

The Occurrence of *Acanthiza hamiltoni* *consobrina* in Victoria.

BY EDWIN ASHBY, F.L.S., R.A.O.U., Blackwood, South Australia.

ON the occasion of the R.A.O.U. camp-out at Murrayville, Victoria, 1924, and my one opportunity of collecting in what is locally known as "the Desert" some 11 miles S.W. of the township, Mr. J. A. Ross and myself saw several small companies of an *Acanthiza*, scattered through the mallee and heath country. Unfortunately, owing to limitations of time, I personally only secured one skin.

It was found impossible to reconcile the skin with the form of *hamiltoni* previously recorded from Victoria, and I therefore brought it to Melbourne for the purpose of further examination and comparison with the examples in the H. L. White collection. Messrs. A. J. and A. G. Campbell, together with myself, have come to the conclusion that it is the desert form that occurs at Leighs Creek and the Everard Range in South Australia, and which was described by Mathews under the name *Acanthiza pusilla consobrina*, from examples collected at the former locality.

As compared with the western examples from the Everard Range, the shade of the whole of the upper side, including the rump, is identical (rump "snuff-brown," Ridgway). This is the lightest and most pallid form of the species, but the Murrayville example is not as dark in the rump as are skins from Palm Valley, Central Australia, collected by Whitlock. On the other hand, the striations of the Murrayville specimen are blacker and broader than either. The fact that the crescents on the forehead are less in number and larger in size is an indication that it is a female—it was impossible to determine the sex when skinned.

This is the first time that this pallid form has been taken in Victoria, and it constitutes a remarkable extension of the range of *consobrina*. As it is only separable from the interior bird by the existence of darker and broader dashes on throat and breast, any attempt to distinguish it by giving it a distinctive name would in my opinion be a dis-service.

Camera Craft.

The White-cheeked Honeyeater (*Meliornis nigra*).—This noisy and brightly-plumaged bird is quite common on the North Shore line (Sydney). It is often heard and seen in gardens where coral trees are growing. Towards the end of August, 1925, I found a pair of these birds nesting in some thick undergrowth along the side of a small creek at Wahroonga, and spent many patient hours trying to photograph the adult birds at home, but without much success. About the same time next year (1926) I was shown several nests of this Honeyeater at Gordon, a few miles away, and it was there that the accompanying photograph was taken. The two young



BRUSH BRONZEWING ON NEST. "ONE NEEDS TO HAVE A CLOSE VIEW OF THESE PIGEONS IN LIFE TO FULLY APPRECIATE THEIR BEAUTY."

Photo. by N. Chaffer.

birds were almost ready to leave the nest so I took them out and placed them on a twig and focussed my camera on to it. As soon as I settled down about 15 yards away, with the release, the parent birds descended, and I had no difficulty in photographing them. When finished I placed the young birds back in their nest and they left of their own accord about two days later.—H. C. BARRY,* Wahroonga, Sydney (7/3/27).

* * *

Photographing the Brush Bronzewing.—On 17th October, 1926, while on a ramble on some of the uplands near Middle Harbour, I had the good fortune to flush a Brush Bronzewing Pigeon (*Phaps elegans*) from its nest. I considered it somewhat of a find, for this bird is getting scarce in these parts. Bush fires, which are of frequent occurrence in the hot weather, are, I believe, the chief cause of their decreasing numbers. Pairs are occasionally met with in the open heathy country, where the seeds of the numerous flowering shrubs form an abundant food supply.

The nest was placed on the ground in a somewhat swampy area of grasses and small dwarfed banksias and other shrubs. Surrounding this comparatively cleared area was a growth of larger banksias, dwarf eucalypts and other trees. The nest was the usual frail structure of sticks, built by all the Pigeons, and contained two eggs which from their faint pinkish tinge were seen to be fresh.

I erected the camera in front of the nest, and, having camouflaged it with bushes, ran out the releasing thread to its fullest length, about forty feet. Returning in about an hour's time, I could make out from a distance the Pigeon sitting on the nest, and at once secured a photo. I approached very quietly, but the bird flew up with startling suddenness when I was about ten feet away and dropped among the bushes after a short swift flight. A little later I noticed it peering at me from beneath the dark shadow of some banksias growing on a miniature rocky plateau about thirty feet away. If I made any movement the bird would hurriedly run off among the bushes, to reappear quickly when all was still.

I again visited the nest on 31st October, and, quietly approaching, had a good view of the Pigeon sitting on the nest. It was in splendid plumage, the rich deep chestnut of the upper surface forming a pleasing contrast to the soft grey of the breast. The bronze of the wings was conspicuous as it glinted in the sun's rays. One needs to have a close view of these birds in life, and in their natural surroundings, to fully appreciate their beauty. The nest still contained two eggs. I made another attempt to photograph the bird, but gave it up after an hour's wait.

A further visit was made on 7th November. This time the nest contained a young bird a few days old and an addled egg. I was again successful in securing a photo of the bird at the nest. The bird was very timid, though at the first approach to the nest she would sit very close and not leave until I was almost upon her. On subsequent visits during the same day she would fly off before I could get near.—NORMAN CHAFFER, Roseville, *N.S.W.

*The writer of this note is only 17 years old.—EDITOR.