

birds and the shrubs and undergrowth act similarly for the large number of smaller birds and in addition shelter much food. The *Polygonum* mentioned previously is much frequented by Red-browed Finches and the plentiful mistletoe is the staple food for the Mistletoe-bird and Painted Honey-eater. Table 4 gives a list of birds known to have nested along the river during the period of study, and in addition four species—Black Duck, Red-backed Parrot, Welcome Swallow and Banded Finch—are presumed to have nested along the river, because of the behaviour of the adult birds or the presence of young.

TABLE 4

LIST OF SPECIES OF WHICH NESTS WERE FOUND

Black-fronted Dotterel	White-browed Scrub-Wren
Australian Goshawk	Superb Blue Wren
Whistling Eagle	Dusky Wood-Swallow
Rainbow-bird	Painted Honeyeater
Willie Wagtail	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Restless Flycatcher	Yellow-winged Honeyeater
Red-capped Robin	Diamond Firetail
Magpie-Lark	Red-browed Finch
Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Yellow-tailed Thornbill	Black-backed Magpie

The occurrence of the first frosts in early April seemed to be of considerable importance because during the following week the numbers of the Crimson Rosella and Red-backed Parrot rose sharply and these birds formed flocks. The Red-browed Finches also flocked and the many small birds formed mixed flocks at the same time. Many of the migratory species left within two weeks of the onset of frosts.

REFERENCES

- (Serventy, D. L. (1938). 'The Relative Abundance of Birds,' *The Emu*, 37, 269-273.
Official Checklist of the Birds of Australia (1926).

A Magpie Catching Food on the Wing.—It is not often that one sees a magpie catching food in the air. One evening recently when I was walking home through Surrey Hills a male White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) rose from the ground and caught an insect flying slowly about thirty feet in the air. The bird alighted on a street pole and soon afterwards caught a second insect in the same way. From their slow steady flight they were probably cock-chaffer beetles. Both were taken cleanly at the first attempt.

I have not observed this before, and it is probably another example of an individual accomplishment among the magpies. A similar incident has been recorded by F. E. Parsons at Glen Osmond in South Australia but in that instance the animal caught was a bat (*S.A. Orn.* vol. VII, July, 1923, p. 82).—HUGH WILSON, Melbourne, Vic., 25/3/50.