

generally confined to the tea-tree belts which border the saltbush plains. It is a very confiding bird, and during autumn and winter may be seen flitting about in suburban gardens. Usually it is a late breeder, as nests are mostly found during November and December. Its wonderfully-constructed nest is a model of bird architecture, being neatly made of fine threads of bark and covered with cobwebs. This bird will readily desert its nest, particularly if watched during building operations.—D. DICKISON, Hon. Secretary, R.A.O.U.

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The Yellow-winged Honeyeater (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*) is one of the earliest nesters in this district, and nests of this species can be found at any time from July to February. The birds seem to prefer to build the nests in the furze bushes, and in any patch of furze can be found a number of nests. The nest is built of grass and spider webs, and is usually located in the fork of a clump of furze a few feet from the ground.—CLARENCE L. LANG, R.A.O.U., Ararat, Vic.

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The Fuscous Honeyeater (*Meliphaga fusca*) is one of the commonest Honeyeaters of the Ararat district, and one of the few Honeyeaters that remain with us all the year. The nests are easily found, and usually several can be located in a position suitable for photographing. The bird in the accompanying photograph built its nest about four feet from the ground, in a bunch of leaves of a eucalypt, situated at the side of a main road. The nests are generally built of sheep's wool, grass and spider webs, and the birds usually select the open timber for nesting.—CLARENCE L. LANG, R.A.O.U., Ararat, Vic.

Stray Feathers

The Brush Turkey.—Though they take no interest in their progeny once they are hatched, it has always been accepted that Brush Turkeys (*Alectura lathamii*) remain about their nesting mounds during the period of incubation. Partly, no doubt, this is with a view to keeping off such marauders as the monitor lizard, but also, we are told, with a view to regulating the temperature of the mound, by piling on extra material should the heat unduly fall, or by scratching off some of the top layer should it rise above a certain point.

Something of this sort must, of course, be necessary to meet the changes caused by an unusual spell of unbroken sunshine or a long run of wet days.

As to how they formed their opinion of the temperature I have never seen any suggestion. However, when recently at Coomooboolaroo, Mr. C. A. Barnard told me he had been very interested once at the Melbourne Zoological Gardens in watching a male bird of this species taking the "thermometer readings" of its mound. It scratched a fairly deep hole, about nine inches in depth, in the mound, and then stepping forward pressed the wattles of the lower part of its neck against the bottom of the hole; the wattles, he particularly noticed, being at the time considerably inflated or distended, the latter being probably the correct word, as the enlargement would most likely be caused by blood pressure and not by air.

This to me seems a most interesting observation, as wattles have always been looked upon as ornaments of sexual distinction only, and it opens up an interesting field of investigation in connection with other wattled birds.

May not the wattles in some cases have other uses than mere appearance?

Mr. Barnard being one of our most observant field-naturalists, and a past-president of the R.A.O.U., I feel his observation should be placed on record.—F. L. BERNEY, R.A.O.U., Longreach, Qld.

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The Galah: Fighting the Rolypoly.—Mr. David G. Stead (President of the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia) has discovered that the beautiful Galah or Rose-breasted Cockatoo (*Kakatoë roseicapilla*) is performing a work of great utility. These birds, he states, are to be seen all over the west eating the seeds of the pernicious and spinous rolypoly bush, which invades the inland country. The far west is in a good season and in a glorious condition, and the hundreds of thousands of pink-breasted Galahs against the green background are like little coral birds set in emerald. The rolypoly weed is found from the Mallee in Victoria to the back of Central Queensland from the region of 15 to 18 inches rainfall. The discovery in regard to the Galahs has been brought under the notice of the Linnæan Society and the Field Naturalists' Club.

Mortality Amongst Mutton-Birds.—Can you tell me the reason of the great mortality in Mutton-Birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) about November each year? For the last four years one could pick up dead birds by dozens on this (Terrigal) and adjoining beaches. I am sending this note along, as it may be of interest to some of the members.—Capt. A. J. MACARTHUR ONSLOW, R.A.O.U.

Galahs on the New South Wales Coast. — It may be of interest to you and your readers to hear that on November 21st last (1928). I saw the unusual sight of a flock of Galahs. They were flying along the beach heading in a northerly direction. I have been since told that they had been seen in the district for some days previous to my seeing them. I have never seen these birds (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*) east of the dividing range before. These birds were probably driven to the coast from want of food, owing to the intensely dry time inland. — Capt. A. J. MACARTHUR ONSLOW, R.A.O.U.

Reviews

[*Birds of the Ocean: A Handbook for Voyagers*, containing descriptions of all the sea birds of the world, with notes of their habits and guides to their identification, by W. B. Alexander, M.A. (Camb.), Vice-president Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, Corresponding Fellow American Ornithologists' Union, Member Sociedad Ornithologica del Plata. With 140 illustrations. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. The Knickerbocker Press, 1928. 428 pages.]

Gould found that much confusion existed concerning ocean birds. Despite the publication of some special works, such as *Monograph of the Petrels* and the good work done by Messrs. Mathews and Iredale in connection with Australian birds, confusion and want of knowledge were still apparent.

With the publication of *Birds of the Ocean: A Handbook for Voyagers*, by our old friend, W. B. Alexander, M.A., well remembered as a successful editor of *The Emu*, the era of want of knowledge in accessible form has definitely ended. Following the characteristic completeness and carefulness of Mr. Alexander's works, he has included every bird that could be fairly claimed as an "ocean bird" in its widest sense. Not only are Petrels and their allies, Shearwaters, Fulmars, Storm Petrels and Diving Petrels and Albatrosses included, but Gulls, Terns, Skimmers, and Skuas are treated. Penguins occupy a compact section. The northern Auks, Guillemots and Puffins are described in full detail. Frigate Birds, Pelicans, Gannets, Cormorants, and Tropic-Birds are described, and even the northern-breeding, plover-like, Phalaropes, with lobed, coot-like feet, are included.