresh, I would have left them a few days to see if the birds laid any more, but I was afraid of an iguana finding the nest, so I thought "twelve eggs in the hand are worth twenty in an iguana," and took them. Another nest found previously contained eight eggs heavily incubated, so the Jumpers must be bent on rearing large families this year.—ERNEST D. BARNARD. Gladstone, Queensland, 16/12/07.

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ANTICS OF THE SOUTHERN STONE-PILOVER (*Burhinus grallarius*) AND THE "WALTZING INSTINCT" OF OSTRICHES.—In *Nature* of 23rd January, 1908, p. 278, is a reference to an article by S. J. E. Duerdin in the *Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union* for December, 1907, on the "waltzing instinct" of Ostriches, as follows:—Ostriches, it appears, are in the habit of running off suddenly with a peculiar whirring movement, sometimes one way, sometimes another, simultaneously spreading their wings, which are alternately raised and depressed. These movements, the author suggests, may be connected with escape from the clutches of the large carnivora. "Indulged in instinctively as play while young, and even when adult, the performance gives the bird expertness in the rapid jerking movements which are those first followed in alarm."

The description of these performances of Ostriches are strikingly like those described by myself in *The Emu* of April, 1906, p. 192, in connection with Southern Stone-Plovers. My words are as follows :—" At times these Plovers performed peculiar antics or dances. When in this humour one of the birds would run with outstretched wings about 20 or 30 yards, bending occasionally to this or that side, or even turning suddenly completely round. (Is there any connection between this and, on the one hand, the weird dances of the Native Companion (*Antigone australasiana*)—on the other, the peculiar little duck of the head when walking practised by some of the Dottrels and their allies ?)" I hardly think the explanation given in the case of the Ostriches (*i.e.*, escape from pursuers) can apply to the Southern Stone-Plovers, and to me it seems more likely that all these peculiar actions—in the Ostrich, Stone-Plover, Australian Crane, and various Dottrels—are individual specific or even generic characteristics, as bound up with the bird in question as any other recognised descriptive trait, such as plumage, size, &c. While on this question of bird actions, can anyone give an explanation of the peculiar flicking of the tail in some Bald-Coots (*Porphyrio*), which takes place when they are alarmed? This flicking exposes a patch of pure white feathers, which are then very noticeable.—(DR.) J. B. CLELAND. Perth (W.A.), 25/2/08.

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CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE TASMANIAN MAGPIE.—

In support of the contention that the Lesser White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hyperleuca*) is a bird of distinctive character, I will narrate an incident which I witnessed a few years ago. I preface the narration of it with the remark that it is a matter for regret that the name "Magpie-Shrike" was not bestowed upon this bird in preference to a name which has been for so long a time and until recently was exclusively applied to another bird. A Grey Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus cinereus*), which affected a certain locality, darted suddenly in pursuit of a small bird—I think, a House-Sparrow—whereupon a Magpie appeared and intercepted the Butcher-Bird, and by circling round the smaller bird caused the former to desist from its purpose and to take to flight. I have already alluded in *The Emu* to a habit of chasing Ground-Larks (*Anthus*). On a later occasion I saw the Ground-Lark overtaken by the Magpie. The Magpie, however, only brushed past the Ground-Lark (which uttered a shrill cry) and went its way.

A tame female Magpie, which I have seen on one or two occasions, was sometimes attacked by a wild bird of the same species, and defended itself by lying on its back, and in that position warding off its opponent with beak and feet. If decisively worsted, it retired beneath a leafy bush, whither the

wild bird did not venture to follow it. The demeanour of the Magpie, when it is slowly moving across fallow land and searching for the earthworms which lie hidden below the excrement of cattle, remind one of a Rook. But in other respects the Magpie is dissimilar to the Rook, for, whereas the young of that bird build their nests in the rookery in which they have been hatched, young Magpies leave the immediate vicinity of the nest before building nests for themselves. Towards the close of summer Magpies wander further afield than at other seasons, and it is probably at that time of year that young Magpies, which will nest during the following spring, seek fresh feeding grounds. A distance of two or three miles divides the nesting quarters of Magpies in the vicinity of Hobart; in some parts of Tasmania they are much more numerous. Their increase and distribution are doubtless partly governed by the quantity of food obtainable. But, having regard to the protection which they receive, it is surprising that they do not multiply more rapidly.—JAMES R. M'CLYMONT. Queenborough, Tasmania, 10/2/08.

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LIST OF AUSTRALASIAN BIRDS in the Zoological Garden at Breslau on 31st December, 1907 :—

2 <i>Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ</i>	75 <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
2 <i>Anas superciliosa</i>	6 " " (var.)
1 <i>Dendrocycna eytoni</i> (male)	2 <i>Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
1 <i>Chenonetta jubata</i> (male)	2 <i>Platycercus eximius</i>
2 <i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	1 " browni
1 <i>Cereopsis novæ-hollandiæ</i> (male)	1 <i>Aprosmictus scapulatus</i>
2 <i>Chenopsis atrata</i> (male and female)	1 <i>Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
1 <i>Zonifer tricolor</i>	1 <i>Dacelo gigas</i> (male)
1 <i>Antigone australasiana</i>	1 <i>Gymnorhina leuconota</i>
1 <i>Ocydromus australis</i>	1 <i>Brachyprorus cinereus</i> (?)
2 <i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	1 <i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>
1 <i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	1 <i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
1 <i>Licmetis nasica</i>	2 " sordidus
1 " <i>pastinator</i>	4 <i>Tæniopygia castanotis</i>
1 <i>Cacatua gymnopsis</i>	1 <i>Bathilda ruficauda</i>
1 " <i>sanguineus</i>	1 <i>Poephila heeki</i>
1 " <i>goffini</i>	1 <i>Munia pectoralis</i>
5 " <i>roseicapillus</i>	1 <i>Meliphaga phrygia</i>
1 " <i>leadbeateri</i>	1 <i>Acanthochæra carunculata</i>
2 " <i>galerita</i>	1 <i>Tropidorhynchus corniculatus</i>
1 <i>Callocephalon galeatum</i>	1 <i>Grallina australis</i> .

Cereopsis novæ-hollandiæ.—Female died 17th February, 1907. In 1903 the birds mated, and on 11th May four eggs were hatched. On the 25th November birds again mated, without result. In 1904, on the 25th January, the female laid again, and on the 9th March two eggs were hatched. In 1905, on the 31st January, the birds again sat, without result, leaving the unhatched eggs on the 19th March. In 1906, on the 19th January, they again sat, and on the 1st March two young were hatched, which were killed by frost on the 10th of the

same month. Again mated on the 24th March, with the result of five young on the 17th May. To my knowledge the Dresden Zoological Garden bred the same species at the same very early season as observed by me.

Chenopsis atrata.—Breed regularly. 1903, first hatching, 4th April, four young; 10th June, four eggs, destroyed by flood; 5th November, three young.

Melopsittacus undulatus.—Have no difficulty in getting the birds to breed, and with very satisfactory results. Light yellow variety was first produced in Belgia about 40 years ago, and the offspring are always of same light colour.

Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ.—Repeatedly breed, with good results.

Dacelo gigas.—The female died 10th March, 1907. The pair repeatedly sat, with result of (usually) three young, selecting an artificial breeding box for nest.

Of the *Poephila* and other Australasian Finches we have just at present an unusually small number. They are, however, very satisfactory birds for European collections.

Meliphaga phrygia and *Acanthochæra carunculata* have been in the Gardens for about 7 years and 5 years respectively.

[The foregoing list and observations were kindly sent to Mr. D. Le Souëf by Director F. T. Grabowsky. Mr. Le Souëf saw many of the birds mentioned when visiting Breslau in December last, and thought a complete list would be of interest for readers of *The Emu*.—Eds.]

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CLARKE ISLAND (BASS STRAIT) NOTES.—The Brown Quail (*Synæcus australis*) on Clarke, Passage, and Three Hummocks Islands are very numerous, which shows that last year's nesting season must have been a prolific one. I was on Passage Island (which contains about 400 acres) not long since; the birds were simply there in thousands—I observed as many as thirty rise in one covey. Also there was a great number of Brush Bronze-wing Pigeons (*Phaps elegans*). Like the Quail, they usually lay in November and December. The Pigeon lays two eggs, and the Quail up to sixteen.

The Painted Quail (*Turnix varia*) appears to have left us for the time being, as none have been noticed this season. We had remarkably heavy rains here in February, and also on the East Coast of Tasmania, and I was informed by a resident of St. Helens, Tasmania, that this flood had drowned nearly all the young birds on the coast, but fortunately did not do any apparent damage here, the hilly nature of most of these islands perhaps being accountable for it. The Brush Bronze-wing usually nests on the ground under a thick bush, but it also occasionally builds on trees or shrubs; the nest is a very rudimentary structure.

15th September, 1907.—Have noticed very few of the White-bellied Sea-Eagles (*Haliaëtus leucogaster*) this season; it is indeed a *rara avis*. Many places here where they formerly nested are now deserted, owing, probably, to their having died

from the effects of the poison laid for them upon the sheep stations of the north-east coast of Tasmania, about 18 miles away. I am told that they kill a great number of lambs, and consequently get poisoned for so doing, but personally I very much doubt their lamb-killing propensities, as I have never known them to interfere with our flock, and when examining the nests with fledglings have noted that the bones in and about the nest are either fish or snake bones. I think they must confound them with the Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaëtes audax*). We never shoot or destroy the Sea-Eagles—not only for the above reasons, but also on account of their rarity—anyhow in these parts.

The Raven (*Corone australis*)—the grazier's arch enemy—is, like the poor, always with us, and a very wary fellow he is. He seems to have his eye everywhere, and if fired at without success is always on the *qui vive*. When the Mutton-Birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) are about half-fledged, one will often see a score of Ravens, in company with the Pacific Gulls (*Gabianus pacificus*), amongst the rookeries, and if a young bird unwarily approaches the mouth of the burrow, he is soon taken by these depredators.

The season throughout has been extremely dry, and, owing to their chief nesting places being dry, very few Ducks are to be seen—in fact, I have not, so far, seen a clutch of them this year, although usually there are plenty.

30th September, 1907.—Cape Barren Geese (*Cercopsis nove-hollandiæ*) are very much in evidence. On Passage Island, however, the clutches are small; the most seen were three, but more often two, and sometimes one. I came suddenly over a hillock, and surprised a dozen in one lot. Of course, they were not all of one brood; some could just fly, others were half-fledged, and the rest quite small; there were four old birds with them. It is fortunate that their haunts are isolated, as I fear that, as they are a fair table bird, if they were within easy access very few would live to any age. I saw a very young gosling on 10th December, and, as the birds begin to nest in June, one can imagine how erratic they are in laying, which, I consider, protects them to a great extent, as, if they laid at one time, people would most likely rob them, whereas, laying as stated, they would not trouble to go to the islands on the chance of only getting a dozen eggs.

The little White-eye (*Zosterops cærulescens*) nests considerably with us, and their home is chiefly among the green twigs, which harmonise so well with their colour, while their nest, which is perfectly circular, lined with horse-hair and fastened on to the twigs with moss and cobwebs, is a work of art. They usually lay four light bluish-green eggs.

The Dusky Robin (*Petroica vittata*), Flame-breasted Robin

(*P. phænicea*), Fire-tailed Finch (*Zonæginthus bellus*), Grey-tailed Thickhead (*Pachycephala glaucura*), and many of the smaller birds are numerous, but the Whistling Shrike-Thrush (*Collyriocinclá rectirostris*) and the Small-billed Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus parvirostris*) are fewer than have been seen for years.

There are not so many Pied (*Hæmatopus longirostris*) or Sooty Oyster-catchers (*H. unicolor*) as there were a few years back, owing to the useless and cruel habit of so-called "sportsmen" shooting these harmless birds, which are not shy and are slow on the wing. On our property we never allow them to be shot, or Gulls either, which people often shoot out of mere wantonness.

The Red-capped Dottrels (*Ægialitis ruficapilla*) are here, but their two eggs are exceedingly difficult to find just at high water mark.

The Black Crow-Shrike (*Strepera fuliginosa*) is now very rare, as are also the Black-cheeked Falcons (*Falco melanogenys*). The Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea berigora*), however, nests here freely. The Mountain-Ducks (*Casarca tadornoides*) have been with us most of the year, but as the small lakes, which they prefer to frequent, are dry, most have left. They are one of the most cunning of the Duck tribe, I think, as when you find them with young ones the parent will fly ahead a little way off, or even land and endeavour by fluttering its wings, &c., to lead you from the fledglings.—J. D. MACLAINE. 4/5/07.

Forgotten Feathers.

DR. R. Bowdler Sharpe has compiled quite a substantial volume on what may be described as the history and growth of the bird collections in the British Museum. Many pages are of peculiar interest to Australians. Until discovered recently by Dr. Sharpe, it was never known where Dr. John Latham, the famous ornithologist of Dartford, England, obtained the material for describing so many Australian, or, as they were called in his time "New Holland," birds.

In 1902 the British Museum acquired from Mr. James Lee, a grandson of the celebrated horticulturist of Hammersmith, a large volume of paintings executed for the latter by one of his collectors, Thomas Watling, who was sent to New South Wales during the years 1788 and 1792. The drawings had evidently been shown to the enthusiastic Latham, who, recognising most of the birds to be new, promptly named them, and appears to have referred to the pictures as "Mr. Lambert's drawings." Perhaps the Doctor had some leading cause in connecting them with Lambert, because in one place he mentions "Mr. Lambert's collection of drawings," although there is no evidence that the