

Ptilotis carteri. Carter Honey-eater.—Uncommon.

Meliornis longirostris. Long-billed Honey-eater.—Common round tea-tree swamps further west.

Myzantha obscura. Dusky Miner.—Common.

Anthochæra carunculata. Red Wattle-Bird.—Very plentiful from April to November. Nearly all birds absent from here during remaining months.

Anellobia lunulata. Little Wattle-Bird.—Very rare.

Acanthogenys rufigularis. Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater.—Same as *Glyciophila albifrons*.

Anthus australis. Pipit.—Very common, especially round cleared country.

Tæniopygia castanotis. Chestnut-eared Finch.—Uncommon.

Corvus australis. Raven.—Extremely plentiful; destructive to lambs.

Strepera plumbea. Leaden Bell-Magpie.—Not very plentiful. Very local in habits.

Craicticus nigrogularis. Black-throated Butcher-Bird.—Seen in district for first time last year.

Craicticus leucopterus. White-winged Butcher-Bird.—Very common.

Gymnorhina dorsalis. Varied Magpie.—Very common.

The Black-eared Cuckoo (*Mesocalius palliolatus*, Lath.)

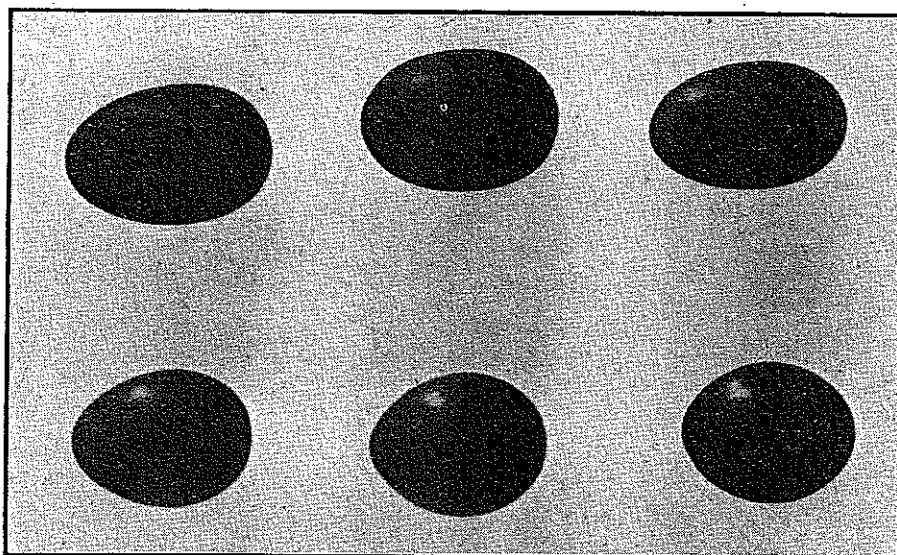
BY P. A. GILBERT AND H. KEANE, Ms.R.A.O.U.

THE first authentic evidence of the presence of the Black-eared Cuckoo in the County of Cumberland, New South Wales, was "an immature specimen procured by Mr. L. Harrison at Manly on 13th January, 1906." * Since that date oological confirmation has been obtained by us. At Flemington, 9 miles west of Sydney, on 16th August, 1908, we found a nest of the little Field-Wren (*Chthonicola sagittata*, Lath.), which contained three eggs. Being an odd-looking set, they were submitted to Mr. A. J. North for examination, and he identified one of them as the egg of *M. palliolatus*. This is the first egg recorded in the County of Cumberland, and is now in Mr. H. Keane's collection. The following are some records :—

- 31/8/08.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and one egg of Little Field-Wren, Flemington, N.S.W.
- 23/10/09.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and one egg of Little Field-Wren, Flemington, N.S.W.
- 17/9/10.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two young Field-Wrens, Flemington, N.S.W.
- 10/12/10.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.

* "Records Aust. Museum," vol. vi., No. 5.

- 19/8/11.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Flemington, N.S.W.
14/9/11.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Flemington, N.S.W.
16/9/11.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Flemington, N.S.W.
26/11/11.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.
14/9/12.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.
14/10/12.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.
3/11/12.—One Black-eared Cuckoo's egg and two eggs Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.
17/11/12.—Found fledgling in nest of Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.
6/12/12.—Saw young one being fed by Little Field-Wren, Blacktown, N.S.W.



Eggs of *Mesocalius palliolatus* (top row).

Eggs of *Chthonicola sagittata* (bottom row).*

FROM A PHOTO. BY P. A. GILBERT.

On 24/12/12 an adult Black-eared Cuckoo was seen flying from the direction of a nest under observation. Closer examination revealed that an egg of the Little Field-Wren had been ejected, and was lying 4 inches from the entrance. Two eggs of the foster-parent and one of the Cuckoo were found in the nest, thus showing, as in common with other Cuckoos, that where a full set already exists one is thrown out and replaced by a Cuckoo's egg. The data here collated demonstrates that the Black-eared Cuckoo evinces a decided preference for the nest of the Little Field-Wren (*C. sagittata*) in Eastern Australia. In Western Australia the nest of the Redthroat (*Pyrholaemus brunnea*) is frequently chosen.

* For natural colour see pl. xiii., fig. 17.

The shape of the Black-eared Cuckoo's egg approximates to that of the Bronze-Cuckoo (*C. plagosus*), being slightly larger in size. In colour it ranges from salmon-chocolate to a deep chocolate, and, when found in the nest of *C. sagittata*, whose eggs it very closely resembles, is readily distinguished by its superficial coating of pigment—which comes off when lightly rubbed with the finger—its elongated shape, and the white composition of its shell, whereas the pigment is incorporated in the shell of *C. sagittata*. The adult appears to do most of its feeding on the ground, as we have frequently flushed it while walking slowly. Its flight resembles that of the two Bronze-Cuckoos (*C. basalis* and *C. plagosus*).

Some Swamp Birds.

BY A. C. STONE, R.A.O.U., MELBOURNE.

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 16th April, 1913.)

I HAVE had opportunities of observing many Australian swamp birds in their natural habitat. The Murray River flats, which I know well, have, up to the last few years, been subject to flooding at longer or shorter periods from time immemorial. Now, huge levee banks serve to keep the river within its bounds, but in an abnormally wet season it is liable to break out at low-lying places that are badly guarded.

It is over twenty years since I first made the acquaintance of the Murray flats and swamps, when but very little had been done in the way of "banking." Many times have I sailed, poled, or rowed a flat-bottomed boat across Lake Boga (which is nearly 3 miles wide), over the flats for a mile or two, direct across the Little Murray ("Barne"),* hardly being able to distinguish the river course (there are no bushes or trees lining its banks near Lake Boga); then away over Pental Island ("Nyetnyetpert Buka-rook"), across the Big Murray ("Millee"), and into the swamps of New South Wales. With shotgun and rifle ready to hand, there was never any difficulty in those good (or bad) old times in keeping the larder more than well supplied. Lake Boga ("Gourrm") is in a large lake system, and most of the lakes are filled with fresh water from the backwaters and creeks at high water mark. The shores of most of the lakes are plentifully sprinkled with the kitchen middens, or ovens ("lukull"), of the now almost extinct aborigines, which tell their tale of a former large population, and vast supplies of fish and game ready to fall victims to the skill of the native hunter.

On such a trip as I have outlined above there was much to please an observer. At one time we would be passing within a short distance of large flocks of Black Swans (*Chenopsis atrata*), "Coonnoar," intent on pulling up the ribbon-weeds ("Narrelle"), which in some seasons grow thickly in Lake Boga, and feeding

* Lake Boga tribal names in inverted commas.