

crowded out by the lusty youngsters. It was most amusing to watch his antics while I was taking the pictures. He tried his best to shield his progeny from my view, but failed utterly. It was not until the young were well grown, about the eighth or ninth day from the egg, that the hen bird allowed me to snap her. The youngsters had huge appetites, and both parents were fully occupied feeding them. It was most interesting to note how the young were fed in their proper turn. Although I watched for some time, I did not detect a single instance of a young one being fed out of its proper turn.—E. M. CORNWALL, R.A.O.U., Mackay, Q.

Stray Feathers

The "White Gallinule" (*Notornis alba*), an extinct bird.—In addition to the Dinornis, or Moa, there is another Australasian bird—once, it is said, fairly common on Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands—which has also become extinct, namely, the "White Gallinule" (*Notornis alba*), which is described and figured in "Phillip's Voyage to New South Wales," published in 1789. "This beautiful bird" (says the account given in the famous "Voyage") "resembles the Purple Gallinule in shape and make, but is much superior in size, being as large as a dunghil (*sic*) fowl. The length from the end of the bill to that of the claws is two feet three inches; the bill is very stout, and the colour of it, the whole top of the head and the irides red. The rest of the plumage is white, and the legs red. This species is pretty common on Lord Howe's Island, Norfolk Island, and other places, and is a very tame species." The male was said to have had some blue on the wings, therefore, apparently, this description refers to a female specimen. One "A. Latham" is the artist responsible for the painting of the "White Gallinule" reproduced in "Phillip's Voyage," and it is doubtless the first drawing made from a specimen of this long-extinct bird, the tameness of which, coupled with its limited range, no doubt assisted in sealing its fate. The compilers of "The Voyage" gratefully acknowledge the assistance they received from "Mr. Latham" as regards the descriptions, etc., of the birds and beasts figured in it, and therefore Latham is probably the individual responsible for the description of the "White Gallinule." A specimen of this extinct bird is said to exist in a museum at Vienna. It corresponded, no doubt, to the *Notornis* of New Zealand, once believed to be extinct, but which, I think, is still seen occasionally in remote parts of that country. Birds of the *Notornis* species have a remarkable resemblance to the Bald Coot, but are built on a much larger scale. There is apparently no record of the time at which *Notornis alba* became extinct, but in all probability the mutineers of the "Bounty" during their residence at Lord Howe Island used this bird as food, and so helped in its extinction.—H. V. EDWARDS, R.A.O.U., Bega, N.S.W.

PLATE XLVIII.



I. Black Bell-Magpies (*Strepera fuliginosa*) and Noisy Miner (*Myzantha garrula*) feeding with fowls during the heavy snowfall at The Steppes, Tasmanian Highlands. Note the Miner's legs out-stretched to support itself in the snow.

II. Black Bell-Magpies: three on ground, one on fence being fed. (See "Emu" Oct., 1921, p. 147)

Photos. by Miss Madge Wilson. The Steppes, Woodbridge, Tasmania.

Blue Wren-Warblers Roosting High.—Returning one afternoon (October, 1919) from a ramble in the bush, I passed through a patch of bracken which is always the haunt of a family of Blue Wren-Warblers (*Malurus cyaneus*). It was just after sunset, and I paused—as always—to watch the busy little creatures hopping about on the fallen timber. A tall stringy-bark tree grew on the edge of the bracken-patch. It went up straight quite 25 feet without a branch, and at the end of the first branch grew a large bunch of mistletoe (*Loranthus*), quite 30 feet from the ground. Whilst I watched the Wrens the little blue male suddenly flew to this big tree, and clinging sideways to the rough bark of the trunk, and (looking like a little jewel) began calling to his family in imperious tones till all the little brown birds came fluttering out of the bracken. Then one after the other, led by the little blue male, they all hopped up the rough bark of the tree, like miniature Tree-Creepers, until, coming opposite the pendant bunch of mistletoe, they fluttered across the intervening space into it and all disappeared amongst its thick leaves, evidently settling down there for the night, as they appeared no more that evening.

I have never seen Wrens climb up a tree like this before, though others may have done so. Their small round wings could scarcely carry them so high in a single flight, or else the exertion was more than they cared to undertake, so they took advantage of the rough-barked trunk as a stairway to their aerial bedroom.—(Mrs.) S. P. W. NORTON, R.A.O.U., Tamworth, N.S.W.

State Secretaries' Reports

QUEENSLAND.

On 27th October, when some other States were preparing for the annual celebration of Bird Day, Queensland was doing its part by passing through its Parliament a modern and efficient measure for the protection of native fauna. This is the most important development of recent years in the movement for the preservation of the birds and animals of the tropics and sub-tropics, many of which are unique and wonderful. It is also a development that has taken a good deal of organising. Birds have no votes, and the unfortunate fact is that there are still some politicians who measure their value accordingly.

Queensland's present bird protection legislation is antiquated. Back in the good year 1877 it dawned on some perceptive citizens that "native birds are disappearing rapidly from some of the districts of this colony, and it is expedient to protect them and their progeny"; wherefor, the first Native Birds Protection Act came into being. Seven years later the Act was reinforced with provision for the establishment of sanctuaries for native game. Nothing had been added to or taken away from this legislation