leads one to believe that eggs would have been laid in May or June.

In Mr. David Fleay's very interesting article in *The Emu*, October 1944, he records the dates on which eggs had been laid by the birds that he had under observation. In 1942 the date is June 1, and in 1944 it was June 6. Mr. Favaloro, in his equally interesting article, 'Eggs of the Powerful Owl,' *Emu*, July 1946, states that his set was collected by Mr. Fleay on June 4, 1945. These dates show that the birds are very consistent in their nesting.

One might expect that there would be some variation in the nesting period between Victoria and Queensland, but from my recent experience it would seem that my birds differed little from those of the south.

I am interested in Mr. Favaloro's remarks concerning the set of eggs in the H. L. White collection. Kingaroy is about one hundred miles by air-line from here and it seems very unlikely that there would be any difference in the breeding time between Kingaroy and Murphy's Creek. It seems evident that Bertling had made some error when he gave the date of collection as November 23.

Stray Feathers

The Lemon-breasted Flycatcher in Western Australia.—The Lemon-breasted Flycatcher (*Micræca flavigaster*) was first described by Gould in 1843 from a specimen collected at Port Essington in the Northern Territory. It was subsequently recorded from north Queensland, but has not been reported previously from Western Australia.

The musical notes of the bird first attracted my attention and, as I had no previous experience of the species, a specimen was shot for examination. Several pairs were observed along the banks of the Ord River at Ivanhoe Station, but one specimen only was obtained. This is at present in the collection of the Western Australian Museum and the following details appear on the label:

No. A5936, *Locality* — Carlton Reach, Ord River, E. Kimberley, *Date* 30/5/44.
Length — 5¾ inches. *Iris* — Black? (eye damaged).
Bill — Black, *Feet* — Black.
Sex — Female.

There appears to be some mistake in the measurements given by Gould for the Port Essington bird, as he records the total length as 3⅜ inches and the tail as 2¼ inches (*Proc. Zool. Soc., Lond.*, 1842, p. 132). It seems likely that 5⅜ inches was the measurement intended by Gould, as that would be more comparable with the 135 mm. quoted by Mathews (*Birds of Aust*, vol. VIII, p. 74) and the 5¾ inches of the Ord River specimen.

As only one specimen was procured, it has not been considered advisable to suggest any subspecific rank for the Western Australian bird, although subsequent investigation may show it to be a well-defined race.

An examination of the stomach contents showed that the bird had eaten one small blue lady-bird (Coccinellidae) and twenty small ants (Formicidae). The stomach also contained a quantity of unidentifiable chitinous particles.

Drs. Ernst Mayr and D. L. Serventy (*Emu*, vol. 44, p. 36) unite this species with the Brown-tailed Flycatcher (*Micrœca brunneicauda*). However, as *M. brunneicauda* has been identified from as far afield as Derby and Darwin, the present extension of the range of *M. flavigaster* brings it well within the area of occurrence of *M. brunneicauda*. It is clear, therefore, that these two similar flycatchers must be treated as separate species, and they cannot be, as Mayr and Serventy supposed, geographical races of one species.—C. F. H. JENKINS, Perth, W.A., 16/5/46.

Lemon-breasted Flycatcher.—My experience of this species, *Micrœca flavigaster*, was obtained in the Mutchilba district, between Mareeba and Chillagoe, north Queensland. We were on the banks of the Walsh river, a tributary of the Mitchell. The bird is not uncommon there, but *M. fascinans* is rather more plentiful, and in general appearance very similar. Seen in a good light, however, the lemon breast is quite noticeable, and *flavigaster* also has a habit of soaring high in circles. All nests of this species found by me were rather higher and more awkward to reach than those of *fascinans*. All were placed on dead branches. The one illustrated was 25 feet from the ground, and on a very rotten branch, which gave way shortly after the young birds left. I had to build a sapling scaffold to get within reach. Both the nest and eggs are very similar to those of the common Jacky Winter.—A. D. SELBY, Kallista, Vic., 1/8/46.

Notes from Menangle Park.—Menangle Park is 40 miles south of Sydney on the main southern line, on the Nepean River, and at the foothills of the southern highlands. The country is open and lightly timbered and the principal production is table grapes. The following are some notes of recent interest from the district.

A flock of White-winged Choughs (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) appeared on February 18, 1946. They fed for about ten minutes on my property and continued in a southerly direction. There was no further appearance of the birds. I have not previously seen them this side of the Dividing Range, though I have noted them in the Goulburn District.

Prior to their departure in March, Spine-tailed Swifts

Lemon-breasted Flycatcher on nest.

Photo. by A. D. Selby.

(*Hirundapus caudacutus*) usually appear in the district in numbers. On the morning of March 29, 1946, many residents were disturbed by a sudden 'whirr'. Some ran out of their houses to investigate. It was a flock of the Swifts leaving for the north. It would appear that they were commencing their migration, as they passed over at only roughly 300 feet, but were rising rapidly.

It is appropriate that one should be 'April-fooled' by a bird on the first of April. Actually, three weeks earlier, my wife reported a pair of strange birds that I could not identify. On April 1, 1946, one of the birds appeared alone and I was able to see it myself, but not identify it until Mr. K. A. Hindwood came to my aid and we definitely recorded it as the Leaden Flycatcher (*Myiagra rubecula*), apparently in immature plumage. It is also apparent that on the first occasion a pair of the birds were present.

Since the appearance here in 1940 of White-backed Swallows (*Cheramœca leucosternum*), I have had many inquiries as to how they are progressing. They are still here, but their numbers have not increased greatly. I attribute this to the fact that the young birds (or at least some of them) leave with the migrating Martins and Swallows, but whether they seek fresh pastures or return to their inland haunts can only be speculated. They definitely do flock with the Martins and Swallows, but there are still odd pairs of birds present throughout the winter.

Whilst not being an advocate of theories I have a definite idea regarding these birds. During the years from 1940 to 1946 the rainfall had been below the average, with the exception of 1943, but in all cases no substantial rain has fallen during the nesting season and even the summer months have been below average. Our heavy falls have been in winter. My contention is that should substantial falls of rain occur during spring, the birds will have their nesting burrows flooded out or will be unable to dig them out. I suggest that this may have been the reason why the birds were previously confined to inland areas.

Since the nesting habits must confine their activities during the breeding season and well into summer to areas of a sandy nature, they do not have the same opportunity to extend their domains as most birds. So far as I can ascertain, the whole family reside in the nest until February or March.

For some years past there have been visitations of Olive-backed Orioles (*Oriolus sagittatus*) each year, usually during April, the principal attraction being larvae of the painted acacia moth, which they kept under control. The same larvae attack apple trees and numerous other cultivated plants. The number of birds appearing generally depended upon the extent of the infestation and ranged

from two or three to half a dozen. There are two large cultivated wattles which they frequent in the house grounds.

This year there was a heavy late brood of vine-moth larvae on the grape vines, which is not only unusual but serves as a warning to the viticulturist that he can expect trouble in the spring — however, the Orioles came to the rescue in force. I have never seen so many of the birds together at the one time and was able to count up to 50 in my vineyards at the one time. It is interesting to note that many of them were young birds in immature plumage. They gorged on the caterpillars and left as suddenly as they appeared.

I have also recorded the Brush Wattle-bird (*Anthochæra chrysoptera*) as eating the painted acacia moth larvae and vine moth larvae. It is not common, and only odd birds are seen rarely.—E. O. EDWARDS, Menangle Park, N.S.W., 30/5/46.

Indian Turtle-Dove. The following notes relate to the introduced Indian Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*), a common bird in the Hobart district. On August 4, 1945, I found a nest of this species containing the full clutch of two eggs. The bird left the nest hurriedly at my approach, and tried the disabled-bird trick to entice me away. A week later the eggs were cold, and it seemed that the birds had deserted, though there was no apparent reason why they should have done so. On a further visit, on August 18, I found one egg broken, and the contents drained away, but the other was still intact. My interest in the nest ceased until September 23, when a fortunate chance took me to the place once more, and I found that the nest again contained a clutch of sound eggs, with the owner in attendance; but the eggs disappeared within a few days, doubtless into a boy's collecting box. Later, a Grey Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*) took over the site and almost completed a nest, using the Dove's nest as base, before it abandoned the project.

On November 24, on the same hillside, I discovered a second Turtle-Dove's nest close to a frequented path. Early in December one egg disappeared from this nest. The broken shell of the other remained until early January, when I removed it, in the hope that the nest would be re-occupied. Nevertheless, despite the reason for my action, I was surprised to find, on February 3, that it was being used again. On this occasion, the bird had woven strands of dodder round the original platform to form a saucer-shaped structure, a much more substantial nest than any I had previously seen for the species. Possibly the changed design was just a vagary of that particular bird, though

at the time I idly wondered if it might not be a concession to the lateness of the season. On February 10 the nest contained two young, but two days later these had gone and the nest had been destroyed by the robber.

In the middle of March, a wet and stormy time, when I thought all nesting activity had ceased, I found a third Dove's nest, with eggs, only a few yards from the site of the second. Two inches of rain in a few days, accompanied by strong winds, must have proved irksome to a bird sitting in an exposed position in a sparse sheoke. About a week later, after four inches of rain in as many days, the bird deserted, which was not surprising. On March 28 only a few damp sticks remained of the nest, and fragments of shell were scattered on the ground beneath the nesting tree.

My chief interest in this series of observations was in the re-occupation of the first and second nests. There was no means of identifying the birds, but it seems probable that the second occupants in each case were the original owners. As is well known, the use of a nest a second, or many times, is a common occurrence; but the return of the original owners (if indeed they were), to an ill-fated nest, in the same season, and following a period of desertion, was perhaps sufficiently unusual as to be worthy of note. The long nesting period, extending over almost eight months, was another point of interest, but I have not had sufficient experience of the species to know if this is normal.— C. C. LAWRENCE, Lindisfarne, Tas., 23/4/46.

White-quilled Pygmy-Goose. — Despite my assertion in *The Emu* for September, 1946, that there was a break in the distribution of this species—between Java and eastern Australia—there are apparently records from the Sepik River, northern New Guinea, as shown by Dr. Mayr in his *List of New Guinea Birds*, p. 13, which were overlooked by me at the time.—JACK JONES, Footscray, Vic., 30/9/46.

Nesting Habits of the Goldfinch.—It is interesting to record habits on the diversified behaviours of the male and female of various species, throughout the nest-building and breeding cycle. According to my limited observation with the introduced Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), apparently the gathering of the nest material and building of the nest is done solely by the one bird, presumably the female. I have watched her on several occasions gathering some loose fibres from a seldom-used rope auxiliary clothes-line, fly to the nest and return repeatedly to gather more. Throughout the full period of observation the male (?) makes no effort to assist in any way, yet he accompanies the female (?) assiduously to and fro, remains in close attendance in flight and whilst the material is gathered,

uttering joyous call-notes all the time and apparently is distinctly pleased with the untiring efforts of his partner and the eventual prospects of a home and family.—A. R. McGill, Arncliffe, N.S.W., 10/9/46.

Publication Dates of Some Recent Names.—On the basis of Opinion 59 of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature it appears that a paper published in a periodical or journal and of which reprints (rather pre-prints) are distributed privately in advance by the author, does not date from the issue of the pre-print, but from the date of publication of the periodical itself—unless formal publication has been made in some other manner. This ruling affects the publication date of several new names in Mr. G. M. Mathews' paper, 'New Forms of Australian Birds', which was read before the Royal Society of Western Australia on September 10, 1940, and pre-prints of which were issued as from the *Journal*, bearing the date February 12, 1942. These were circulated privately by the author to some of his colleagues and the paper was reviewed in *The Emu*, vol. XLII, 1942, p. 127, but the *Journal* containing it was not published till June 10, 1943. The new names proposed in the paper do not, therefore, acquire nomenclatural standing till June, 1943, and the private publication date, 'February 12, 1942,' has no status nomenclaturally and may be ignored. The Royal Society of Western Australia is one of the few publishing bodies which issues papers in this way and the present instance is the only one in which ornithological names are concerned. Many other papers, however, in other animal groups, from volume X (1924) onwards, carry nomenclaturally-misleading publication dates. The position is aggravated by the fact that the publication of the various annual volumes was frequently seriously delayed.

The volumes unfortunately do not contain the exact dates of publication, thus creating difficulty in determining the priority of some names. On its attention being directed to the matter, the council of the Society appointed Dr. E. M. Watson to ascertain the exact dates of publication of past volumes from all the records available. His report has now been published (*Journ. Roy. Soc. Western Austr.*, 29, 1945, p. 174) and provides this information for all the publications of the Society from 1904 to 1944.

It might also be mentioned that the new species of *Cervinipitta* in Mathews' paper is spelt '*kimbleyensis*' in the text but an errata slip in the volume (but not issued apparently in the pre-print) corrects this to '*kimberleyensis*.' The corrected spelling should be adopted.—D. L. Serventy, Perth, W.A., 1/10/46.