

752. CASARCA TADERNOIDES, Jardine (Shelduck).
Loc.—Kellidie Bay. Hab.—4, 6, 9.
753. ANAS SUPERCILIOSA, Gmelin (Black Duck).
Loc.—Wangary. Hab.—4, 6, 7, 9.
754. NETTION CASTANEUM, Eyton (Teal).
Loc.—Kellidie Bay. Hab.—4, 6, 9.
757. SPATULA RHYNCHOTIS, Lath. (Shoveller).
Closely observed by Capt. White on one of the small lagoons.
Hab.—4, 6, 9.
760. STICTONETTA NÆVOSA, Gld. (Freckled Duck).
Loc.—Near Koppio. Hab.—4, 6, 7, 9.
763. BIZIURA LOBATA, Shaw (Musk-Duck).
Loc.—Port Lincoln. Hab.—4, 6, 7, 9.
764. DROMÆUS NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, Lath. (Emu).
Loc.—Mortlock. Hab.—4, 6, 7, 9.

At Port Lincoln we saw many specimens of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*, Linn.), and the Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*, Macg.) It will be interesting to watch the Starling's line of expansion from the Marble Range to the Eucla country. Graziers will get a benefit.

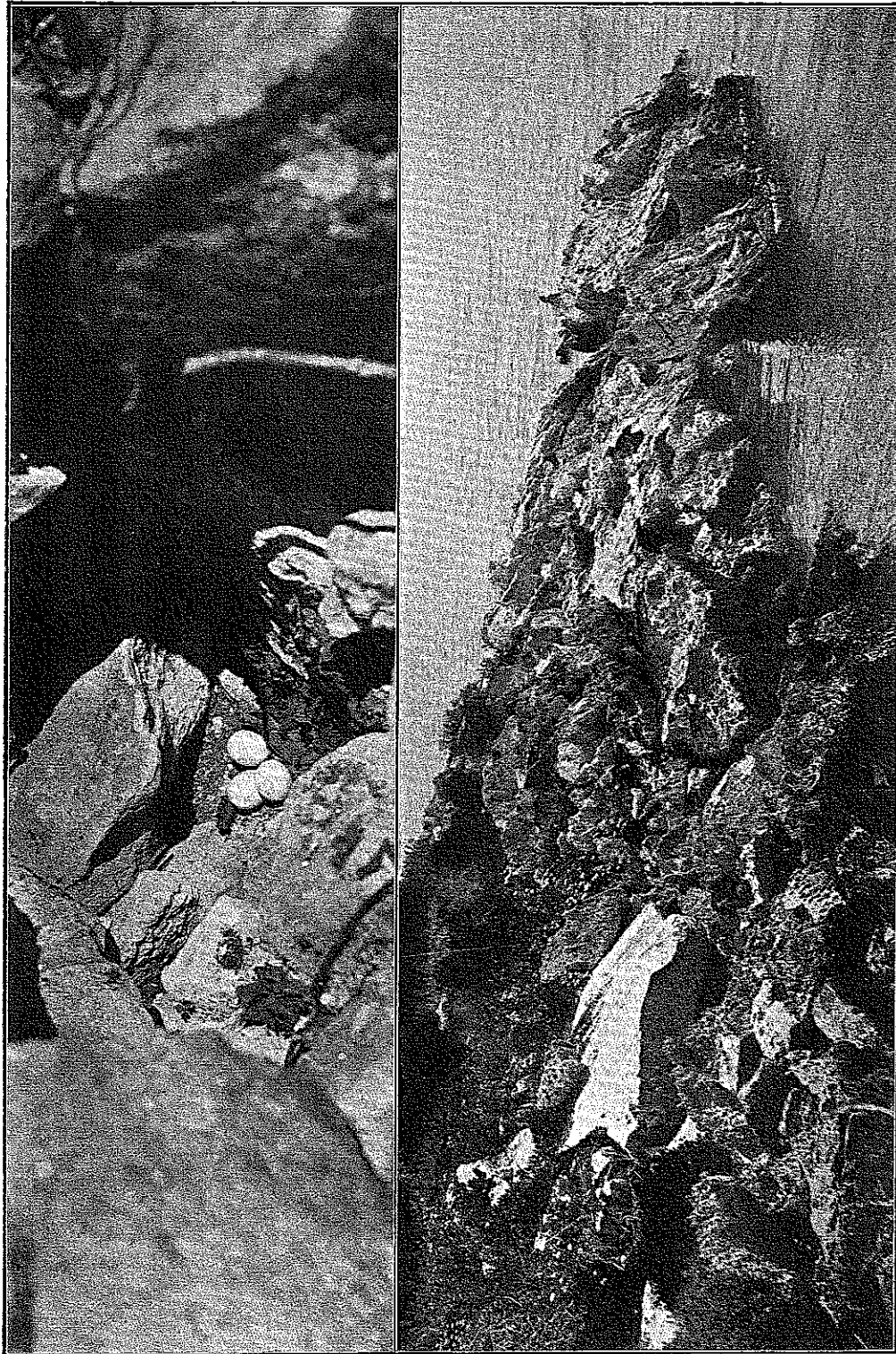
This list deals only with the birds of the extreme southern portion of Eyre Peninsula. Two very interesting fields still offer themselves—the western coast-line, containing the larger timber and better watered conditions; and the northern dry area, in its relation to the much drier area.

Notes on the Rock-Parrakeet (*Neophema petrophila*).

BY CHARLES BARRETT, MELBOURNE.

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 25th November, 1909.)

WHEN the ornithologist returns from visiting some place unknown to him before, he brings, not specimens alone, but also pleasant memory pictures of the birds he has studied alive in their native wilds—of birds in nature as distinct from bundles of blood-stained feathers from which the lustre has faded even as the colour and light depart from the eye in death. All bird-lovers, I suppose, "collect" these mental pictures, but I may differ from some in regarding them as more precious than the spoils of the specimen gun. In a charmingly written chapter in his "Birds and Man," my friend, Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., describes some of the birds he has seen at their best. His "harvest of the quiet eye" is richer than mine, for he has lived among the birds for many years, doing little else but observe their ways. But I would not exchange my memory picture of the Rock-Parrakeets on Goat Island, in Kellidie Bay, South



Nest of Rock-Parrakeet (*Neophema petrophila*), (uncovered).
Islet in Kellidie Bay—Home of the Rock-Parrakeet.

FROM PHOTOS. BY G. L. BARRETT.

Australia, even for his vision of the Dartford Warbler in "a curious splendour wrought by the sunlight in the dark but semi-translucent, delicate feathers of his mantle."

It was during the camp-out of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union on Eyre Peninsula, in October last. A small party, including myself, hired a conveyance (accredited with being a spring trap) and drove a distance of about 16 miles to Lake Wangary, on the west coast. We spent three days exploring the neighbourhood, and on one occasion, through the kindness of a resident farmer, were taken to Kellidie Bay, a lovely little inlet of the sea, tranquil as a lake when we saw it, and with a background of mountain peaks reflected in the still water. Driving along the rough road which girdles the Bay, we flushed from the long grass beyond the wheel-tracks flocks of the beautiful *Neophema petrophila*. Hundreds of the graceful little birds rose, almost from beneath the horse's hoofs, and flew a few yards to settle on the branches of the nearest eucalypt or she-oak. They were easy to approach, and one of our gunners soon obtained a brace for purposes of identification—for on the wing the birds closely resembled *N. elegans*.

On reaching the homestead of Coffin Bay Station, which overlooks Kellidie Bay, the owner, Mr. Mortlock, informed us that there were many birds breeding on an islet which lay about a quarter of a mile from the shore near the outlet to the sea. Boats were kindly placed at our disposal, and, embarking with guns and cameras, we rowed to the island of desire.

As the boats drew near Goat Island, a gun was fired from one of the boats by some too eager hand, and immediately the air was filled with winged forms. From behind the green curtains of *Mesembryanthemum* which draped the rock ledges from water-line to summit of the island, Rock-Parrakeets flew, screaming, out of the darkness of their nesting-holes into the sunlight, which made their golden-green plumage shimmer like satin. It was a very beautiful sight for all; entrancing to one who had not seen the *Neophema* before in its native haunts. "Rock-lover"! Was ever bird more happily named?

Goat Island is barely an acre and a half in extent. Its steep, rugged shores, rising here and there to a height of 20 feet, are honeycombed, for the rock (dune limestone) is soft and water-worn, and the Parrakeets have claimed it for their own, save that a few Silver Gulls and Sooty Oyster-catchers make use of some of the ledges in nesting time. The vegetation consists of small, wiry shrubs and grasses, and the pig-face drapes the rocks, screening the caves from the sun. The flat summit is strewn with limestone boulders. Several cairns were, for some purpose, long ago built of these stones, but they are now tumbled down, and the Parrakeets nest in the interstices. At every step, almost, we flushed a bird, and by pulling away the stones found its nest.

Along the cliff face the nests were difficult to locate, and still harder to reach, for several which I examined were placed at the end of burrows from 3 to 4 feet in length. On the summit, however, the eggs often lay under a flat stone, raised a few inches from the ground by fragments of rock. One nest, just above the water's edge, and containing five young, was between two vertical rocks, a situation in which the eggs of the Oystercatcher are often found.

I succeeded in obtaining a series of photographs—nest with eggs, nest and young, and an adult bird perched on a rock. Unfortunately I had only four plates, or I might have secured other interesting studies of the graceful little birds.

The nesting season was evidently at its height at the time of our visit, for we found nestlings in all stages of development, and nests containing from one to the full complement (four) of eggs. Although one nest contained five young birds, I am inclined to think that four is the average. Several nests we examined held three eggs highly incubated.

The newly-hatched *Neophema* is as ugly in appearance as its parents are beautiful. The nestling down is pale yellowish-grey—not a pleasing colour. The eggs are pure white, with a finely-textured, glossy shell.

Gould, in writing of the Rock-Parrakeet, states that he received specimens from Port Lincoln, but that the principal habitat of the species appeared to be the western coast, on Rottnest and other islands near Swan River. Mr. A. J. Campbell, in his "Nests and Eggs," draws attention to the fact that Dr. Ramsay does not indicate *N. petrophila* for South Australia in his "Tabular List." It seems probable that Gould's specimens came from the Coffin Bay district, which is not a great distance from Port Lincoln.

Gould further states that the Rock-Parrakeet breeds in the holes of the most precipitous cliffs, choosing in preference those facing the water and most difficult of access. My observations at Goat Island bear out the latter part of this statement, for the majority of the nests we located were in the cliff face, and many were inaccessible. The great ornithologist speaks of the extremely rapid flight of this species, a noticeable feature, but I have not seen them "mount to a great height in the air."

Mr. Campbell's description (in "Nests and Eggs," pp. 652, 653) of a visit to Rottnest Island, where he found *Neophema petrophila* nesting in large numbers, gives a better idea of such a scene than I can hope to do. But my notes, dealing as they do with a different locality, may prove of some interest.



Nest of Spur-winged Plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*).

FROM A PHOTO. BY H. BURRELL.