

horizontal position. As with all of the bird's movements the flight is graceful and charming to watch. It is swift with sudden short wing beats closely resembling those of a heron or plover. When the birds are gliding, which they do for a considerable distance before alighting, the wings are bent to form an exact right angle. The tail pattern of black and white is very conspicuous in flight and the long legs project beyond the extremity of the tail.

Cameras were set up near the burrow sheltering the two small young and release threads run out to the car some distance off. The birds were very wary of the cameras but took very little notice of the car. They often brought up food for the young, but would not go to the burrow entrance to feed them. They appeared to be endeavouring to entice the young out, but we had guarded against this by blocking the burrow entrance. Occasionally they would fly off to a small swampy area about half a mile away. Soon they would wing their way swiftly back and, after a long glide, alight a hundred yards or more away and gradually move up towards the young. Eventually, during a four-hour vigil, two photos were secured and a little colour film exposed as one of the birds passed a few feet behind the burrow.

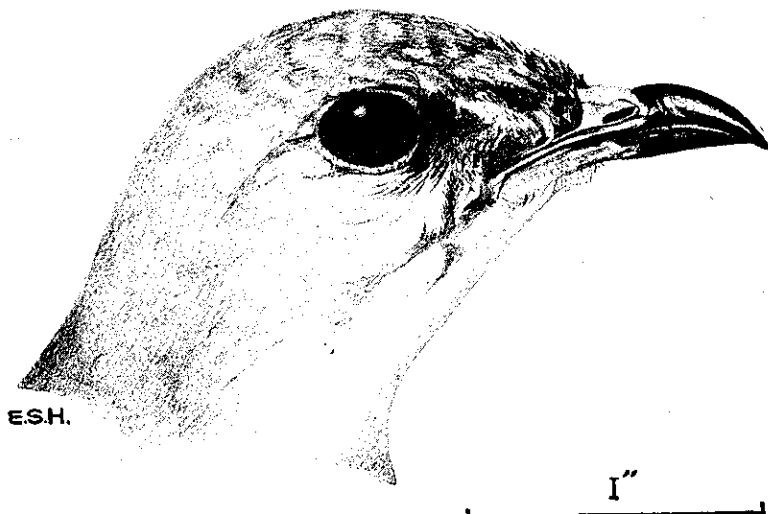
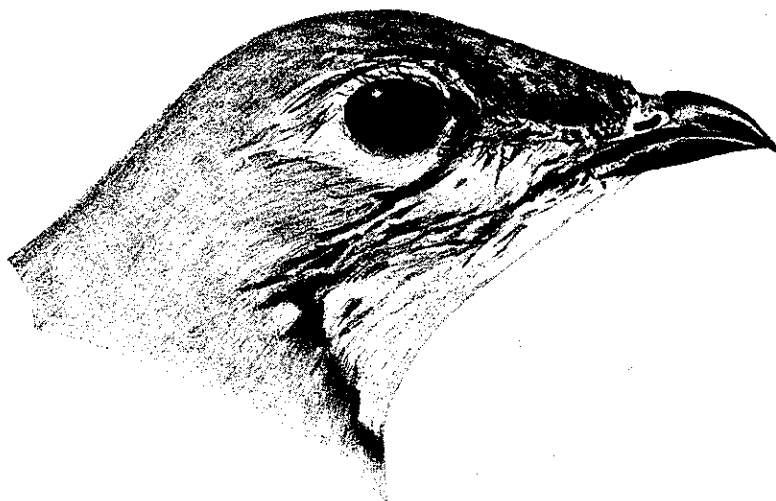
The area was again visited three days later when it was found that both lots of young were still sheltering in the same rabbit burrows in which they were first found. The advanced young bird appeared to be still fed entirely by the parents and did not appear to make any effort to forage for itself. We attempted to photograph the parents of this bird but were not successful. Finally the young bird was removed from the burrow to take its portrait, but it broke suddenly away and, after running swiftly for a few yards, took off and flew for twenty yards or so and disappeared down a deep burrow.

## Pratincoles Near Sydney

By K. A. HINDWOOD, Sydney, N.S.W.

In July, 1877, an Oriental Pratincole (*Glareola maldivarum*) was shot 'near Botany,' a few miles south of Sydney, New South Wales (specimen no. O.18411, male, Australian Museum, ex 'Dobroyde' Collection). The bird is either in eclipse or immature plumage, the narrow black throat band being indistinct, and there is less of the pale rufous wash on the foreneck and the lower breast than in fully-adult birds. This is the only recorded occurrence of the species for the County of Cumberland (Sydney district). The Oriental Pratincole (or Eastern Pratincole) breeds in Transbaikalia, north-eastern Mongolia and southern Manchuria, south to India, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Hainan and the Philippines, and on migration occurs throughout the Malay Archipelago, south to Australia.

The Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabella*) is, in New South Wales, almost exclusively a bird of the inland areas, that is west of the Great Dividing Range. It has been re-



Upper figure: Oriental Pratincole.  
Lower figure: Australian Pratincole.

E. S. Hoskin, del.

corded from near Adelaide (coastal), South Australia, where it was common and bred freely at Goodwood and Glenelg in

1881 (A. J. North, *Nests and Eggs of Birds found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania*, vol. 4, pt. 3, October 30, 1913, p. 254).

The following sight observations, kindly sent to me by Norman C. Fearnley, add the species to the list of birds recorded from the County of Cumberland.

"On November 25, 1948, Mr. M. Schraeder told me that he had seen a pair of Pratincoles at Pittown Swamps the previous day. We arranged to go out there on Saturday, November 28. Sure enough, they were there and we had a good look at them through glasses. They were very quiet and fairly tame, making short runs on the ground and an occasional short flight. I went out again on December 5 and watched these birds for about two hours. I sat on a grassy bank against the fence and could train my glasses on them without interruption. I had hopes that they might be nesting but they showed no signs of it and only stood about amongst some Spur-winged Plover, making occasional darts along the ground after insects, and, it being rather 'cloddy' and uneven with hardened hoof marks and holes made by stock, they seemed to be slightly off balance and almost fell over on occasions.\* One bird took to the air and was soaring and darting, skimming the ground and shooting up to about sixty feet, like a Swallow; in fact it was chasing a Swallow at one time. The birds were definitely the Australian Pratincole.

"On December 19, Mr. Schraeder and I saw them at the rear of a large flock of Black Duck which had taken fright when we appeared. They were flying very high and, after circling about and getting higher, the whole flock of duck and the two Pratincoles went towards the river. I haven't seen them since though they may have gone to the other fast-drying lagoons about the district. I say 'fast-drying,' but I guess this rain we are having will fill the lagoons again." N. C. Fearnley, *in litt.*, 10/1/49.

The Australian Pratincole breeds in Australia and, possibly, in southern New Guinea, as a young bird has been collected at Merauke (*vide* E. Mayr, *List of New Guinea Birds*, 1941, p. 34); it migrates to Borneo, Java, the Lesser Sunda Islands, the Celebes, the Moluccas, New Guinea and some adjacent islands.

My thanks are due to Mr. E. S. Hoskin for the drawing of heads of the two Australian species of pratincoles.

Detailed field notes, photographs and a colour plate dealing with the species appear in *The Emu*, vol. 24, pt. 2, October 1924, pp. 81-85, pls. 15-17; and *The Emu*, vol. 35, pt. 1, July 1935, pp. 1-10, pl. 1 (col.).

\* Could there have been a failure to recognize certain natural movements of the species? The Pratincole sways and tips to such an extent that in some districts—I found it so in the country around Tibooburra, N.S.W.—it is called the 'balance-bird.'—Ed.