

bill slightly decurved. In flight a 'pale lengthwise shade' showed in the wings. When later we were able to look at pictures of both species side by side in volume IV of the *Handbook of British Birds* (1940), both of us independently decided on the same bird, a juvenile American Pectoral Sandpiper.

In the field its behaviour tallied exactly with published accounts. It looked a short-necked wader, but when alert, it had a habit of stretching its neck upwards, so that it looked not unlike a small Reeve (*Philomachus pugnax*). Generally it was silent, but once when a Stilt guarding its nest-site made a jab at it, it uttered a single note, which the yapping of the Stilts prevented me from hearing clearly. Three weeks later, on October 18, we visited the pool again, and found presumably the same bird still present. On this occasion, although it showed no desire to leave this ideal feeding-ground, it was much livelier, and assumed the upright Reeve-like stance more often than on September 27. I noted its flight as swerving and deliberate with rather slow wing-beats. Neither of us knows *E. acuminata* in the field for comparison. By all accounts the behaviour of the two species is very similar. The deciding factor in our identification was the solid unbrokenness of the gorget.

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## Stray Feathers

**Notes on Lyrebirds in Sherbrooke Forest.**—From October to Christmas, 1942, good rains made the forest damp, with better observation and less perambulation for me. October 18 was the earliest record of occupation of adult mounds by young males. Two in song (4)\* and display area (M6)†. A company of six 'plaintails' noted in 'walkabout' in the centre of the forest. On November 15 bird M15, west of firebreak, was observed to have 7 or 8 notches showing in lyrate feathers and black tips fully developed. I followed the bird many hours to see if it would display at this stage of tail growth. It indulged in low song (2) with much preening of feathers and finally a 'dummy dance,' i.e. an up and down movement of the body with accompanying dance notes but no overhead tail display. On November 29, with Mr. Heathcote, I noted courtship by M12. Nearly full tail, but no sign of diminishing notches denoting complete growth. Wing agitation and ardent courtship with fine 'dummy dance' on branch beside female carried out. Previously there had

\*These figures indicate volume of song range (1 to 10), last being voluminous nuptial song.

†Male Map area (see *Emu*, vol. XL, p. 108).

been early courtship in the same area—on January 24, 1942. I looked for new platform as the urge may have come from the female. No platform found.

On December 17 there were two young males with evanescent chestnut throat, in song (4) and display with concluding vertical tail shake from one. Bird M15 had 14 or 15 notches showing, filamentaries in unison. M11 joined him near O'Dell Gully—six notches only showing in lyrates. Song was heard coming from the gully head. M15 challenged it in song (5) and displayed on open ground. Bird M11 looked on, then sang (2) and performed 'dummy dance.' Bird M10, with 9 or 10 notches showing, now appeared with female. All four adults moved on.

I went to investigate singing at the gully head and counted five 'plaintails,' one, a male, being on a mound among ferns. Good observation at six yards. Particularly noted the long, narrower central feathers—3.5 inches longer than true tail and slightly curved upwards near the tips and raised about an inch above the displayed tail. These feathers cross at the tips when carried at the trail. Song (5). The bird left the mound for a horizontal spar, turned, displayed, and stepped backwards in easy step along it. Immediately a young female joined company, step for step, beak to beak. Both then dropped from the spar among ferns. Song again and display on low log. I had never seen this stage previously with young birds. In the centre of the forest on December 6, 1940, I had noted a young male following a female with song, wing agitation and tail shake. I thought it was play or a youthful escapade, but am now uncertain if pre-selection takes place before acquisition of territories. Another young male, with one filamentary showing, moved within six feet, scrutinized me and then started song and display. This prompted a third to the left of me to fine song (5) and display. Thus three birds, all 'plaintails,' were in song and display within a radius of twenty yards. Afterwards they moved peacefully down the gully. M11 came later but was not of this company.

On December 18, M8 was in full plumage. Song (6). Display on mound at east end of firebreak. Last season's young bird, with crest erect, was intently watching. M8 walked from the mound with overhead tail shaking. Is this educational? Mother feeding placidly near by.

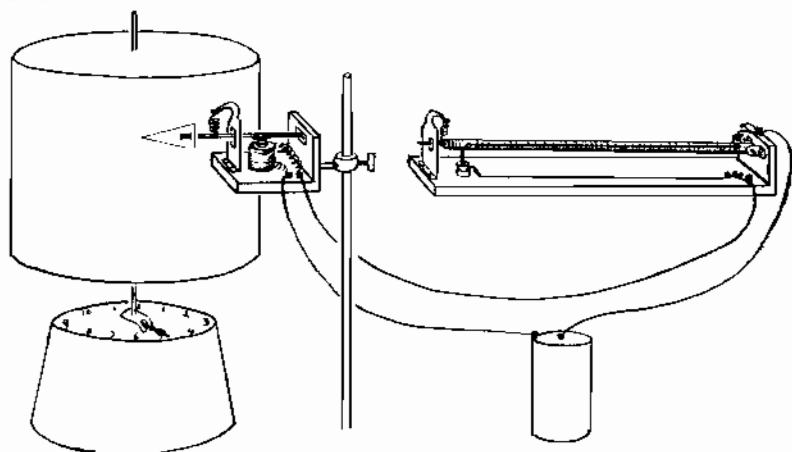
On December 19 I noted overhead display by M11, his short tail making the most of it. The next day I made a cross section of the forest for 2½ hours to see if general 'walkabout' was in progress. I found M2 had full tail. He answered with song as is usual with this bird. Two 'plaintails' seen, in song (4) and display on mounds. Other youthful birds seen but no general 'walkabout.'

On December 26, Mr. A. G. Campbell reported to me that

between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. he had found nineteen birds in areas M11 and M12, many in song. In six individuals the moult was incomplete.

On December 28 I followed M3 for three hours, slowly, finally moving downhill to headquarter mounds above Whip-bird Flat. Song (5). Shafted sunlight falling on lustrous full tail display made happy remembrance. No 'plaintails' seen during stay in this area.—ALEX. GRAY, Bentleigh, Vic., 26/2/43.

**Automatically Recording Nesting Habits.**—By request Prof. B. J. Marples has forwarded the accompanying sketch to illustrate the mechanism referred to in his and L. Gurr's paper in the July *Emu*, pp. 67-71.



**A Pallid Cuckoo Interlude.**—Early in September, 1942, the familiar scale note of a Pallid Cuckoo was heard in the military reserve adjoining the suburb of Mosman, near Sydney. Towards the end of October the single harsh call of this cuckoo was heard, as well as the scale note. One afternoon, when sitting on my verandah, in front of which is a eucalypt, I was interested to note an immature Pallid Cuckoo settle among the branches. It uttered the single harsh call several times. Presently an adult cuckoo flew into the tree and fed the baby with a small brown caterpillar. The youngster, however, was careless and let the morsel drop to the ground.

It is evident that the single harsh note was the call of the young bird, and that it acted as a signal of its whereabouts to the parent. The observation shows that the adult sometimes feeds the immature bird after it has left the care of the foster parents.—A. S. LE SOUEF, Mosman, N.S.W., 24/5/43.

**Mallee Honeyeaters.**—In the review of the March, 1943, issue of the *South Australian Ornithologist*, vol. XVI, pt. 5, in the July *Emu*, there is a statement, in the section dealing with *Meliphaga plumula* and *M. ornata*, that the former "does not appear to extend east of Port Augusta." I have skins of both species taken at Orroroo, approximately 57 miles east of Port Augusta, and 33 miles east of the Flinders Range. My notes give sight recordings of the birds in all months from April to November of the years 1931 to 1935 inclusive—that is in every month in which I would have been in the scrub. I agree with Mr. McGilp that it is almost impossible to separate the species on a sight record, so cannot say both species were present on every occasion. The locality is approximately half a square mile of hills and gullies just south of the township of Orroroo, and is covered by big mallee.

In so small an area the number of any species is not great, yet the number of species of honeyeaters I have seen there is rather remarkable. I have noted the following: *McIlthreptus brevirostris*, *Myzomela nigra*, *Gliciphila albifrons*, *Meliphaga virescens*, *M. leucotis*, *M. ornata*, *M. plumula*, *M. penicillata*, *Myzantha flavigula*, *Anthochaera carunculata* and *Acanthagenys rufogularis*.—JAMES G. GRAY, Orroroo, S.A., 14/8/43.

**Scaly-breasted Lorikeet near Sydney.**—The Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) inhabits the eastern parts of Queensland and New South Wales from the Cape York area to Sydney. It is a rare bird in the latter locality which seems to be about the southern limit of its distribution. When writing about this lorikeet A. J. North remarked—"That it does occasionally occur in the northern parts of the County of Cumberland [Sydney district] there is no question, but I have never seen a specimen obtained in the neighbourhood of Sydney for many years past, nor have I ever observed at any time a skin in any collection formed south of the metropolis." (*Nests and Eggs*, vol. III, pt. 1, March, 1911, p. 45).

In view of the apparent rarity of the species anywhere near Sydney the following records are given:

Bexley, eight miles south-west of Sydney. Several observed in 1902 when many species of lorikeets were numerous (H. J. Wright).

Liverpool, seventeen miles south-west of Sydney. Seven skins in the Australian Museum collected in 1903.

Avalon, eighteen miles north of Sydney. A few birds observed in forest country, Sept. 28, 1935 (K. H. McKnight). Two birds seen investigating a hollow limb about fifty feet from the ground next day. Several feeding in flowering *Eucalyptus* trees in company of Musk and Little Lorikeets on May 1, 1938. A few birds seen on September 28, 1941.

Lane Cove, five miles north-west of Sydney. Four birds seen on several occasions on Feb. 7, 9 and 10, 1943. Observed flying and also in tall blackbutt tree (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). Apparently two adults and two young which were being fed by the adults. The young birds uttered a high-pitched whistling note repeated continuously. Not noted in the Lane Cove area during the previous nine months, and not seen since early February.

Kurnell, Botany Bay, ten miles south of Sydney. Two birds observed resting in swamp mahogany (*E. robusta*), June 20, 1943.

Some of the above observations seem to indicate that the Scaly-breasted Lorikeet may breed closer to Sydney than the Ourimbah district which appears to be the nearest recorded breeding locality (North, *loc. cit.*) Ourimbah is about fifty miles north of Sydney. The red markings on the under wing-coverts are very noticeable when the birds are in flight.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Lane Cove, Sydney, N.S.W., 22/6/43.

**Birds and their Prey.**—Late one evening, while camped on the Chalka Creek, in the Kulkyne National Forest, with Mr. Jack Jones, I watched a Tawny Frogmouth with a bird in its beak, battering the feathers off its prey by hitting the bird against a dead bough. A stick was thrown towards the Frogmouth, which flew off and dropped its prey at the foot of the tree. On examination the victim proved to be a Brown Tree-creeper.

In company with Mr. Hal. Thomas, of Mildura, one afternoon at Chaffey's Bend on the River Murray, I saw a Goshawk make a sudden dash, seize a Magpie Lark, and bring it to earth. Our timely interference no doubt saved the Magpie Lark, for on our appearance the hawk carried its prey almost ten feet into the air before the weight told and the bird struggled free from the clutches of the Goshawk. The Magpie Lark flew into a neighbouring gum, by all appearances none the worse for its experience. The silent glide through the timber and the sudden dash at its victim is characteristic of the Goshawk.—ROY WHEELER, Elwood, Vic. 10/4/43.

**Black-faced Flycatcher.**—The Black-faced Flycatcher (*Monarcha melanopsis*) is usually associated with typical rain-forest areas, so it was a welcome surprise to hear its engaging 'why-you, wit-chew' call from the back verandah of my residence in the early morning of October 26, 1942. The gladsome notes continued until 9.15 a.m., when the birds probably moved onwards or were subdued by the quickly increasing heat of the day. It was evidently a flock resting on their southern migration flight, for, although only three

birds were actually seen, the calling was continuous and was clearly uttered by numbers of birds. I had little expectation of adding these brush-loving birds to my local list for suitable habitat is entirely absent. However, some densely-foliaged trees in the residential allotment neighbouring mine evidently suited for their short stay. The disturbing influence of the unusual visitors amongst the regular resident species in this area was very noticeable.—A. R. MCGILL, Arncliffe, N.S.W., 4/12/42.

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## Reviews

**Decisions on Nomenclature.**—Since the secretariat of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature was moved to London, eleven 'Opinions' embodying decisions on nomenclatural points have been published, the first, Opinion 134, on August 28, 1939, and the most recent, Opinion 144, on March 30, 1943. Most of the Opinions deal with entomological names. Three, however, concern ornithology. Opinion 138 gives an interpretation of the amended Article 25 of the International Rules (the 'Law of Priority') and refers to the method to be used in the replacement of invalid names. This clears up an ambiguity which was the subject of a controversy in the *Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. LV, 1935, and means that several of Gregory Mathews' names, proposed since January 1, 1931 (when the amendment came into force) have no nomenclatural status. Opinion 141 establishes the principle that the type genus of a family or subfamily—from which the family or subfamily name is constructed—need not be the oldest available genus but that the author of a new family is free to choose as type genus any which he considers appropriate. Opinion 140 confirms 'Meropidae' as the spelling of the family name for *Merops*; that for the insect *Merope* being 'Meropeidae'.—D.L.S.

**Systematics and the Origin of Species.**—This is the title of a book by Dr. Ernst Mayr, of the American Museum of Natural History, published by the Columbia University Press, 1942, which is the most brilliant exposition yet of the species problem, treated from the taxonomic standpoint. To the Australian ornithologist not the least merit of the work is that so many examples from the Australian and Pacific avifaunas are drawn on as illustrations, and nobody interested in taxonomy generally or in geographical distribution can afford to be without it, both as a reference and a stimulus. Ornithology is in a peculiar position to render service to other branches of zoology in this field because, as Dr. Mayr points out, no group is better known taxonomically than the birds, and the refined state of present-day bird systematics presents leaders and pointers to taxonomists in other groups. To these workers, in fact, not to know something of the present state of ornithological taxonomy and its special problems is to remain blind to their own future goal. In this lucid and attractively written book it may be said that Dr. Mayr has 'sold' to taxonomists at large the concept of the polytypic species (the species viewed as a group of geographically-intergrading populations, or subspecies), and has presented his evidence adequately and with a wide perspective, including a discussion of associated problems such as phenotypic variants, sibling species and generic limits. There is a very useful preliminary chapter on methods and principles. The American price of the book is \$4.—D.L.S.

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