

during the winter and spring. One, which resides in some blue gums passed by me every day, salutes one with "Come up, oh do! Come up, oh do! Kai, kai, kai!" the latter phrasing reminding us of the Maoris' call to food—"Haeremai, kai, kai." Another of the birds, in a friend's garden, calls out frequently, "Cycles go quick, quick, quick!" There is also a single guttural note, "Kwok," much like the well-known sound made by the Yellow Wattle-Bird (*A. inauris*); this is varied by "Kok, kok, kwee, kwee, kwee," and occasionally by a much softer "Too-tee, too-tee, too-tee," apparently a courting note. There is infinite variety of tone, and some of the phrases, such as the first and second cited above, appear to belong to individuals only. I am in great hopes that some of the Brush Wattle-Birds will nest in the trees about the town, as numbers still remain with us, and are evidently courting; they are most entertaining visitors, owing to being in constant movement and almost constant voice. Numbers of White-bearded Honey-eaters (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae*) were with us when the Anellobias arrived, and at first disputed vigorously the right of possession with the larger birds; but after a great deal of scolding and chasing the White-beards were eventually routed, and have betaken themselves to "fresh woods and pastures new."

While spending a few days at Table Cape, North-West Tasmania, in the early summer (November) of last year, I noticed a small party of half a dozen of the Little Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus mentalis*) feeding in the gums which border the River Inglis. They were flying from tree to tree at no great height, searching the foliage for insects. The morning was beautifully fine and sunny, with scarcely any breeze, and remained so during my stay. The trees in which the birds were observed were of the white or "manna" species (*Eucalyptus viminalis*). Numbers of our ordinary Cuckoo-Shrike (*G. parvirostris*) frequent the Table Cape district, but this was the only lot of the smaller species which I saw, and on the single occasion only.

Spine-tailed Swifts have been seen once only this season in the Devonport district, on 2nd January this year, when, at 7.30 p.m., a considerable number passed over at varying heights from N.W. towards S.E., or inland. There had been an electrical disturbance, with heavy rain, on the previous evening.

Native Birds in Captivity.

By EDITH M. JONES, HARRIS PARK.

IN the April issue of *The Emu* you mention a case occurring in the Melbourne Zoological Gardens of a Black Duck and a Muscovy Duck producing hybrid offspring. At Umbercollie station, 7 miles out of Goondiwindi (Qld.), there was a deep hole of water just in front of the house, surrounded by sedges and tall grasses, where

the late Mrs. Treweeke kept Rouen Ducks. These often mated with the wild Duck and produced their hybrid offspring. Mrs. Treweeke presented me with a setting of eggs, but only one showed the wild strain.

In my yard (about half an acre) I had running about among the fowls five Wood-Duck that I had hatched—three Ducks and two drakes—one Teal, two Black Duck, one Whistling-Duck, five Spur-wing Plover, one Scrub-Turkey, and one Crimson-winged Parrot. It was funny to watch the Parrot dodging in and out among the fowls, picking up grain. The Scrub-Turkey was a nuisance; I gave him away. Nothing delighted him so much as to come into the house, jump on the table, and scratch everything off—crochery or glass, it was all one to him. The Teal was a great pet. At meal time, directly she heard the bell ring, she would mount the steps—five of them—into the house, and waddle into the dining-room, where there was always a saucer of bread and milk placed on the hearth for her.

We left Goondiwindi and went to St. George. There I had a good-sized wire-netting enclosure built under the shade of some big Cape mulberry trees. In it I had two Bronze-wing Pigeons and two Topknots, different sorts of Parrots, one Dollar-Bird, two "Happy Family" (Babblers), and other birds, besides a Magpie and Jackass running loose. I have heard people say that Bronze-wing Pigeons cannot be tamed. I used to go into my aviary, in which we put a big branch of sandal-wood tree every fortnight, and the Pigeons would roost on my head. They would gather sticks and try to make a nest, but the "Happy Family" never allowed them to finish, for they would always pull the nest to pieces just as it was nearing completion. The Topknot-Pigeons were very gentle little fellows, but they never attempted to make a nest. The Crimson-winged Parrot would perch on my shoulder and gently tweak my ear, and, if he could reach it, my nose, but he never hurt. When we were leaving St. George I gave most of my birds to a friend, but she wouldn't have the "Happy Family," with the result that the Bronze-wings finished their nest in peace and reared their young the next year; since then I have not heard how they got on. During the big mouse plague in St. George the Jackass used to catch and eat as many mice as he could swallow; then he would sit all day long with the last one in his beak, the tail hanging down. The Magpie would catch the tail in his own beak and waltz round and round the protesting Jackass, crowing with delight. Poor Jackie was too full of mouse to do more than utter angry, hoarse growls. The Dollar-Bird did not do well in captivity. I finally let him go. Of course, I could not get him the kind of food he required.

LAST nesting season I noticed a Blue Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) feeding the female while she was busy building her nest. Is this usual?—A. MACCASKILL, JUN., Coleraine, Vic.