

cubation of the third was well advanced; the fourth contained a live chick. It is interesting to note that, while many young birds were fluttering about in the cave, though there were none in the nests, the eggs were in successive stages of incubation. The architecture of the nests, the way in which they were attached to the roof, and the attitude of the birds clinging to and brooding over them, resembled the picture in Richard Kerr's book—'Nature, Curious and Beautiful'—of the Swifts (*Collocalia*) which build the edible nests, which picture reproduces an exhibit in the Natural History Museum, London. True, the shape of the nests does not exactly correspond, though the scoop-like general appearance is preserved.

"The cave, which is invisible from the sea, is only about 30 feet above high water mark, and the entrance which the birds favour is, strange to say, averse from the sea and much obscured by leafage. Altogether the incidents connected with this experience were very pleasant."

Notes on the Migration of *Apus* (*Micropus*) *pacificus*, Lath.

BY ROBERT HALL, C.M.Z.S., COL. M. B.O.U.

WHILE in Vladivostock in May, 1903, I became aware of the presence of thousands of birds, filling the stormy night air with loud and terrified call notes.

Lieut.-Colonel Lochvitsky informed me that it was the usual time for the migration movement of Ducks, Swifts, waders, and other birds northwards. It is said to be noticeable by all the people, as if the birds were directly upon a defined migration course. The Russian block calendar of 13th May (= English 26th May) makes a definite statement to the effect that the Swifts arrive at Vladivostock from the south, and travel northwards. The Australian White-rumped Swift does actually pass at that time. I found it nesting in large numbers in the perpendicular cliffs of the River Lena, about one hundred miles down the river from Vitim, on 16th June. On 27th June, 1903, in Yakutsk, lat. 62° N., I found it nesting under the verandah of the market place. The birds were not seen further north, although the cliffs were good for the purpose of nesting, and food seemed plentiful. My companion, Mr. Trebilcock, and I travelled a further 1,200 miles down the river to the delta, and saw nothing more of them. Yakutsk, in 1903, was the northern end of their wonderful journey, so far as that tract of Siberia was concerned. I had not been able to land and examine the nests in the cliffs further up the river. Now, it seemed just a matter of care to take the number of eggs and young from the market-place that would satisfy the Australian collector. However, care was not the word to fit the occasion, for every Russian has an almost religious belief in the utilitarian value of the Swift and Swallow. On one occasion a burly Russian

disturbed my investigation of a Martin's nest on a river-bank. He was furious at my breaking into the home of a sacred bird, and seemed resolved that I must stay my hand or drop below into the river. A strange altercation ensued, during which I was only able to use the words "Ispravink" and "Musée" ("Police" and "Museum") in defence. These had the desired effect, however, and he went away in great wrath. Even the hospitable Chief of Police, whose guests we were, was not anxious to satisfy such enthusiasm. It could not be done in daylight, even for scientific purposes, and, as we had a sun that did not fully set, there seemed to be no opportunity for us. After a week's stay, we were accommodated with the services of a peasant and a ladder, and finally witnessed and handled the real things—eggs, nest, adult bird, rafters; even the atmosphere was there. The young were just leaving the nest. One fully-fledged bird was miserably thin; there was scarcely any fatty tissue about its body, and the sternum was only covered with dwarfed muscles. A second young bird was particularly fat.

These birds congregate in large numbers, but do not breed in close company. They fly quickly, and have a single shrill note. The bird has a strong grasp (with its four toes in the same plane), which is enough to pierce the fingers and draw blood. The nest consists of a few straws and feathers cemented by saliva. The eggs were two or three to a clutch. The parents occasionally worry the feather-bred Swallows which associate with them in nesting. This species was not met with lower down the river than Yakutsk. From 40° S. in Victoria to 62° N. in Siberia is a long fly. The period of flight from the time of leaving the south in early autumn to the time of arriving in the Japan Sea could be gauged if only some ornithologist had the date of leaving Victoria in 1903.

The illustration shows the outer verandah of the market square in Yakutsk, under which *Apus (Micropus) pacificus*, Lath., had built many small and strangely constituted nests. The negative is by the Czar's officer, Mons. Zooyef, Governor of Olekminsk.

Stray Feathers.

NEW FOSTER-PARENTS.—In a recent letter received from Mr. C. M'Lennan, Carina, Victoria, he named *Hylacola cauta* and *Malurus melanotus* as new foster-parents for *Chalcococcyx plagosus*.—F. E. HOWE. Albert Park (Vic.), 10/12/c8.

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RHIPIDURA DRYAS (Math., Handl., p. 65).—I received this bird in a small collection of skins sent me from near Wyndham, N.W. Australia, by Mr. J. P. Rogers. I think this is a new locality for this species.—GREGORY M. MATHEWS. Watford, England.