

feature or the result of cross-breeding? The breast and abdomen in mature birds are golden yellow, sometimes tinged with green; but in the two instances the birds were evidently mated and thus mature. A cross with the Eastern Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*) might possibly produce an aberration in the colour of the abdomen.

Myiagra cyanoleuca. Satin Flycatcher.

A species becoming remarkably common throughout the State. Inquiries have been received from many districts as to the identity of this species, which the writers state has not been seen in the locality before. In two known instances recently it has been wrongly identified locally as the Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), of which there are very few records for Tasmania.

Chloris chloris. Greenfinch.

This introduced species, once confined to King Island in Bass Strait, has suddenly extended its boundaries. For some time it was known at Stanley and Marrawah on the north-west coast, but recently it has been reported at Port Davey, in the far south-west (November, 1951), and two birds also were taken in an orchard at Woodbridge, south of Hobart, during October this year. One is believed to have been seen in Hobart itself in 1950.

Stray Feathers

Observations on Figbirds.—The presence of Figbirds (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*) in the Brisbane area during the winter months shows that there is an apparent migration to the coast as the autumn nears an end. My records show that there is a gradual decrease in the numbers of Figbirds in the Murphy's Creek area after March and that most of the birds have deserted by the end of April. During May, 1950, only odd birds were recorded. From June to August, one or two birds—rarely three—were seen at infrequent periods. In early September there was a marked increase in their numbers and by the end of the month they were common and their calls were a feature of the locality.

Mating apparently takes place in October, for after the end of that month nests are found in many places. On one occasion I saw a male brooding eggs. It may not be unusual for the male to take part in incubation but I had not seen him perform these duties previously. When the nest is being constructed the male does not seem to gather material but follows the female in her movements to and from the nest and carries on a series of varied calls to encourage her. Compare this with a similar habit of the introduced Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) recorded by A. R. McGill (*Emu*, vol. 46, p. 235).

The many notes of the male are of considerable interest and might easily be mistaken for those of other species. The 'doctor-pugh' call might be misjudged for a similar call of the Red-backed Kingfisher. Other notes resemble those of the Brown Tree-creeper and Spotted Pardalote. However, there is no apparent mimicry in the calls of the Figbird. The 'parrot-like' and 'cricket-like' notes are part of the bird's own repertoire, and, as far as I have observed, are only given by the male. The female appears to have only one call, unless she joins the male in the soft 'chirping' notes which are given when building the nest and when feeding the young.

The nest is a fragile structure and the eggs can be seen clearly from below. Nests are built at varied heights from 15 to 70 feet, or even more, and are usually placed in the slender branches of a tree or in the foliage of a mistletoe.—E. A. R. LORD, Murphy's Creek, Qld., 31/7/51.

The Correct Name of the Crested Penguin.—That Forster had based his name, *Aptenodytes chrysocome*, 1781, on materials representing more than one species was pointed out by A. F. Basset Hull (*Rec. Aust. Mus.*, vol. 12, 1918, p. 71) and, more precisely, by Mathews and Iredale (*Austral Avian Record*, vol. 4, 1921 p. 145). The argument was further elaborated by Iredale and Cayley (*The Emu*, vol. 25, 1925, p. 1). The three species involved in the composite description were the birds now commonly known as the Thick-billed Penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus* Gray, 1845), the Macaroni Penguin (*Eudyptes chrysolophus* Brandt, 1837), and the Crested or Rockhopper Penguin. The last-mentioned retained for many years Forster's original name, *chrysocome*, until Mathews and Iredale, in 1921 (*Manual of the Birds of Australia*, p. 11), replaced it by *serresianus* Oustalet, 1878, and later the same year (in the reference quoted above) by *cristatus* (sometimes corrected to *crestatus*) Miller, 1785.

The reason given for the rejection of *chrysocome* was that a name based on a description of composite material must be dismissed as indeterminable. This stand has been followed since by many ornithologists, including the compilers of the R.A.O.U. *Checklist*, 2nd. edn., 1926.

The action so taken, however, is quite contrary to the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature (cf. Art. 31 and Opinion 88, and discussion in *The Emu*, vol. 43, 1944, pp. 300-304). The official summary of Opinion 88 opens with the statement: "The name of a species is not disqualified merely because the author included in his conception bodily parts of more than one species . . .", and, as Mayr mentioned in *The Emu* correspondence quoted, "many of the names proposed by the early authors (Lin-

naeus, Gmelin, Müller, Pennant, Shaw, etc.) are founded on a composite basis, and were restricted by later authors (first revisers) to one of the components".

Until the unfortunate 'reform' by Mathews and Iredale in 1921, the name *chrysocome* had been universally restricted to the Crested Penguin (syn. *cristatus* and *serresianus*), and was so applied by Ogilvie Grant in the *Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum*, vol. 26, 1898, p. 635. Among those authors who declined to follow Mathews and Iredale in the rejection of the name were W. B. Alexander (*Birds of the Ocean*, 1928, p. 221) and W. R. B. Oliver (*New Zealand Birds*, 1930, p. 71). After investigating this nomenclatural question, we decided to revert to the use of *chrysocome* in our *Systematic List and Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia*, 1948.

Forster's original publication is difficult of access, but Hull (*loc. cit.*) has provided a translation and reproduced the accompanying plate. The crucial part reads: "*Aptenodytes chrysocome*, with dark red bill, yellowish feet; frontal crest, narrow and erect, auricular crest, sulphur coloured and drooping". This is a generalized description, but the drooping crest fits the Crested Penguin better than any other; the plate is undoubtedly of the same species, as admitted by all authors.—D. L. SERVENTY, Perth, W.A., and H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 20/9/51.

Indian Mynas on the Darling Downs.—In answer to Mr. A. H. Chisholm's questions, *Emu*, April 1951, pp. 285-286, I would like to record the following concerning his query as to how the Myna reached the Darling Downs area.

I questioned the older identities of the Oakey area, and, after many discussions, I believe that the following information is correct, though I stress that the 'facts' given were from memory and may not be exact.

Mr. C. Gould of Oakey told me that the first Mynas were brought from Cairns early in 1918, by a Mr. Bill Robinson, now deceased. Mr. Robinson was an auctioneer in Toowoomba. While in Cairns he learned that the Indian Myna was noted for its habit of eating ticks. He captured eight and brought them to Toowoomba to use on his property. Mr. Robinson released the birds on the outskirts of Toowoomba. Mr. Gould, who was present, said that the birds flew off in a westerly direction. In July 1918 Mr. Gould settled on a property at the junction of Westbrook and Oakey creeks, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Oakey township, and later that year he discovered Mynas nesting in some gums along the creek and counted a flock of sixteen birds. At the time no mention was made of the birds, for there was some doubt as to whether it was lawful for them to be introduced into the area, hence one reason for the lack of documentary evidence.

There is also a belief, particularly in the Biddeston area, 10 miles south of Oakey, that the Myna was introduced by the Hon. A. J. Thynne who at one time was Agriculture and Stock Minister and had a property halfway between Oakey and Biddeston. In this area the bird is commonly known as the 'Thynne Bird' but I have not been able to ascertain any dates or find anyone who will verify the alleged introduction as a fact.

I have information that the birds first nested in Biddeston in 1921-22. I also have reason to believe the birds have slowly spread over the years to the surrounding districts. I have noted them west to Jondaryan, 7 miles; north-east to Goombungee, 15 miles; east to Toowoomba, 20 miles; and south 25 miles.

The Myna in this district is considered a pest for it is partial to figs and other fruits. They nest in the houses and have also destroyed many an excellent nesting site for parrots. They are constantly seen feeding around pig pens, riding on the backs of pigs, cattle and horses, and generally feeding in the fields among the animals.

Common names used in this area are—Thynne Birds, Tasmanian Starling, Chocolate Birds, White-wings and Tick-birds.—R. B. WALKER, Oakey, Qld., 25/8/51.

Food of Birds.—Near the mouth of the Tweed River, N.S.W., recently, I watched a pair of Magpie-Larks (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) feeding on a tidal flat along the edge of the incoming tide. Apparently their sharp eyes detected slight movements in the muddy sand for they frequently seized and extracted worms, which were swallowed with evident relish despite the salt-water flavouring. Clearly these land birds were experienced hunters in this marine habitat and had learned to exploit a concealed and inexhaustible supply of food. Feeding nearby was a Straw-necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*), which thrust its long sickle-shaped bill deep in the sand, in the manner of a Sea-Curlew, with very successful results.

At Austinmer, N.S.W., early this year I saw a Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) pounce on a mouse, which it proceeded to maul, pecking it savagely and making many ineffectual attempts to swallow it. This battering was continued, the unfortunate victim being held by the bird's feet, for a period of approximately twenty minutes, after which the by then hardly recognizable rodent was swallowed without difficulty, fur and tail included.

At Austinmer also I observed a party of Silver Gulls (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) foraging in a long curve of tidal wrack which proved on investigation to be a veritable entomological 'graveyard'. Over a distance of about 30 yards I counted more than 100 insects, including grasshoppers, mantids, moths, butterflies, beetles, wasps, and

bees, whose flight over the sea apparently had reached the limit of endurance. It can hardly be an exaggeration to say that the sea must take a toll of many millions of insects every year, and that gulls and other sea-birds probably take most of them before they reach the shore.—N. L. ROBERTS, Beecroft, N.S.W., 1/9/51.

White Egret at Macquarie Island.—The following note by Mr. Hugh Oldham, a member of the scientific party stationed on Macquarie Island for the 1950-51 period, has been handed to me by Mr. P. G. Law, officer-in-charge of the Australian National Antarctic Expedition.

"On May 10 a bird was seen by myself and Peter Fenton, which I would describe as a White Heron. The size was perhaps a little larger than the 'Blue Crane', and it was probably a little more heavily built. As it glided in to land the light through its wings had a yellow tint, similar to those of white cockatoos, but not as intense. We walked over towards the pools of water where it landed, and when we were within 15 or 20 yards it flew up out of the tussocks, with a typical heron-like flight—the long legs dangling and neck outstretched until it became properly airborne, when it folded up its legs (which stretched well beyond its tail) and folded back its head onto its neck. The beak was long, tapering and *straight*. Then it flew off with the typical slow, easy beating of wings.

"Almost immediately it was attacked by a skua gull, which made several passes, but it had little difficulty in evading the skua. Then it rose to a fair height on an up-current beside Wireless Hill, and drifted sideways until it reached the edge of the plateau, where it landed again among the tussocks.

"The bird appeared to be pure white, and I could see no dark markings on it at all".

Mr. Law informs me that he also saw the bird, but not from such a short distance as Oldham. The colour of the beak and legs was not recorded, but in flight the legs looked black.

The description appears to be an unmistakeable one of the White Egret (*Egretta alba*), and from the particulars provided (including the long trailing legs, which would eliminate the white phase of the Reef-Heron), there is no other likely species that it could be.

The White Egret is suspected of a tendency to make ocean or coastwise wanderings (see *The Emu*, vol. 43, 1944, p. 250), and I have seen a lone individual feeding on the tidal flat of one of the islets of isolated Ashmore Reef in the Timor Sea and another on Adèle Island, nearer the Australian coast.

This record represents an addition to the avifauna of Macquarie Island. Possibly the bird wandered from the

New Zealand region, where it is a scarce resident, and if so could be ranked as yet another of the casual immigrants from that source which have been noted in recent times (Falla, *B.A.N.Z.A.R.E. Reports, Birds*, 1937, p. 24). Mr. Law, however, considers it more probable that the bird came from Tasmania—where it is an irregular though fairly common visitor from the Australian mainland. Mr. Law states: "With the known strength of the NW-W gales at that period I am doubtful if the bird could proceed against them from New Zealand, whereas it would be assisted from Tasmania.—D. L. SERVENTY, Perth, W.A., 14/7/51.

Nest 'Piracy'.—That many birds utilize, with varying measures of renovation, nests previously made by birds of other species, is a well-established fact that opens up a wide field for investigation by students of avian psychology. Birds that are very diverse in relationship and habit have resorted to this practice on occasions, and it seems more common with some species than others. Moreover, the type of nest selected often differs considerably in form from the normal pattern of the bird adopting it, and seems to point either to some temporary aberration of the nesting instinct, or some special or urgent circumstance that finds its solution in the acquisition of an old nest or some gradual change in the nest-building instinct itself.

The behaviour of a pair of Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Coracina novæ-hollandiæ*) that acquired the mud nest of Magpie-Larks (*Grallina cyanoleuca*), built in a tree in my garden, is perhaps worth noting, as I believe there is only one record of this species using another bird's nest. In this case the Cuckoo-Shrikes did not merely select an unused nest, but harassed and bullied the adult and young Magpie-Larks, who were just ready to use the nest, and then took possession of the desired 'domicile', which is quite unlike that of their species. The 'pirated' nest was relined quickly, and the usual domestic routine of the usurpers initiated and partially consummated. I say 'partially' because tragedy—or was it poetic justice?—overtook them soon after the eggs hatched, the perpetrators of it being a pair of Grey Butcher-birds (*Cracticus torquatus*) interested in replenishing their larder! One is tempted to speculate that some factor of urgency must have prompted this most unusual aggressive behaviour on the part of the Cuckoo-Shrikes.—N. L. ROBERTS, Sydney, N.S.W., 3/7/51.

Bulbuls in Melbourne.—It has been stated on occasions that bulbuls have become established in the suburbs of Melbourne, and it has generally been assumed that the species in question is the Red-whiskered Bulbul (*Otocompsa emeria*) which is common around Sydney.

I have only seen a bulbul in Melbourne on one occasion—in October, 1942—when I had a good look at a solitary bird in a garden in South Yarra. This bird was definitely not the Red-whiskered Bulbul, but was an example of one of the red-vented bulbuls (*Molpastes* sp.), which have a much thicker crest and a black head and throat without any red marking thereon.

Is this the species established in Melbourne? I might say that only yesterday I discovered a skin in the MacGillivray collection in the South Australian Museum, of *Molpastes* sp., collected by J. D. Sargood in Toorak, Vic., in 1918.—ALAN LENDON, Adelaide, S.A., 13/9/51.

An Australian Specimen of the Arctic Tern.—Critical re-examination of museum skins, often perfunctorily labelled in the first instance, occasionally brings to light something of interest. While I was combing through the terns in the 'H. L. White Collection' for possible misidentified specimens of *Sterna hirundo longipennis*, a skin of the Arctic Tern, *Sterna macrura* Naum. (*paradisaea* auct.), was found. Presumably a beach 'derelict', it was taken at Bunbury, Western Australia, by Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock on October 26, 1927. (This should, I think, read 1926 as the specimen was received at the National Museum on December 1, 1926). The bird is an adult female in summer plumage and, although the head is sadly battered, there are still some black feathers on the forehead, crown and occiput.

The skin is registered as number 8479 in the 'H. L. White Collection'. Colours of soft parts: bill 'black', iris 'deep brown', feet 'red'. Regarding bill colour, there is still an underlying tinge of red visible, especially at the tip, which would suggest that, in life, it was, perhaps, a dark red. Measurements: Total length in the flesh 295 mm., wing (abraded) 250 mm., tail (abraded) 126 mm., culmen (from feathers) 30 mm., tarsus 16 mm., toe 22 mm. The plumage is quite worn, the tail, in particular, and the wings showing abrasion.

The close similarity of the present species to *striata*, *vitata*, *dougallii* and *hirundo*, especially in winter plumage, makes identification, even in the hand, a matter of some difficulty without good comparative material. Whilst I had satisfied myself that this skin did, in fact, fit the description of *macrura* (the extremely short tarsus is diagnostic), I was glad to have Dr. R. A. Falla confirm the identification during a visit to Melbourne in October, 1951.

The occurrence of the Arctic Tern on the west coast of Australia can only be regarded, at present, as accidental; it may, however, indicate an Indian Ocean migration route considerably closer to our western shores than hitherto suspected. Falla (*B.A.N.Z.A.R.E. Reports*, series B, vol. 2, *Birds*, 1937, p. 253) cites three October records for the south

Indian Ocean (one record of five birds at 30°S, 60°E), and it may be that the Bunbury bird strayed from a flock following such a route south to Antarctica.—W. B. HITCHCOCK, National Museum, Melbourne, Vic., 22/1/52.

Reviews

Birds of Western Australia.—The first edition of this work (November 1948) received the support it deserved and was soon out of print. (See *The Emu*, vol. 48, p. 246, and *The South Australian Ornithologist*, vol. 19, p. 39, for reviews of the first edition typical of general enthusiasm for the work). The encouraging response led the authors, Dr. D. L. Serventy and Major H. M. Whittell, O.B.E., to a second edition published about three years after the first. Naturally, the text was revised wherever shown to be necessary or desirable. More illustrations in colour and in text figures were included, Miss Olive Seymour and Mr. H. O. Webster being the artists. The work now consists of 384 pages (medium octavo), 6 coloured plates showing 17 species, a text figure for each of 37 species, 9 distribution maps, and an end-paper map of Western Australia. (Price is 25/–, 6d. postage. The book is cloth bound. Publishers are Paterson Brokensha Pty. Ltd., Perth, W.A.).

The Summary (in Introduction) of the first edition was not precise in its total count of species and division into categories. It was corrected for the second edition, and states that 356 species are dealt with; of those 262 are breeding land and freshwater species, 28 breeding sea species, 30 visiting land and freshwater species, 31 visiting sea species, 5 introduced breeding species. The Introduction otherwise has been revised with a few additions.

The Section on Bird Geography is practically unchanged other than that omission of *Psophodes nigrogularis*, as an Eyrean sub-region species found in both south-west and south-east Australia, has been rectified.

Of the 19 additional pages of the second edition, most are taken up in Section III, The Birds, in revisions, including new text, and 14 new text figures of species. The revisions noted in a page-by-page comparison of the two editions are not considerably relative to the extent of the section, emphasizing the care with which the original text was prepared, but generally the revisions noted are substantial enough in number and effect to require all active workers to dispense with the first edition as a working text.

Critical appraisal of a reference work cannot be exhaustive in a review, even if a reviewer be appropriately knowledgeable and diligent. The authors probably gained by reviews of the first edition, but obviously private comments of field workers would be a fruitful source of correction, confirmation and improvement, and should continue to be with the second edition. Several points of criticism, confirmation and commendation noted in the scrutiny required for this review will be privately passed on to the authors, but a few items not being field notes are thought worthy of public note.

Whilst relating (p. 2) the general arrangement of the work to the *Official Checklist* of the R.A.O.U., 1926, the authors (on p. 10) state that "Australia as a whole contains 652 indigenous species." They are obviously referring to that useful and provocative study, 'The Number of Australian Bird Species?' by Ernst Mayr and D. L. Serventy (*The Emu*, vol. 44, p. 33), and should have referred appropriately, in the Summary, to such a significant departure from the *Checklist*. Similarly, the category of 'tribe' (a type of subdivision of arrangement not used elsewhere in the work) is used for the *Anatiformes* without explanation of that ornithological innovation of Delacour and Mayr ('The Family Anatidae', *The Wilson Bulletin*,