

and Barnard should have failed to give any account, contenting themselves with writing: "This species is one of the novelties of the northern scrubs. It spends almost its whole time on the ground, and resembles the *Sericornes*. It builds a bulky nest, almost entirely of moss, and as large as a football, which is suspended to a fern or low bush near the ground. The entrance is at the side. We were unfortunate in not taking eggs. One nest we had under surveillance was rifled by some enemy (beast).'"

Stray Feathers

The Noddy near Sydney.—The influence of cyclones on the dispersal of sea-birds is well known. Notes on the subject, together with some interesting New South Wales records, were recently published in *The Emu* (Goddard, M. T., and Hindwood, K. A., vol. 51, 1951, pp. 169-171).

It is, of course, impossible to tell just how many pelagic species are blown from their usual haunts and are either dispersed over extensive land areas or find a temporary home in 'foreign' waters. Interested observers, capable of appreciating the significance of such unusual occurrences, are so few, and the places where the birds are likely to be found are so isolated, that most wind-blown or storm-blown waifs pass unnoticed.

The cyclone that moved down the east coast of Australia towards the end of February doubtless scattered many birds far and wide during its progress. A Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) in adult plumage seen at Boat Harbour, North Cronulla, a few miles south of Sydney, on February 28, 1954, was probably such a straggler. It was observed quartering the rocky coastline nearby, dropping down now and again to pick up food (? very small fish) from the broken water. It was also closely watched as it rested on the rocks. Generally its habits were the same as those of an immature Noddy that frequented Long Reef, near Sydney, for some two months in 1951 (Hindwood, K. A., *Emu*, vol. 52, 1952, pp. 155-8, pl. 16).

According to the Weather Bureau, Sydney, the cyclonic disturbance started on February 13, 1954, near the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, some 2,000 miles north-east of Australia. Eight days later it reached south-eastern Queensland and then moved southwards, being off Sydney on the following day, February 22. About that time the wind was blowing from Lord Howe Island, in the direction of Sydney, at a speed of between 30 and 50 miles an hour. Lord Howe Island, some 450 miles north-east of Sydney, is the Noddy's nearest nesting-place to New South Wales. The birds leave the island about the end of February, or in March, at the close of the breeding season. Without banding it is impossible to ascertain the origin of stragglers of such a wide-

spread species, though it is possible that the individual seen at Boat Harbour on February 28 was blown across from Lord Howe Island, or the adjacent seas, a few days earlier.

This recent occurrence of the Noddy is the fourth known record of the species for coastal New South Wales.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Sydney, 28/3/54.

Topknot Pigeon in Tasmania.—On December 10, 1953, a specimen of the Topknot Pigeon (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*) was received at the Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, from Spreyton, a fruit-growing district on the north-west coast near Devonport. It was an adult male, in good condition, and T. G. Cashion, who examined it, informs me that its stomach contained cherries. As an 'accidental' species in Tasmania, this handsome fruit pigeon has been recorded very rarely, and it appears that the preceding authentic record was in 1907, when two birds were taken near St. Helens, and presented to the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston.

About a month elapsed before I could visit Spreyton to see if other birds were there. The Museum had been informed that 'about a dozen' had been seen in the district. Local advice given me on arrival was that what had not been shot had left. One only had been seen during the previous fortnight and now this had disappeared.

Mrs. Eric Smith, whose husband had sent the specimen to the Museum, told me that nine or ten birds had been about the orchard, visiting cherry trees close to the house. She had not seen the birds in the district before. Mrs. Pilgrim, on a neighbouring property, said there were about ten birds. They 'camped' in some bushy gum trees in a small gully about half a mile away on the range behind the house, and regularly at about 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. each day they descended into the cherry trees, breaking off twigs and eating the fruit greedily. Her husband had shot one.

I accounted for four of the birds when Mr. F. Pilgrim, living a couple of miles away in another direction, told me he had shot two. One, he said, had a cherry in its beak and two more down its throat. He had seen twelve birds, and remarked—"They warmed the cherries all right!"

Spreyton is chiefly an apple-growing district, but most growers have cherry trees, and the cherries were done when I called, though cherry plums were coming on and I thought these might induce the remnant of the flock to return. No reports were received of their reappearance, however.

The presence of a Topknot Pigeon at Antill Ponds, in the Tasmanian midlands, during the previous season was suspected by Mr. R. Green, R.A.O.U. He wrote to me in March 1953, saying that his tractor driver had told him a strange bird had been observed at his house close to Antill

Ponds railway station. He described it as like a pigeon in character and with a 'bump' on its head. When he was shown coloured illustrations of a number of birds, he identified the bird, without being prompted, as the Topknot Pigeon.

Those interviewed at Spreyton all remarked on the tameness of the Pigeons, declaring they could approach them to within a few yards; and the same thing also was reported by the Antill Ponds observer, who said the bird came close to his house as if looking for food.

Registered number of the specimen added to the Tasmanian Museum collection is 13184/B2703. — MICHAEL SHARLAND, Hobart, Tas., 12/3/54.

News and Notes

ANNUAL CONGRESS, 1954

Congress will be held this year in New South Wales, the proposed camp-out site being on the South Coast (Wollongong district). It is the permanent camp of the district Scout group and is situated on the edge of a mountain in dense brush. A caretaker who is a member of the Illawarra Naturalists Club is in residence. There are spacious grounds, kitchen and cooking facilities, dining-room, and sleeping quarters with bunks and mattresses. Transport facilities are available and most of the roads in the vicinity are tarred. A tiled swimming bath has been constructed. The period of the camp will be from November 8 to 19. Mr. G. R. Gannon has been appointed preliminary organizer, but enquiries should be directed to Mr. A. R. McGill, 119 Wollongong Road, Arncliffe, N.S.W., the State Secretary. Further details will be published when available.

MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The response to the request to members in arrears to bring their subscriptions up to date has been splendid, but some members are tardy. Assist the Hon. Treasurer and the Union generally by keeping up to date. Enquire of the Hon. Treasurer if you are uncertain of your position.

The Council has decided to discontinue the despatch of *The Emu* to members in arrears with subscriptions. Please pay attention to this reminder and pay your subscription at once.

NEW HON. TREASURER

Mr. Howard Jarman, 386 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, has been appointed Hon. Treasurer of the Union.

FIFTY YEARS INDEX

Members are reminded that copies of the comprehensive Index to the first fifty volumes of *The Emu* are available