

P. occidentalis by Ramsay, this species now being correctly placed in the synonymy of *P. pectoralis*. The bird was sent to the authorities at the South Australian Museum for comparison with a specimen of *P. rufogularis* at that institution, and my later identification has been confirmed.

PARDALOTES.—Mr. Sutton called attention to the fact that Fletcher and I listed the Striated Pardalote (*P. striatus*), from Mount Lyndhurst, whereas he and others contend that the birds from that locality should be recorded as the Red-tipped Pardalote (*P. ornatus*). We have since examined a very large series of Pardalotes from which we drew the following conclusions: The Yellow-tipped Pardalote (*P. affinis*), appears to be a distinct species. The lemon-yellow tips to the primary coverts is constant in shade, while the only white on the wing is the thin edge of the outer web of the second primary; neither of these characters varies in the slightest degree over a series of eighteen specimens. The red tip of *P. ornatus*, the orange tip of *P. striatus*, and the grey of the back and mantle, as well as the size of the white patch on the wing, which North described as characteristic of *P. assimilis*, all vary to a considerable degree. The tips to the primaries range from a pale orange to a clear red, almost crimson, while the extent of the white patch on the wing varies from a single stripe to a comparatively large patch, and no separation can be made into groups. We examined about sixty specimens of these three species, and agree with the compilers of the Checklist that *P. assimilis* is synonymous with *P. ornatus*; but also we feel that North was right when he placed *P. ornatus* in the synonymy of *P. striatus*. The specimen collected by Mr. Troughton is the red-tipped colour variety, but we regard it as *Pardalotus striatus*.

Stray Feathers.

The Queensland Black-and-White Petrel.—On June 6th 1770, during Captain Cook's celebrated voyage along the Australian coast, a small Shearwater was captured in latitude 19° 0' S., longitude 213° W. (of London), a locality off Townsville, Queensland. Dr. Solander prepared a Latin description of it and gave to it the manuscript name of *Nectris nugax*. In his *Birds of Australia*, Vol. II, p. 72, 1912, Mathews included this bird with the vernacular name given at the head of this article and the scientific name *Puffinus lherminieri nugax*.

In a recent paper "On Certain Forms of *Puffinus assimilis* and its Allies" (*American Museum Novitates*, No. 276, Sept. 8, 1927), Dr. R. C. Murphy records that a bird agreeing with

Solander's description was obtained at Melapav (= Meralav or Star Peak) Islet in the Banks Group of the New Hebrides on Sept. 14, 1926, by Mr. R. H. Beck during the Whitney South Sea Expedition. The specimen is a female with enlarged ovaries, so presumably this islet is the breeding-place of this long-lost bird.

After examination of three hundred specimens from about thirty localities in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, Dr. Murphy agrees with Mr. Mathews that the small Shearwaters of this group are divisible into two species, *Puffinus assimilis* and *P. lherminieri*, each with numerous subspecies. On the other hand, Mr. Loomis and Dr. Hartert, who have also discussed these birds recently, regard them all as forms of one species, for which the former used the name *Puffinus obscurus* and the latter *P. assimilis*. In my book, *Birds of the Ocean*, now in the press, I have followed Dr. Hartert's view, as the most recent then published, but perusal of Dr. Murphy's paper has satisfied me that the two species can be satisfactorily diagnosed.

In the Checklist (Second Edition), 1926, there is no reference to *Puffinus lherminieri nugax*. When a third edition is contemplated Audubon's Shearwater, as *P. lherminieri* is generally known in the vernacular, should be included as a New Hebrides bird which has once occurred on the Queensland coast. But perhaps before that time further specimens may come to light and it may prove to be a regular visitor to north Queensland seas, or even to breed on some of the islands of the Barrier Reef.—W. B. ALEXANDER, Croydon, England (Nov. 16, 1927).

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Wedge-tailed Eagle Attacks Child.—About eighteen months ago or thereabouts, there appeared in a leading Perth newspaper a rather sensational paragraph describing an attack made by a large Eagle on an infant sleeping in a cradle under the verandah of a settler's cottage. The incident occurred in forest country near Manjimup, which is situated about mid-way between Perth and the South Coast. Even to a casual reader the account required confirmation, for it was difficult to see how an Eagle flying around could be aware of the child under the shelter of the verandah. Mr. D. L. Serventy and I both tried to clear the matter up, but we both failed to obtain first-hand evidence of what actually occurred. We did, however, secure particulars that throw rather a different light on the story.

It appears that the owner of the cottage kept a flock of tame Pigeons and these may have attracted the Eagle to the vicinity, for it had been seen for some time in the neighbourhood. The climax came when one day, as a little girl was crossing the adjacent clearing, the Eagle made a swoop after

her in a menacing manner, following her right up to the verandah as she ran screaming into the house. The verandah was an enclosed one, but fitted with a wide unglazed window, open during the day time, but closed at night by a big flap-shutter. On the sill of this window the Eagle perched. Incidentally the infant happened to be asleep under the verandah at the time, but as far as we could learn the Eagle made no attack upon it. Hearing the little girl's screams, a man working nearby ran over to see what was the matter. Seeing the Eagle on the window-sill he let fall the flap-shutter, closed the verandah door, and made it prisoner. With the aid of a chaff-bag, in which the Eagle entangled its claws, he finally captured it. Of course there was a scuffle, but neither the infant nor the little girl received any injury. The Eagle was sent up to Perth and I saw it a few days later. As far as plumage goes it was an adult bird, and judging from its size a male. The wing expanse was said to be seven feet three, but I estimated that the wings would have to be stretched to their extreme limit to attain this width.

I have written the foregoing account which is interesting from what follows: Mr. A. Lawrence, of Young's Siding, near Albany, and whom I know personally, writing under the date Dec. 2nd last, remarks—"I had noticed for a little time a pair of Eagles hanging about the paper-bark flats at the bottom of the home paddock. I did not interfere with them in any way as I suspected they were building in the vicinity. Subsequently I saw only the female bird and concluded the male had been shot by some gun fiend. On a recent Sunday a little boy, aged six, was playing down on the flats about one hundred and twenty yards from the house, as he was often accustomed to do. Suddenly we were alarmed by his terrible screams; my wife and daughter rushed out to see what was wrong and I followed a minute later. There is no doubt about what we saw—the Eagle was attacking the child. Running to his assistance and our loud shouts drove the bird away, but so deliberate was the bird that it only retired to the top of a broken gum, from which it watched the mother and daughter soothing the terrified child. I hurried back to the house for a gun, but when I got back the Eagle had cleared off. The child luckily escaped any physical injury, but the sight of any large bird of prey passing over still sends him running into the house in alarm."

Mr. Lawrence assures me that the foregoing is a plain, unembellished account of what took place and I have no hesitation in accepting his word. He takes an intelligent interest in nature and as in my case—both of us being Englishmen—the large birds of prey are always an attraction from their great rarity in our native country. In answer to a few questions I put to him, he further writes that the little

boy was wearing a dark blue jersey inconspicuously piped with red, he wore no shoes or stockings and no cap, but he has naturally a mop of bright curly hair. A careful examination of the ground nearby revealed no animal remains or anything likely to attract an Eagle. The boy is a bright little fellow and he declares the Eagle swooped down upon him from the air as he was returning to the house. Is it possible that the mop of light curly hair may have attracted the Eagle to the boy?

I know the Young's Siding district intimately. There are always Eagles about, especially Sea-Eagles, but Wedge-tailed Eagles also are frequent. I think now that the district is so much settled that pairs which formerly nested in the big karri trees have retired to the line of coastal cliffs between Knapp's Head and West Cape Howe. I have always found Eagles very wary. I have stood in their nests and handled their young when quite alone, but beyond flying round at a safe distance and uttering yelping cries, they have made no hostile effort in protection of their young. I regard an authentic case of an Eagle attacking a well-grown active child as of especial interest.—F. LAWSON WHITLOCK, West Leederville, Western Australia (Jan. 6, 1928).

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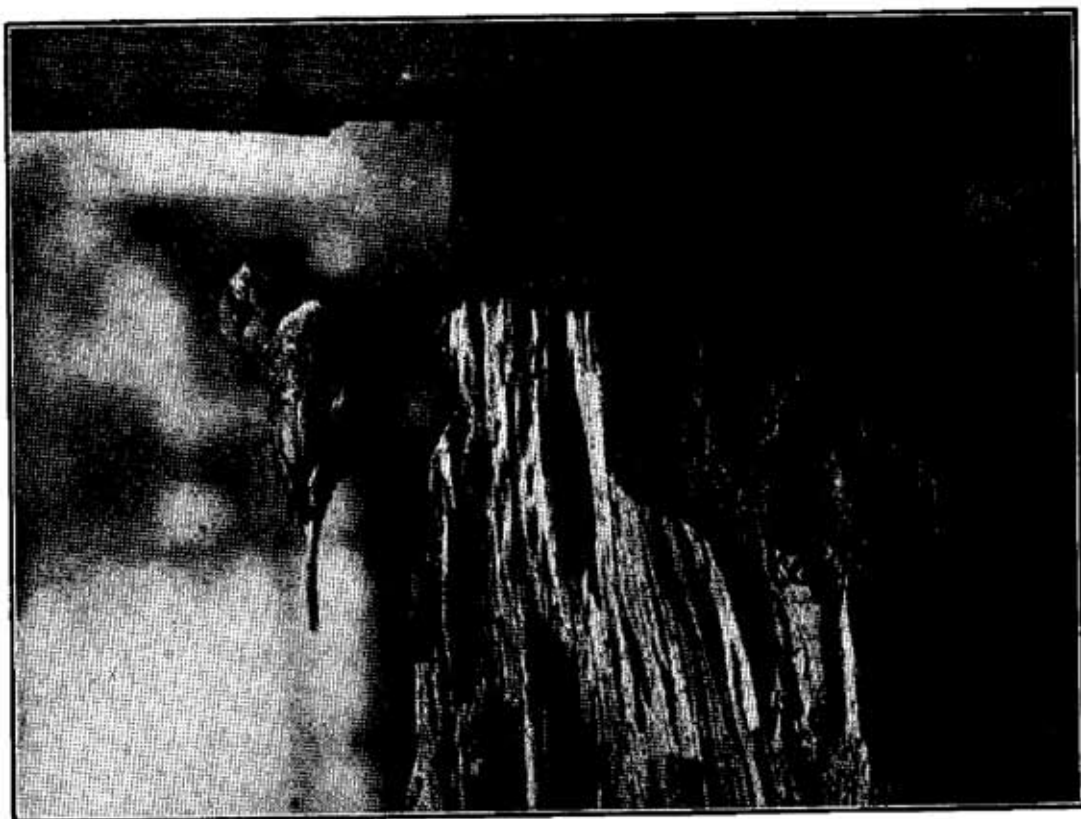
A Supposed Combination Clutch among Cockatoos.—

An acquaintance of mine, Mr. J. Grogan, of Bassendean, a keen local aviculturist, told me of an interesting case of a supposed combination clutch among Cockatoos which came under his notice recently. On October 21, 1927, he was at Minginew on the Irwin River, and took some young Cockatoos out of a nest in a salmon gum. Two of the birds, which were all of the same age and in the pin-feather stage, were Major Mitchells (*Kakatoë leadbeateri*), and the third was a Galah (*Kakatoë roseicapilla*). Mr. Grogan considered that the Galah was too aggressive a bird to contract a union with the meeker Major Mitchell, and came to the conclusion that the birds were not hybrids, but the result of a combination clutch. He surmised that the nest was originally occupied by a Galah which laid one egg and then met with a misadventure. A pair of Major Mitchells then immediately entered into possession, laid two eggs and hatched them with the original one. Mr. Grogan noted that the head of the young Galah was of a paler pink than in normal birds. Adult Major Mitchells had been seen in the vicinity of the nest for the previous six weeks. Dr. W. Macgillivray records in *The Emu* (XXII, p. 325), instances of a natural cross between a Galah and a Major Mitchell, and between a Little Corella (*Kakatoë sanguinea*), and a Galah.—D. L. SERVENTY, Subiaco, W.A. (November 19, 1927).

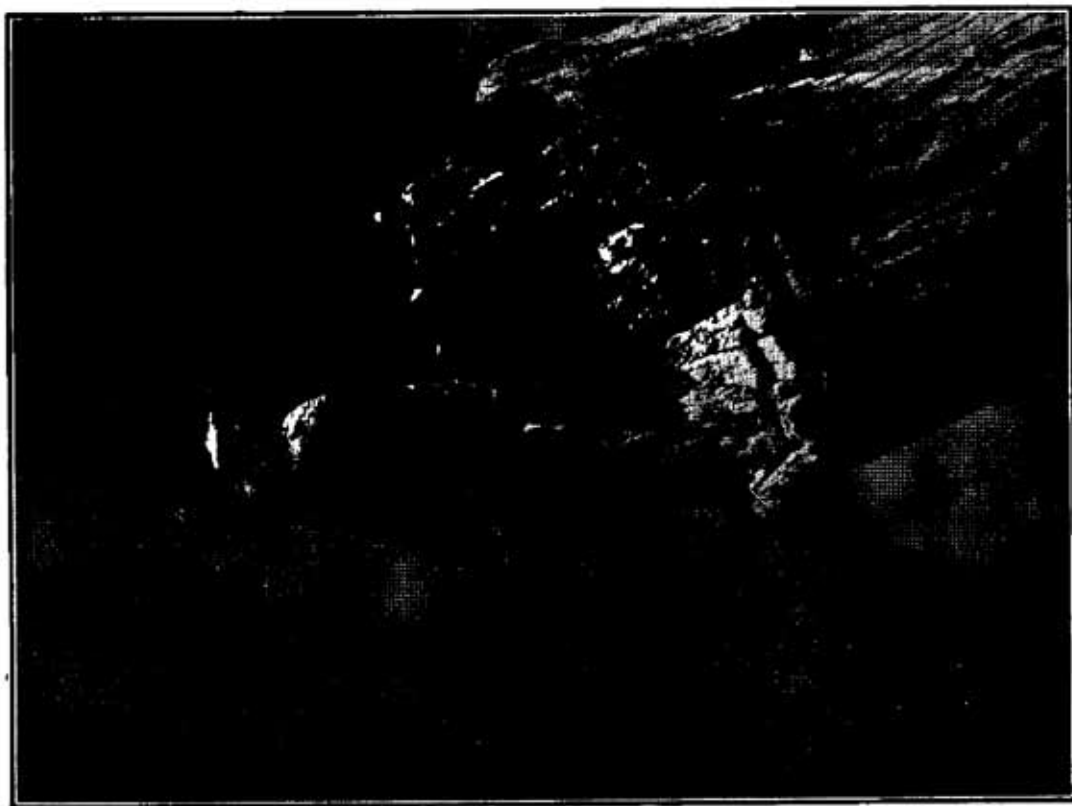
Jacky Winter's Low Nesting.—I have been greatly interested in the notes on the above subject which have recently (1st April, 1927, Vol. XXVI, p. 281, and 1st January, 1928, Vol XXVII, p. 216 and Plate 30), appeared in *The Emu*. My experience of *Microeca fascians* is not nearly as long as that of either of the two observers who have contributed notes; but in respect to the north-western Mallee country of Victoria it is not negligible. Had I been asked to state the rule and the exception, I should have placed them in the reverse order. Until on October 4th, 1926, on a visit to the Avoca district in central Victoria, I found a Jacky Winter's nest ten feet from the ground, I was not aware that it ever nested so high. Looking through my notes for that year I find that at Kow Plains on September 18 I saw three nests of this bird. One was ready for the eggs, one contained two eggs and was placed exactly as the one in the photograph of Mr. Wolstenholme, the dry tree in this case being a fallen Murray cypress pine (*Callitris robusta*), while the third contained two baby birds apparently very recently hatched. All three of the nests were so low that one could look into them without climbing. It might be argued that so small a nest placed higher might readily be missed. Belcher, however (*Birds of Geelong*, p. 222), mentions a habit, the knowledge of which is helpful to the observer: "In nearly every case, if the birds have a nest with eggs and are watched, one of them will eventually fly directly to it—a habit which is rarely noted in other birds." For this reason the nest of *Microeca fascians*, although one of the tiniest, is also as a rule one of the easiest to find.—WALTER WALTERS, The Rectory, Scottsdale, Tasmania (Jan. 30, 1928).

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A Fruitful Bird Day.—On November 6th, 1927, accompanied by Messrs. H. Wolstenholme and M. S. Sharland, I spent a very pleasant day near St. Mary's, an area of partly cleared forest country about 30 miles west of Sydney. Fourteen species of birds were found nesting. On arrival we visited the "melaleuca patch" described in *The Emu* of July, 1923, in which five species of black-and-white birds were nesting. It now contained a sixth black-and-white bird—on the topmost fork of one of the trees about 20 feet from the ground was the nest with two young of the Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*). The only other occupant of the patch was a Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*), with eggs. Several other nests of this bird were also found. Close by, in the corner post of a small stockyard, a Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), had its nest containing young birds. On a visit five years ago, when the accompanying photo was taken, the Whiteface nested in the



WHITEFACE AT NESTING HOLLOW IN FENCE-POST.



BROWN TREE-CREEPER AT NESTING HOLLOW IN STUMP.

Photos. by N. Chaffer.

post on the opposite corner. This species seems to be on the increase about here, and is becoming fairly plentiful. It has not, I believe, been previously recorded east of the Blue Mountains in this region. The bird was an easy subject to photograph, being quite tame at the nest. Another pair of Whitefaces were noted building behind the loose bark of a dead tree.

Mr. Wolstenholme found the nest of a Brown Tree-Creeper (*Climacteris picumnus*), in a stump about three feet high. The entry to the nest was made from the top of the stump, and the nest, containing three eggs, was placed about twelve inches down. The bird was photographed on a subsequent visit and proved rather shy. She approached very cautiously, flying about in the neighbourhood of the nest from stump to stump repeatedly before facing the camera. She would soar to the foot of a stump and, climbing to the top, would remain motionless watching me for minutes at a stretch. Food was obtained as often from the ground as from the trunks of the trees.

Two nests of the beautiful Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*), each with eggs, were found in isolated melaleuca trees. Other nests found were several Magpie-Larks (*Grallina cyanoleuca*), a Brown Flycatcher (*Microeca fascians*), two Wagtails (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), a Blue Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*), a Little Thornbill (*Acanthiza nana*), a Red-tipped Diamond-Bird (*Pardalotus ornatus*), a Grey Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), and several Diamond Firetails (*Zonæginthus guttatus*). Fairy Martins (*Hylochelidon ariel*), nested in numbers under the culverts.

On a subsequent visit I found that tragic happenings had occurred. The two Red-capped Robins' nests had wholly disappeared; one Wagtail's nest hung in shreds; and the Thrush's nest was deserted. Two large goannas seen along the creek-side probably accounted for the disappearance of the nests and eggs.

An interesting bird met with was the Double-banded Finch (*Steganopleura bichenovii*), a small flock of which was seen. I did not think it ranged so far south.—N. CHAFFER, Chatswood, N.S.W. (Dec. 20, 1928).