

These data substantiate the well-known fact that *Aplonis m. metallica* is gregarious to a high degree during the breeding season.

APLONIS CANTOROIDES

On February 13, 1945, nine nests of this species were found among abandoned pilings along the shore of Lake Sentani, Dutch New Guinea, opposite the village of Dojo or Sowaidewarre. Their contents are given as follows:

Contents	Table II	Number of nests
Being constructed		1
1 fairly large nestling and 1 egg		1
2 large nestlings		1
2 fully-grown fledgelings; both flew away from the nest when disturbed		1
Empty; formerly had 2 nestlings, one of which was taken on February 6		1
Empty; formerly had 3 nestlings, which were collected on February 5		1
Empty		3

Another nest, which had two fully-grown fledgelings, was found among abandoned pilings at the village of Dojo on March 8, 1945.

The eggs are deposited simply in a hollow of the upright piling. The inner lining consists of a few grasses loosely arranged to form a bottom for the nest. The entrance is at the top, and is merely the opening of the hollow log.

The individuals of this species are undoubtedly gregarious while breeding, although this may be related to the limited distribution of the abandoned pilings in which the eggs are deposited. There was a noisy congregation of adults when the two fully-grown fledgelings mentioned in Table II left the nest. However, the individuals quickly dispersed, and no further disturbances were noticed. This was apparently a weak manifestation of group defence behaviour in a species which is typically monogamous.

Stray Feathers

'Flashlighting' the Lyrebird.—The potentialities of flash-light photography for daytime pictures in poor light are well shown by the accompanying 'shot' of the Lyrebird. The picture, taken by a Department of Information photographer, is typical in many aspects—the heavy forest, the scratching bird, the balanced tail, and the Yellow Robin waiting to snap up some small 'crumb' from the larger bird's 'table'.



Flashlight photograph of Lyrebird scratching on forest floor.

Photo. by Department of Information.

The Distribution of the Indian Cotton Teal.—In his paper in *The Emu*, vol. 46, 1946, pp. 128-132, Mr. Jack Jones refers to a gap between the habitat of this species, *Nettapus coromandelianus*, in Australia and its main habitat to the north and north-west, but on p. 235 refers to records from the Sepik River, New Guinea.

In 1929 the Crane Pacific Expedition of the Chicago Museum collected, on the Sepik River (Marienberg and Geketa) in northern New Guinea, seventeen specimens of the species. In their paper 'Birds of the Crane Pacific Expedition' (*Field Museum Chicago, Zoological Series*, 20, no. 34, August 30, 1938), Dr. Mayr and Mr. S. Camras state that the New Guinea specimens agree very well in their measurements (which they give in detail for a number of specimens from various portions of the range of the species, including eleven adult males of the Australian form, *albipennis*), with the Asiatic form. The New Guinea specimens were collected during the season when the northern race is breeding in Asia and they consider that the specimens obtained by the expedition were probably winter migrants that had remained in New Guinea instead of returning to Asia to breed.

Whatever the causes of the occurrence of the species in New Guinea, it is an interesting fact that the Indian Cotton Teal does on occasion occur there, and so the distribution is complete from the northern to the southern limits of its range.—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 9/10/46.

The Most Recent Australian Record of the Indian Pygmy-Goose.—In response to Mr. J. Jones's plea for more information on this species, I would like to record that there are three males and one female of *Nettapus coromandelianus* in the Mathews Collection obtained by the late E. Oliver at Alice River, Queensland, between July 2 and 6, 1900. Older, undated specimens in the Mathews collection are labelled 'Gracemere', 'Mackay', 'N.S.W.', or simply 'Australia'.

I might point out on this occasion that Australian birds are definitely larger than Indian birds and that Gould's name *albipennis* is available for the Australian subspecies (see Mayr, 1938, *Zool. Ser. Field Mus. Nat. History*, vol. 20, p. 464). A series of specimens of the nominate race was collected on the Sepik River between May 22 and 29, 1929, which indicates that New Guinea must be included in the range of this subspecies (Mayr, *loc. cit.*).—E. MAYR, New York, U.S.A., 20/12/46.

Reviews

The Number of Bird Species.—The *Auk* of Jan. 1946, pp. 64-69, contains a paper by Ernst Mayr on this subject. The tenth edition of Linnaeus enumerated 564 species, Sharpe's *Handlist* (1909) 18,937, but this latter includes subspecies. About 400 good species have been described since 1909.