

Although large numbers of Salangane nests have been collected for centuries, no decrease in the number of birds has so far been observed. China imports yearly about 9 million nests, amounting to a total weight of 168,000 lbs. On the north coast of Borneo, 1 lb. of the best white nests is worth 50s. at least. The nests, which have the form of a quartered egg, are so thin that about 70 go to a pound. It requires three nests to make a soup for one person. The more or less soiled black nests are relatively cheap, for the price is only 2/- to 3/- per lb.

The Chinese first soak the nests and afterwards place them in a tightly closed pot, together with a fat capon or Duck, and allow them to boil gently for 25 hours. The Japanese boil them into a slimy mass, which is mixed with sugar and eaten cold. European epicures have them sliced and boiled in strongly spiced broth; they are said to stimulate the appetite, an effect which is probably partly due to the action of the spices.

Stray Feathers.

A ROBBER.—A case in which the White-eared Honey-eater (*Ptilotis leucotis*) figured as a breaker of the "eighth commandment" recently came under my notice. A pair of these Honey-eaters were building a nest on the banks of the Cardinia Creek, Beaconsfield, and, although lining material was by no means scarce in the locality, they selected a lined nest of the Brown Tit (*Acanthiza pusilla*) as a suitable source of it, making frequent trips to and fro till they had exhausted the supply. The Tits evidently recognized the futility of ministering to the Honey-eaters' wants, and therefore moved to more favoured breeding-grounds.—F. E. WILSON. Melbourne, 22/10/09.

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CAN BIRDS RETAIN THEIR EGGS?—In the flight aviary in the Melbourne Zoological Gardens a pair of Black-breasted Plovers (*Zonifer tricolor*) laid two eggs, but before the clutch of four could be completed a young Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*) ate them. This catastrophe put the Plovers off from laying any more at the time, but about a month later, on 3rd November, they nested again, and six eggs were laid—that is, the usual clutch of four and apparently the two that should have been laid with the first clutch. Is it possible that the bird has power to prevent its eggs coming to maturity? and, if so, are those retained merged into the succeeding clutch? This in some cases may help to account for the number of eggs in a clutch being so irregular. Possibly other observers may have noticed the same occurrence.—D. LE SOUËF. Melbourne, 19/11/09.

AMYTIS MACRURA RE-DISCOVERED.—Referring to *Amytis varia*, provisionally described by me as a new species in *The Victorian Naturalist* (xxv., pp. 75 and 86), the opinion of experts is that the two skins I obtained are referable to *Amytis macrura*, Gld., although there are no specimens of this species in either Sydney, Melbourne, or the South Kensington Museums, and the type skins are in Paris, so I was unable to compare my birds with them. The only work in my possession at the time when I described the birds was Gould's "Handbook," and this gives the total length of *Amytis macrura* as $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This measurement is apparently an error, but it caused me to form the opinion that the bird I procured was a new species.—TOM CARTER. Broome Hill, Western Australia.

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A TRIBUTE TO THE WHITE-EYE.—An illustration of the great value of the dainty little White-eye (*Zosterops*) to orchardists has come under my notice. In a garden close by our place a tree of the Rome Beauty apple became afflicted with a virulent species of aphid—what is generally known as the "cotton blight." Recognizing that if this new pest was not quickly eradicated it would in all probability spread over the whole garden, the owner tried every means at his disposal to stamp it out; but phenyle, kerosene, and many other remedies availed nothing, and the gardener was resigning himself to the sacrifice of his tree, when salvation came from an unexpected quarter. One bright day the housewife was surprised to see a flock of White-eyes in the tree busily at work. The industrious little birds cleared the tree of the pest. I was not surprised when the grower told me that his opinion of the little White-eye had undergone a change. A few months ago he was abusing them; now he is loud in their praise. "I reckon," said he, "they earn all they charge."—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vic.), 26/8/09.

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A CUCKOO DAY.—At Ringwood, Victoria, on 31st October, in company with Messrs. J. A. Ross, L. G. Chandler, and F. E. Wilson, I, or others of the party, observed no fewer than four nests containing five Cuckoos' eggs, besides those of the foster-parents. *Chalcococcyx basalis* is always very common in this district, and an egg was noticed in the nest of *Malurus cyaneochlamys*. Another was found in the nest of *Acanthiza pusilla*, together with two eggs of the Tit and an egg of *Cacomantis rufulus*. *C. rufulus* is also very common in this locality, and I added a new combination to my collection in the shape of an egg of this variety accompanying two beautiful dark eggs of *Chthonicola sagittata*. Another nest of the *Chthonicola* contained two young, just hatched, and a heavily incubated egg of a Cuckoo, which, if not

Mesocallius palliolatus, is a very elongated and lightly coloured egg of *Chalcococcyx plagosus*. As I saw a pair of the former variety not far from the spot last Saturday, 27th November, I am inclined to believe that the egg belongs to it.—F. E. HOWE. Albert Park, 30/11/09.

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NEW EGG FOR VICTORIA.—In a patch of box-tree (*Eucalypt*) forest, some two miles from the foot of the Grampians, I had the pleasure of examining, on 27th November, 1909, a nest of *Gerygone albigularis* (White-throated Fly-eater). The species is very rare for Victoria, two birds only having been recorded* in 1899 as occasional visitors. This is the first instance known of the species nesting in Victoria. The eggs were three in number, warm white ground, speckled, chiefly at the larger ends, with pinkish or reddish-chestnut. Average dimensions, 0.65 x 0.50 inches. The nest was built chiefly of shreds of bark knit together with sheep-wool and spider-web, and ornamented on the outside with a few spiders' cocoons and blebs of gum-tree resin. It measured about 8 inches in length and 2½ inches through, and hung pendent to a low shoot on a box-tree. It had the characteristic hood over the entrance and tail of all Fly-eaters' nests. The male bird has a very pleasant and striking song. The plumage is—upper surface, olive-green; under surface, yellow, throat white, the female being slightly duller in plumage.—A. G. CAMPBELL. Pomonal (Vic.), Nov., 1909.

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FIDELITY OF THE EMU.—Mr. Colvin Clarke had a young Emu and a young kangaroo. When they grew to a goodly size the kangaroo became violently enamoured of the Emu, and, to the amusement and surprise of everyone who saw them, the 'roo used to hug the Emu. The Emu squatting on the ground, the 'roo would approach, and, in the most loving way, "hug" the Emu with great gentleness. The Emu then took a great liking to a draught mare, and wherever the mare went the Emu went also. In fact, they "kept company." Even when the mare was in the dray the bird would accompany her, walking alongside! As the station paddocks are large, the two would often be absent for days at a time. One day the mare was found in a creek, dead, having broken her neck, her faithful feathered consort still feeding around the spot. Judging from evidence the mare had been dead over a week. A fire was lighted over the body of the mare and the remains burnt to ashes. Still for more than a week the bird remained by itself in the near vicinity, till one day it returned to the homestead and again took up with the kangaroo. I think this a remarkable case of fidelity in a bird—a case of "faithful unto death."—(DR.) ERNEST A. D'OMBRAIN. Sydney, 23/10/09.

* "Nests and Eggs," Campbell, p. 155.

THE MARCH OF CIVILIZATION.—In the July number of *The Emu* you published some of my notes under the heading of "A Collector's Paradise." It is with sorrow I tell you that this paradise is no more, for that fine swamp, in which so many rare water-fowl (including *Erismatura australis*) have been breeding for hundreds of years, is now dry, having been reclaimed by the Government, cut up into blocks, and leased out, so that in less than 12 months all this has come to pass—and more, for bordering this one-time swamp were sand-hills with native pine and box, the breeding haunts of so many native birds. These fine scrubs have fallen before the settler's axe, for, being close to the reclaimed selections, the wood was utilized for building houses and for firewood, &c. Sad to say, in many places where a fine forest of pine stood less than 12 months ago, and where I admired so many birds, especially several of the Robin family, in their native haunts, the destruction has been so terrible that they are immense sand-drifts now. I shudder to think of what the end will be, for this is but one of the swamps on the reaches of the Murray River, and these swamps, the home and breeding-place of thousands of water-fowl for generations, will be dried up one after another. Where, I ask, will our poor birds go?—(CAPT.) S. A. WHITE. Wetunga (S.A.), 5/9/09.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.—At the last annual (Adelaide) session Mr. H. L. White exhibited a parcel of skins collected by Mr. F. L. Whitlock in the neighbourhood of Lake Way. The collection, which included *Amytis gigantura*, *Cinclosoma marginatum*, *Acanthiza robustirostris*, *Stipiturus ruficeps*, &c., and other interior forms, was as a whole extremely striking, by reason of the bright colouring of many of the species, resembling more the richness of sub-tropical forms than the paler appearance of usual desert species. This was particularly noticeable in *Malurus splendens*, which was smaller in size and more intense in colour than the south-western coastal bird; and in *M. leucotus*, being generally of a brighter blue, also darker (brown) wings, compared with the eastern bird of the same species, while examples of *Peltohyas (Eudromias) australis* were smaller and of a richer red (buff) compared, say, with examples found in Riverina, N.S.W. Possibly Mr. Mathews, in his forthcoming work, will find it expedient to make *two* races of this interesting bird. The collection also contained an albino variety of *Acanthiza robustirostris*. An account of the collection, with full field notes by the collector, will appear in a later issue of *The Emu*. Mr. White first had the collection submitted to Mr. A. J. North, of the Australian Museum, who detected and detained two new species—one, *Acanthiza whitlocki*, mentioned on page 173, and the other a Honey-eater, for which Mr. North has founded a

new genus. A full description will appear in the current (January) issue of the *Victorian Naturalist*. The new Honey-eater (*Lacustroica alfredi*) has been dedicated, by desire, to Mr. White's son, the youngest member of the A.O.U. (see Plate IX.)
—A. J. CAMPBELL.

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A CURIOUS COMBAT.—I am not aware if any of the readers of *The Emu* ever noticed that when the Musk-Duck (*Biziura lobata*) makes the deep-toned note it also throws out a jet of water on either side, caused evidently by a rapid motion of the feet. This occurrence has often puzzled me, but of late a peculiar incident came under observation. A Bald-Coot (*Porphyrio melanonotus*), which had been wounded, was observed to be making frantic efforts to escape from a Hawk. The latter bird had made up its mind to have that Coot at all risks, and was making drive after drive, in its characteristic manner, to tire out the Coot, and at each rush the Coot was seen to edge closer and closer to a fine old male Musk-Duck who was placidly floating in the deep water, caring not a straw for the Hawk. At last the poor terrified Coot reached the Duck's side, and as the Hawk renewed its charges, attempting to hit its victim on the head with its powerful wing, the Coot dodged from one side of the Duck to the other, and it was now that the Musk-Duck began to take an active part; for, strange to say, every time the Hawk made a swoop down upon the Coot the old Duck gave forth a deep sound and splashed up the water behind him, and the time was so well judged that the Hawk received the full force of the water. Three desperate efforts were made, but after the third dousing the Hawk took himself off in disgust, but the old Musk-Duck floated on in his majestic style as if nothing had occurred or he had not saved the life of a wounded friend.—(CAPT). S. A. WHITE. Wetunga (S.A.), 5/9/09.

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MARYBOROUGH (VIC.) NOTES.—Throughout the winter the Honey-eaters have been plentiful about this district, Red Wattle-Birds (*Anthochaera carunculata*) and Warty-faced Honey-eaters (*Meliphaga phrygia*) especially so. The dainty little Robins—Flame-breasted (*Petræca phænicea*), Scarlet-breasted (*P. leggii*), and Red-capped (*P. goodenovii*)—too, have been fairly numerous. On 20th August a Flame-breasted Robin paid us a visit in town. This is the latest date on which I have observed these winter visitors here. One of the prettiest bird-sights imaginable I witnessed a few weeks ago when on a visit to the Pyrenees Ranges, beyond Avoca. Coming to a fine patch of the heath for which these ranges are noted, I was delighted to find numbers of the elegant Spine-billed Honey-eater (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*)—a bird unknown to Maryborough—present among the

flowers. The spectacle of these lovely birds, with gay plumage flashing in the sunlight, hovering over the white, pink, or red blossoms, was worth going miles to see. Close by I watched for some time a pair of Pennant Parrakeets (*Platycercus elegans*) feeding in the tree-tops. The White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) was well represented in this part. I noted flocks of over 50 members each.

The Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus inornatus*) was first heard on 13th August, and on 22nd August I was surprised to note a company of Fairy Martins (*Petrochelidon ariel*) flying about a swampy paddock in the vicinity of M'Callum's Creek, and near by I flushed a Pipit (*Anthus australis*). These are the earliest dates on which I have observed these two species. Many of the stationary species are nesting, and some of the earlier-nesting Honey-eaters have their broods abroad. On 25th August I found a Brown Tree-creeper's (*C. scandens*) nest with the unusual clutch of four eggs.* The nest was built in a hollow fence-post at a depth of nearly 3 feet. Viewed by the bright light of a burning leaf, the pink-splashed eggs, resting on their bed of soft down in the narrow post, looked charming indeed.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vic.), 22/11/09.

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CHARLOTTE PLAINS BIRD NOTES.—A few days ago a friend and I took a trip to the Charlotte Plains, a large, open tract of country, 10 or 12 miles from Maryborough. We were unfortunate in our choice of a day, for the weather proved unfavourable.

The native birds we saw most of were the Yellow-rumped Tit (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*), the White-fronted Chat (*Ephthianura albifrons*), the Red-rumped Grass-Parrot (*Psephotus hæmatonotus*), the Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*), the White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina leuconota*), the Miner (*Myzantha garrula*), and the White-browed (*Artamus superciliosus*) and Masked Wood-Swallows (*A. personatus*). With the exception of the Miner and the domed-nest builders, the majority of these birds were nesting. It appears to be a custom among the Wood-Swallows to gather into a flock on the approach of stormy weather. During the afternoon I watched with interest the antics of a large number of these birds (of both species) that had thus flocked, and were performing excited evolutions about the low shrubs and bushes. One nest of the Masked species I found contained two eggs of an unusual shade—a distinct green ground colour, thickly spotted and marked with brown.

Other birds we found nesting in lesser numbers were the Brown Tree-creeper (*Climacteris scandens*), the Whiteface

* Some species of Tree-creeper occasionally lay four eggs.—EDS.

(*Xerophila leucopsis*), and the Cockatoo-Parrakeet (*Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ*). This Cockatoo-Parrakeet, like the pretty little Shell-Parrot, is, I regret to say, not nearly so plentiful as formerly; probably the destruction of so much of the big timber is a cause for this. A friend recently told me of a curious practice of the Cockatoo-Parrakeets. Generally during the warmer months, a number of the birds—perhaps about eight or ten—will gather together on the horizontal branch of a tree, and, sitting quite closely together, caress each other in a most engaging manner, meanwhile chattering away in a low musical tone.

Sundry Hawks and Kestrels, Crows, Plover, White-fronted Herons, and a flock of the handsome Galahs were among the larger birds met with on the trip.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vic.), 22/11/09.

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THE HELMETED HONEY-EATER (*PTILOTIS CASSIDIX*) AS FOSTER-PARENT TO THE PALLID CUCKOO (*CUCULUS PALLIDUS*).—On the 10th of October, 1908, at Cardinia Creek, Beaconsfield, I made my first acquaintance with this rare and beautiful member of the genus *Ptilotis*. Seeing a pair or two of these birds flying about near the creek, and being ignorant as to the position favoured by them as a building site, I made an unsuccessful search for a nest. I decided to sit down and watch them, and this time saw a bird fly down to a tea-tree bush growing out of the creek bank. In this shrub I discovered an unlined nest, and, curiously enough, there was interwoven in the exterior texture of it two pieces of newspaper about 3 inches square.

Again, on 26th September of this year, in company with a young friend, Mr. W. Walton, I again visited the locality, and was on the point of turning back when I saw a golden flash in the sunlight, created by the passage of one of these birds from a tall white gum tree close by to a neighbouring wattle. Motioning my friend to sit down, I soon brought three pairs to within a few feet of us, and we beheld a sight rarely witnessed by human eyes. The whole six birds sat upon a small branch of the bush where I had found the nest in the previous year, and from time to time uttered a quaint little call, somewhat like one of the notes of the Yellow-faced Honey-eater (*Ptilotis chrysops*). Giving my friend instructions as to the position where they were in the habit of building, I went to search a small patch of scrub a few yards further down the creek before attacking the portion where we had seen the birds. He, on the other hand, walked over to the bush which I had pointed out to him as their last year's nesting site, and quickly summoned me with the information that he had found a nest. On reaching his side I beheld a sight that filled me with admiration; for there, suspended about 4½ feet above the creek level, and not more than a couple of

feet below us, was the nest, its contents hidden by the graceful form of our most beautiful of Victorian Honey-eaters. Although we stood so close to the nest the bird showed not the slightest fear, so that I had to tap gently at the side of it to get her to leave. When she did so, and revealed the contents of the nest, my joy knew no bounds, for there were three eggs, and one of them no less than that of the Pallid Cuckoo. The Cuckoo was a new record, and, although a long way from home, it was with cheerful hearts that we retraced our weary footsteps.

Measurements of clutch are :—Honey-eater's—(a) 0.93 x 0.68, (b) 0.91 x 0.68. Cuckoo's—0.95 x 0.68.—F. E. WILSON. Melbourne, 22/10/09.

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BIRD DAY.—*Apropos* of the lists which the Education Department is encouraging of birds seen about the State schools, the following may be cited as an interesting example of the way in which one may read into a list of common birds all the conditions obtaining in or throwing influence upon a certain district. This list comprises all species of birds seen at Pomonal, near the Grampians, Vic., on the first Bird Day, 29th October, 1909:—

Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-throated Tree-creeper
Kestrel	White-eye
Raven	Spinebill
Grey Crow-Shrike	White-naped Honey-eater
Grey Thrush	Tawny-crowned Honey-eater
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	New Holland Honey-eater
Brown Flycatcher	Fuscous Honey-eater
Scarlet-breasted Robin	Yellow-faced Honey-eater
Yellow-breasted Robin	Wattle-Bird
Blue Wren	Striated Pardalote
White-shafted Fantail	Spotted Pardalote
Shining Flycatcher	Swallow
Ground Thrush	Wood-Swallow
Little Field-Wren	Red-browed Finch
Striated Tit	Jackass
Brown Tit	Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Tomtit	Bronze Cuckoo
Buff-rumped Tit	Musk-Lorikeet
Scrub-Wren	Crimson Parrakeet
Ground-Lark	Rosella
White-backed Magpie	Black Cockatoo
Chat	Bronze-wing
White-throated Thickhead	

The presence of the Magpie, Jackass, and Ground-Lark indicate that the country is being opened up, these birds increasing with settlement; yet the Black Cockatoo and Crimson Parrakeet point to the immediate vicinity of mountain ranges, wild and secluded, which they (the Black Cockatoo especially) require for nesting. The Grey Crow-Shrike, White-throated Tree-creeper, Scarlet-breasted Robin, and White-naped Honey-eater belong to quiet forests, while the Ground-Thrush, Yellow-

breasted Robin, White-throated Thickhead, Yellow-faced Honey-eater, and White-shafted Fantail inhabit thickets and such cover as deep and undisturbed gullies afford. Now, apart from the nature of the locality being shown in this manner, the geographical position is indicated by the presence of the Striated Pardalote and Fuscous Honey-eater, both of which belong to northern Victoria; yet, being in association with the White-throated Thickhead and Spotted Pardalote, which are properly species of the southern portion, they show that the locality is somewhere on the junction of the two regions. Withal, the White-backed Magpie and the White-shafted Fantail throw the balance toward southern more than northern avifauna, and at the same time the locality is fixed fairly accurately in the western portion of the State, since the stronghold of this Magpie is the region from about Melbourne through the south-western quarter of Victoria. Thus there can be elaborated from such a list all the main physical facts of the district, provided that the list contains two score or more names of representative birds. This is not so exact as regards soil, climate, altitude, and configuration as a list of representative plants, for instance, might show, but, nevertheless, sufficient material will be evident to make the perusal of authentic bird-lists of great interest. — A. G. CAMPBELL. Pomonal, Vic., November, 1909.

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VISIT TO A NIGHT-HERON ROOKERY.—At a point some 20 miles to the south of Fremantle lie scattered about, close to the coast, a small group of rocky islets and broken reefs, guarding the entrance to Safety Bay, well known on the western seaboard as a spawning ground for the schnapper (*Pagrus*). Through the kindness of Inspector Abjornsson, of the Fisheries Department, I was able to accompany him on one of his trips to the bay during the close season. While the spawning lasts the bay is zealously guarded from disturbance by Italian and other fishermen. The temptation to sweep into the comparatively smooth waters of the bay, or Warnbro' Sound, as it is otherwise called, and secure an easy haul of fish is a very strong one, and were it not for an enthusiastic Inspector great inroads would be made among the spawning fish. Leaving Fremantle at daybreak on 14th November in a comfortable lugger, we ran down past Garden Island, and eventually anchored near one of the open channels in the line of reefs that runs parallel with the coast at a distance of about a mile. The long ocean rollers, meeting with no resistance just here, race on until they reach the beach, which trails like a white ribbon against the blue waters of the bay. From our anchorage we could see the outline of the Darling Ranges, extending into the misty distance to the north and south, and, in between a small cluster of islets, was just

discernible the contour of Rottnest Island, which lies 10 miles or so out to sea from Fremantle. All these outposts of the western coast have been gnawed by the waves, and some of the rocks near Safety Bay have picturesque grottoes and caverns. Perhaps the largest of these is situated on Bird Island, and every year it affords a nesting-place for many hundreds of the beautiful Night-Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*).

Through the night we lay snugly sheltered under the lee of an islet, and at daybreak we left the lugger and leisurely rowed across to the cavern on Bird Island, facing the open ocean. Pulling close up to the entrance, we found every ledge occupied by a sitting bird, and as we entered the grotto great was the scuttling as numbers of the birds rose on the wing and made a hurried exit to the rocks surrounding the entrance. From there they watched us with evident concern as we scrambled from rock to rock, here examining a pretty nest, and there picking up a baby Heron. Rock crabs scuttled away as we moved about, and excitement was added by a large shark seen slowly swimming round beneath our small craft. With lazy movements he made his way, much to the consternation of the smaller fish, which darted to the protection of the seaweed-covered rocks that edged the bottom of this pretty sea-cavern. Scrambling up the rocks to the top of the small island, we found the low bushes thickly tenanted by the Herons, many chicks being seen, apparently about a week old. Another mass of rock close by was the home of hundreds of Cormorants, dozens of whose nests crowned every jutting point of rock. The adventurous member of the party managed to land there with difficulty. The dinghy was rowed close in to the reef that flanked this sanctuary of the birds, and as the small craft bobbed about dangerously near the rocks, the would-be lander jumped from the bows into shallow surf, while with a few strong pulls the boat was shot back again to quieter water away from the reef, which every moment was covered with foam, and then exposed as the backwash, thrown away, ran outwards again to meet and mingle with the oncoming waves. Much interesting work was done among the birds during my short stay, but undoubtedly the pleasantest recollection of the trip is the visit to the Heron rookery, just after daybreak on that beautiful morning.—C. PRICE CONIGRAVE. W.A. Museum (Perth).

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DEVONPORT (TAS.) NOTES.—Double-banded Dottrel (*Ochthodromus bicinctus*).—The afternoon of 16th July was warm and sunny, and, while walking at East Devonport, I noticed about 30 Dottrels feeding in a swampy paddock near the beach. They were very wary, and, not having glasses with me, I was unable to distinguish the bands, but there is little doubt they belonged

to the above-mentioned species. As the conspicuous black band of lower throat changes in winter to ashy-brown, it would not be easy to distinguish at a distance, nor would the chestnut band below. The wings were somewhat curved, and it was a pleasing spectacle to watch the flock rise simultaneously, fly some distance, then wheel before alighting.

Pipit (*Anthus australis*).—Although a certain percentage of Pipits is always to be found here, yet the bulk of them appear to migrate. On 30th August I noticed a pair, with a single one hard by, on the grassy parade by the river, one of their favourite haunts. These seemed to be new arrivals, their plumage being of a very light brown, as if they had undergone a moult just previous to their return. On 2nd September I saw a Pipit soar from a grass-paddock, rising, not in spirals like the Sky-Lark, but in long, graceful undulations, uttering the while a short, sibilant strain, and after reaching perhaps 50 feet of altitude, descended with the same curving flight, still singing. Sometimes, after reaching the climax of the flight, this bird will give one or two downward curves, then descend to earth in a long slope and silently.

Flame-breasted Robin (*Petræca phænicea*).—On the branch of a pine tree near the water, just where three smaller branches grew out, I discovered the nest of a pair of Flame-breasts, containing three young in the downy stage, on 31st August. This is, I believe, quite as advanced as anything yet recorded from Victoria of the same species. The parents are both in brown,* not a trace yet of colour on the male. The only difference I can detect is that one appears rather stouter in build than the other, and the breast of one slightly darker. The nest is built of stringy-bark fibre, with some portions of web stuck on the outside, and is about 8 feet from the ground. The young are fed quite fearlessly while I am sitting close to the tree.

I should like to record the finding of a Pink-breasted Robin (*Petræca rhodinogastra*) within the town boundaries here. Certainly we have some rural spots within the town, and this was at one of them; but it is remarkable, for all that, as this species is usually confined to fern gullies and forest country, and is of shy and retiring habits. On the morning of 4th September, as I passed a thorn hedge, leafless, but covered with dry needles from the pines overhead, and only 100 yards or so from the sea, a male Pink-breast in fine plumage flew from the hedge and disappeared among the pines. Was not able to locate it again, but will keep the spot under observation, as I am in hopes there may be a pair there and that they will nest.

Pipits (*Anthus australis*) have now (6th September) returned

* It has not been previously recorded that this Robin breeds before the male has acquired his nuptial plumage. The fact is interesting.—EDS.

in plenty, and may be seen soaring in undulations to a moderate height, and uttering their somewhat sibilant notes, which can hardly be dignified with the name of song.

On the 8th September the first immigration of *Graucalus parvirostris* took place. At noon a party of twelve individuals passed inland from seaward, flying low—that is, at about 30 to 40 feet up—from north-west to south-east, the wind being light from N.E. with a drizzling rain. Always, when at Devonport in spring, I notice these small companies of "Summer-Birds" passing over in September, and always from the north-west. One would much like to know where they have wintered, this being at present a matter of conjecture.—H. STUART DOVE.
West Devonport.

From Magazines, &c.

NEW ACANTHIZA FOR AUSTRALIA.—In *The Vict. Nat.*, xxvi., p. 55, Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., has described from Mr. H. L. White's collection a new species of *Acanthiza* found in Western Australia. It has been named *A. whitlocki*, after its discoverer, Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock, who obtained it near Lake Way. *A. whitlocki* is apparently closely allied to *A. apicalis*, from which species it may be distinguished by its greyish-brown instead of olive-brown upper parts, by its purer white under parts, and by the broader black sub-terminal band on the tail feathers.

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INTRODUCING GERMAN OWLS INTO NEW ZEALAND.—*The Auckland Weekly News* (7th October, 1909) furnishes a half-tone (photo.) illustration of a cage containing 10 little Owls imported from Germany by the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association. It is stated a number of these little Owls were imported some time ago, and several that had taken up their quarters in farm-yards were said to be doing good work in clearing the place of Sparrows and other small birds. "Other small birds" has rather an ominous signification. May they not be *useful native birds*?

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PETRELS OFF THE NEW SOUTH WALES COAST.—In *The Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.*, xxxiv., p. 419, Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., records an adult male Forster Petrel (*Puffinus gavia*) having been picked up dead by Mr. Wm. Barnes after an easterly gale in September, 1908. In the same volume, p. 589, Mr. A. F. Basset Hull records that he found the White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*) breeding on Tom Thumb Island (Five Islands Group), near Wollongong, on 17th October, 1909. Hitherto this little Petrel had not been recorded as breeding on the New South Wales coast. The island, barely half