

These were apparently not of sufficient length, and it then somewhat startled my wife by picking at her ear as she thought. In the meantime I decided to try and obtain some snaps. I removed my hat and obtained a snap. The bird flew away, but after some minutes returned. On its return it examined me closely and then hopped on my shoulder and proceeded to extract hairs from my head. He repeated this several times and on the latter occasions brought along his mate who was apparently of less heroic strain, for despite every encouragement failed to join in, but remained an interested onlooker. Both my wife and I feel certain that the bird was the White-eared Honeyeater, No. 358 of *An Australian Bird Book*. On mentioning the incident on our return to the boarding-house we were informed that during the previous year a party of girls had reported a somewhat similar incident when these birds pulled threads out of their woollen scarves. I have seen the Blue Wren on numerous occasions collecting hairs from cows and horses, but this is the only occasion of which I have any knowledge of birds tackling the human.—WALTER H. CROWE, 33 Garnet Street, Preston.

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Nesting Sites of the Grey Shrike-Thrush.—In *The Emu*, Vol. XXVIII., p. 186, H. Wolstenholme mentions his having twice observed a nest of the Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Coluricincla harmonica*) on the remains of a nest of the Red-browed Finch (*Ægitha temporalis*). At Beaconsfield on 17th November, 1928, C. F. Ladwig and I saw a similar case, and secured a photograph of the nest. In this instance the nest of the Finch was quite fresh, for some of the grass of which it was composed still retained a tinge of green. The Finches, which had been ousted from their home, had built a new nest a few yards away. Once I found a nest of the Grey Shrike-Thrush on the ground in long grass, another was on a narrow ledge on the steep bank of a small creek, and I have several times found their nests on old nests of the White-browed Babbler (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*).—J. A. ROSS, Sometime President R.A.O.U., Malvern.

Stray Feathers

Greenshanks in Tasmania in May.—Whilst on a duck-shooting expedition to the Apsley Marshes at the head of the Moulting Bay, into which the Apsley River waters find their way through a series of drains dug long ago by the late Wm. Lyne, I had a good view of a couple of Greenshanks (*Tringa nebularia*) busy feeding along the margin of the marsh. This was yesterday, the 24th May. It

struck me as very unusual for these birds which breed in north-eastern Siberia during May and June to be found down here so late as this, when all the other Asiatic migrants have long since taken their departure. It has been a very mild autumn here, and it would be of great interest if these birds were to be found breeding in Tasmania. The Moulting Lagoon and the Apsley Marshes are favourite haunts of all the Limicolae we are accustomed to see spending their "winter" in Tasmania. I should like much to hear of any other observers having noticed these birds in Tasmania so late as this.—ROBT. W. LEGGE, R.A.O.U., Cullenswood, Tas.

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The Wandering Albatross in Tasmania.—During a recent visit to friends residing close to the seashore at Fal-mouth (east coast, Tas.) I was informed that a very large sea bird had been washed high up on the beach about half a mile distant during the great storm of the first week of April: the storm that was responsible for the terrible floods in the northern half of the Island State. My curiosity being aroused I asked to be taken to see this bird, and on reaching the spot where it lay I found it to be none other than a fine specimen of the Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) which must have terminated its long life somewhere far away out in the Tasman Sea, and, being borne along by current and mountainous seas, had now found its last resting place. The bird was in an advanced state of decomposition, but all its bones seemed to be intact, its wing-spread being just on nine feet. The plumage of the neck, shoulders and back had that hoary tip denoting considerable age. The breast covering was much discoloured from the process of decomposition, and most of the plumage carried a heavy load of damp sand. With the idea of securing the long "pipe-stem" bones of the wings a stick was threaded across the wings behind the back and the bird was carried to my friend's garden and duly buried. Perhaps in the course of a few months, and with the assistance of a nest of ants, the wing bones and the great mandibles may be recovered as trophies. For me this find was something akin to the pathetic, discovering this once-great and free master of all the winds that rage over the vast southern oceans, tossed up like a puny Penguin amid the jetsam of the beach. What countless leagues had those great pinions borne this majestic creature through the tempest-scourged latitudes it had so long roamed over and defied? What fate had brought about its untimely end? No gale that ever swept the seas could have daunted its courage or sapped its strength. From descriptions given me by an old bushman friend at

Bicheno, of four long-winged birds which rode out the gale down there throughout its height during Thursday and part of Friday, 4th and 5th April, I am very much inclined to say that they were Frigate-Birds (*Fregata minor*). One was fated not to depart, as it was found disabled on the rocks close to the township, and the description of this bird, with its long wings, hooked beak and red throat membrane would seem to point to its being a male of the above species. How many hundreds of miles were these birds driven out of their accustomed zone? I very much regret that it was not my good fortune to be able to examine this wounded bird, though I should have easily recognised the others had I seen them on the wing.—R. W. LEGGE, R.A.O.U., Cullenswood, Tas., May, 1929.

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The Corella in Southern Victoria.—In the October number of *The Emu*, I read a note on the Corella (*Kakatoe tenuirostris*), by Mr. D. Dickison, Hon. Secretary, R.A.O.U. The writer referred to "the total disappearance of this bird from southern Victoria." I have, however, observed the species several times in the Western District of Victoria during the last year.

January 27th.—Ellerslie. Small flocks totalling 50 to 60.

February 2nd.—Hawkesdale. A flock of 15 birds.

August 8th.—Ellerslie. A flock of five.

August 22nd.—Moyne Falls. A flock of seven was seen.

September 1st.—Mortlake. Four flew over the town.

October 14th.—Warrnambool. A flock of ten flying north over the Hopkins River.

October 16th.—The Sisters. A flock of six.

October 20th.—Macarthur. A flock of ten.

November 16th.—Hawkesdale. Four were identified.

On five of these occasions identification was made certain by means of field glasses. The birds were always seen out in the open country and generally appeared to be digging out the bulbs of the onion grass.—C. S. SULLIVAN, R.A.O.U., Warrnambool.

Note.—Mr. Dickison states that his reference to the disappearance of this species "from southern Victoria" was intended to comment on its disappearance from that part of southern Victoria from which the type specimen was obtained, viz., the western coastal area of Port Phillip Bay.—Ed.

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Nesting Sites of Swallows.—That the Swallow has a peculiarity all its own in selecting nesting sites was fully realised by those who attended the Mooreville Road Methodist Church on Sunday. The first to enter the church were amazed to find that a pair of these birds had during the

previous week constructed their home immediately on top of a green baize door which was standing ajar, and which leads from the porch to the church proper. The nest was not supported by the wall, making the discovery all the more remarkable. The birds entered the building through a hole in one of the windows.—*Advocate*, Tas., 9/1/29. From H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., West Devonport, Tas.

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The Motor-car as an Enemy of Birds.—Birds have many enemies. Within the last 30 years the motor-car has been added to the number, but its sphere of action in the matter is strictly limited. Occasionally one sees a dead Pipit on the road, but very seldom. The Spur-winged Plover very rarely suffers; he may be seen on the road at night, but practically never in the daylight. In the towns, the cheeky Sparrow becomes over-bold and pays the price accordingly. But the chief victim is the Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*). Sometimes the adult bird will leave his run too late. Occasionally he develops the habit of deliberately swooping down in front of every car that passes. Then one day he tries the same game with a car travelling at, say, 50 or 60 miles an hour, and the slight error of judgment is his undoing. With a young Magpie, however, the case is different. Each year the car claims a large number of victims among the young Magpies which have, so to speak, left the parental apron-strings and, at the same time, lost the protecting influence of a fond mother or father. The old birds are very careful to keep the young off the road surface, and very seldom does one see young Magpies allowed in the middle of the road until they are at least two or three weeks out of the nest. You will see them quite close to the road, but not on it. When a car approaches, the young bird loses its head, he crouches, his wings go forward to beat off the approaching enemy and by the time he decides to beat a hasty and awkward retreat, the car has passed him. Had he been allowed on the road, he would not have left it—under his own power, at any rate. I was travelling recently from Hamilton to Braxholme with a friend. About 150 yards ahead of us we saw a young White-backed Magpie in the centre of the road. With him was an adult bird, which was endeavouring with all its powers of persuasion to hunt him off the road. It flapped its wings in his face, it butted him forcibly breast to breast, and still the young fellow held his ground. He dug in with his claws on the gravel, and the car was getting nearer. Finally the old bird grasped its obstinate child's bill in its own, swung him off his feet and effected a dramatic rescue just in the nick of time.—C. SULLIVAN, M.B., B.S., Warrnambool.

The Whiskered Tern.—On 7th November, while travelling from Hamilton to Macarthur, we passed a paddock which was being ploughed. A flock of about 300 Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias leucopareia*) was hovering over the newly-turned soil. Gently flapping into the wind, they worked gradually along the furrows, now hovering with head bent down, now dropping to earth to secure a titbit, now resuming their leisured progress until the end of the furrow was reached. Then up they soared and back to the other end to start again. The bolder spirits, eager to have first chance at whatever the plough might uncover, followed about ten or twelve yards behind the team. Watching with the aid of field glasses as the dense column of birds neared us, we agreed that it was a sight well worth seeing. What they were eating, grubs or worms, we did not ascertain, but there must have been enough for all, as they were still there when we repassed the spot some six hours later.—C. SULLIVAN, M.B., B.S., Warrnambool.

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Frigate-Bird Catching Its Own Food.—Mr. A. W. Walsh when cruising off the island of New Georgia (British Solomons) saw a "Long Tom" (a species of Garfish) suddenly shoot out of the sea, and go slithering along the top, evidently propelled by its tail, which was still in the water. The fish was pursued by a porpoise. A Frigate-Bird swooped down at the fugitive, which dived to escape this new enemy, but almost immediately it had to come to the surface again in its endeavours to get away from the menace below. This happened three times and on the last occasion the bird picked up the unfortunate "gar" and swallowed it.—Communicated by A. S. L. LONG, C.M.Z.S., Taronga Zoological Park, Sydney.

Reviews

[Henry, G. M., and Waite, W. E. Coloured plates of the birds of Ceylon, by G. M. Henry, with a short description of each bird by W. E. Waite, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U.—Parts I.-III. Parts I.-II. now issued, obtainable from the Director, Colombo Museum, or Messrs. Dulau & Co., 32 Old Bond Street, London. Part III. to be issued in November, 1929. Price of each part, £1/10/-.]

The second part of this work has been received from the Director of the Colombo Museum. While the sixteen plates it contains are, as in the first part (reviewed in