

tame that it accepted a grub from my companion's fingers. It is interesting to watch a Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin when it is perched. Should the stick sway slightly, the bird's body sways in unison, but its head remains stationary. This enables the bird to focus its eyes on any desired spot.—L. G. CHANDLER. Malvern (Vic.), 15/5/15.

Stray Feathers.

Figs Eaten by Butcher-Bird.—A few days ago I noticed a Collared Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*) devouring ripe figs. Whether the bird did so for the sake of the fruit only, or whether it was attracted, in the first instance, by the numbers of insects which infested the figs, I do not know. I have not before known these birds to eat fruit, but this season being exceptionally dry, with a great scarcity of insect life, might account for the change of diet.—L. G. CHANDLER. Melbourne, 21/4/15.

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Extension of Locality.—While working in the bush the other day, I observed a male Olive Whistler (*Pachycephala olivacea*), and, knowing that this species was supposed not to range further north than New South Wales, I thought that I might have made a mistake. However, further observations led to my sending this note to *The Emu*. The olive-brown back, dark grey head, white throat marked with brown, the faint grey band across the chest, and the reddish-brown under surface served as recognition marks.—NOEL V. I. AGNEW, R.A.O.U. Moreton Bay, Queensland.

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Cockatoos in Western Australia—Mr. E. A. Le Souëf states * that he saw a flock of "hundreds of Bare-eyed Cockatoos (*Cacatua gymnopsis*)," apparently in the Moore River district of Western Australia. I should say that the Cockatoos were probably *Licmetis pastinator* (Western Long-billed Cockatoo), which, I know, still occurs about there, and also further north. I have never seen any other species of White Cockatoo about there, except *Licmetis*, and Mr. Le Souëf states that the birds he saw "were using their long bills to dig up yams," which certainly confirms my surmise. Apparently, no specimens were obtained for identification, and, if the birds were *Gymnopsis*, it is probably a first record for that locality, as I can find no previous mention of their having been observed there. Neither Mr. Lawson, in "A Glance at the Birds of the Moore River (W.A.)," † nor Mr. A. W. Milligan, in "Notes on a Trip to the Yandanooka District, Western Australia," ‡ mentions *C. gymnopsis*, but both speak of *Licmetis* as occurring in these localities.—TOM CARTER. Sutton, Surrey, England, 11/3/15.

* *Emu*, vol. xiv., part 3, p. 172. † *Emu*, vol. iv., part 3, p. 132.

‡ *Emu*, vol. iv., part 4, p. 152.

Lyre-Birds' Habits.—In our district most of the farmers have reserved a little patch of native scrub, generally in a corner of a river or creek, which is nearly always occupied by a Victoria Lyre-Bird or two (*Menura victoriae*), and it is painfully noticeable that the male birds always disappear first. This, of course, may be accounted for in many ways. It is open to doubt whether the majority of rabbit trappers would release a male bird in full plumage found in a trap (for birds are sometimes caught), and, again, the male makes its presence known by its mimicry, which attracts the man with the gun, who seeks such spots for rabbits. It is particularly interesting to note the life the female birds lead when deprived of their consorts, and I have known, and still know of, many such cases. Every year the females construct their nests, lay, and sit till assured that they are only wasting time, when they desert; this is repeated while the females live. I have known a female Lye-Bird, when surprised in the bush, to take refuge in a hollow log where the hole was too small for most dogs to follow, and future investigation showed that the bird had emerged safely. A young bird was found dead in its nest and still warm immediately after a violent burst of thunder. Mr. A. H. Edwards, of Glen Alvie, has a female Lyre-Bird, which, apparently having lost her mates, has taken up her abode with the domestic hens, and causes much amusement by her mimicry (for the females can also mimic creditably even for a Lyre-Bird, which is saying much). The bird was still alive and thriving when last I saw Mr. Edwards.—L. C. COOK. Poowong (Vic.), 13/5/15.

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Notes from Poowong (Vic.)—A pair of Tawny Frogmouths (*Podargus strigoides*) has nested for five consecutive years in the same nest, just below our house. Just before the young leave, both the parent birds sit together on the nest for a week or ten days. In warm weather they appear to be very uncomfortable sitting as best they can on their frail structure, with the fluffy nestling bunched in between them. Possibly this is due to impetuosity on the part of the male bird, who has been kept away for so long. This has happened four years out of the five. The first year I removed a young bird, and my sister reared it. Each season, when mating, Frogmouths are much in evidence at night time, and it has become a custom with them to sit on a fence a few feet from my bedroom window and repeat again and again their monotonous "Too-roo, too-roo." They start this call very faintly, swell it as they proceed, then allow the sound to die away again, till finally it ends as faintly as it began. At a very short distance the call sounds like "Oom-oom-oom," but "Too-roo, too-roo" is the best way I can describe it. The call was made by both the birds that we had in captivity. They repeat this call as many as 45 times, at all events in the nesting season. A few weeks ago when on a visit to what we call the open country, between Nyora

and Lang Lang stations, I was surprised and delighted to find some Satin Bower-Birds (*Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus*) in the river-bank scrub. This is the first occasion I have ever known these birds to visit the locality, where it would be safe for them to nest, and suitable, too.—L. C. COOK. Poowong (Vic.), 13/5/15.

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Calls of the Tawny Frogmouth and Boobook Owl.—I was pleased and interested with the notes on birds of the Wangaratta district, Victoria, by Miss G. M. Cheney, which appeared in *The Emu*,* and I am glad to know that another enthusiastic observer is in the field. There cannot be too many observers. On one point—namely, the call of the *Podargus*—I must beg to differ from Miss Cheney. I am familiar with the Southern Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides rossi*), as there are specimens on our property at the Reedbeds, near Adelaide, that are quite tame both by day and night, and I am also familiar with the Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook marmorata*). Specimens of the latter species perch on clothes-line posts and other points of vantage at night, where they can watch for the mice that come to eat the seed given to the birds in our large aviaries. I have spent much time in studying the habits and listening to the calls of both species. I am still of opinion that the "More-pork" notes are uttered by the Boobook Owl, and that the Frogmouth does not use this call, but utters notes which sound like "Boo, hoo, boo, boo," continually repeated, and resemble somewhat the notes of the Bronze-winged Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*), only given in a softer and more dreamy way. I have often stood beneath a tree from which a Frogmouth was calling. I have, also, scores of times been within a few yards of a Boobook Owl and "seen" it calling. One night, while I was watching, motionless, a bird settled on my head, and on another occasion, while I was waiting to get a shot at some Ducks at the edge of swamps at the Reedbeds, a Boobook Owl settled on my gun-barrel. I mention these facts to show that I am as familiar with the birds in question as I am with barn-door fowls in the yard. I am of the opinion that Miss Cheney heard the call of the Owl and mistook it for that of the Frogmouth.—J. W. MELLOR. Fulham, Adelaide (S.A.), 12/5/15.

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Field Notes from Dumbleyung, W.A.—The following interesting notes are extracted from two letters received by Mr. W. B. Alexander, M.A., Keeper of Biology, Western Australian Museum, Perth, from his correspondent, Mr. Martin W. Elliott, of Dumbleyung, near Wagin, W.A. :—

"*Restless Flycatcher* (*Seisura inquieta*).—Of this species Gilbert wrote :—' Its most singular note is that from which it has obtained

its colonial name, and *which is only emitted while the bird is in a hovering position at a few feet above the ground.*' This has often been quoted—e.g., by Mr. Robert Hall in his 'Useful Birds of Southern Australia.' Granting that it is usual for the bird to hover while giving out its peculiar whirring note, to say that it does so at no other time is absolutely wrong. I have several times seen the bird perched while doing so. To give one particular instance. Last season, while burning off, I heard one of these birds strike up its whistle. I looked round, expecting to see it on the wing close to me, but it was not there. Then I caught sight of it some 20 yards away, seated on a piece of burnt poison bush. After some time it flew to a dead mallee sucker and continually let forth its whirr. The bird was about me for fully half an hour, and whistled as much while perched as when hovering. He was the only one present, and, as the nearest timber was 200 yards away, it could not have been from another bird. Further, I could see his throat moving. Afterwards I observed other birds give off their whirring note while perched, although none of them in so marked a manner as this one. The Flycatcher apparently does not nest just in this immediate neighbourhood, but every year, before the breeding season, numbers of them arrive and stay for some time. Dumbleyung, near Wagin, W.A., 25th March, 1915.

'I have been fortunate enough to make two further observations of the Restless Flycatcher, and I think they will prove that my previous statements were correct. The following is my rough note of the first instance:—'18th April, 1915, 8 a.m.—Restless Flycatcher came across from water-hole, hovering over bushes on way, but silent. Flew behind stable and whirred while hovering, then perched on lower wire of small paddock fence (two-wire fence, lower wire 2 feet 6 inches from ground), and whirred for about 25 seconds; flew chain further along and perched on top wire (3 feet 6 inches from ground) and whirred for 30 seconds, then flew to road. No time to follow him. Times of whirring note approximate. These were the distinct whirring notes, and not the preliminary whistle.' The second observation I made this morning on the Dongolocking Road. I heard one of these birds, and pulled up my horse. It crossed the road and perched on a dead mallee about 5 feet high, and whirred for 15 seconds. Flying a couple of chains, it rested on a small bush, and whirred for 12 seconds; then, proceeding to a mallee some 10 feet from the ground it whirred for 28 seconds, and then, going to a lower hush, it whistled for 20 seconds. I took these four times by a second hand of my watch, but, as I had to keep one eye on the bird and the other on my horse (as I was driving a sulky and this sand-plain is plentifully interspersed with mallee and black-boy), I could not take further times, but followed the bird for 10 minutes, and during that time it repeatedly whistled while perched, but only did so twice while in the hovering position. In case it might be urged that this was a solitary bird, and perhaps

suffering from some injury which caused it to perch frequently. I would point out that this spot is 7 miles from where I made my observations on the 18th inst. I have further noticed that when the bird gives a short whirr it is neither so loud nor so clear as the longer one—in fact, in the longer call, say of 30 seconds' duration, it almost seems as though the bird is in reality getting up speed. 19th April, 1915.

"*Tawny Frogmouth (Podargus strigoides)*.—The Boobook Owl may say 'More pork,' but to say that the Frogmouth *does not* is quite incorrect. I have heard it give the cry scores of times. 25th March, 1915."

From Magazines, &c.

Captives Set Free.—In *Bird Notes and News*, vol. vi., No. 5, Mr. W. H. Hudson, F.Z.S., has a charmingly written article entitled "On Liberating Wild Birds." Those who believe that it is foolish to give caged birds their liberty because they will be mobbed and killed by wild birds may change their opinion on reading of Mr. Hudson's experience. He was at Seaford for a few days, and noted in the landlady's kitchen a Bullfinch in a cage that had not been cleaned for many days. Mr. Hudson cleaned out the cage, hung it in a shady place, and gave the Bullfinch greenstuff daily. On the day of his departure he put the bird in a cardboard box. The woman remonstrated, saying that her husband would be angry when he returned home, but put in her purse the half-crown that Mr. Hudson laid on the table in payment for the bird.

"At Lewes," writes Mr. Hudson, "I got out of the train just to give the bird its freedom. I had thought of the Abbey garden as an ideal spot for the purpose; it was private, shaded by trees, full of wild birds, and the keeper I knew as a bird-lover. Once inside the grounds I opened the box, and the Bullfinch fluttered out on to the grass. He appeared wild with astonishment, craning his neck and looking all round, then fluttering a yard or two further away, but unable to fly. Presently he recovered a little from his excitement and began to examine the grass and herbage about him, and then to taste the green buds and leaves. This tasting occupied him some time, and at intervals he looked up and piped his little plaintive note, now becoming louder each time it was uttered. Then all at once the impulse to fly came to him, and, first fluttering over the grass, he succeeded in rising and flew straight away to a distance of 40 or 50 yards, where a stone wall, a remnant of the ancient Abbey, stood in his way. He failed to rise high enough to get over, and so came fluttering to the ground. There he again began looking about him, and, finding something to his liking, spent two or three minutes in biting at it. Then once more he was seized with the desire to fly, and on this occasion rose higher and flew further, and finally