

two birds concerned subsequently raised a brood after building two nests, the first having been deserted.

My thanks are due to Dr. D. L. Serventy, who identified the two birds as being immature Red-capped Robins.

Stray Feathers

Gilbert Whistler near Sydney.—Most Australian members of the genus *Pachycephala* have their strongholds in coastal and near-coastal areas. A notable exception is *P. inornata*, the Gilbert Whistler, which is widely spread throughout the interior of all mainland States and which has come to be regarded as typical of dry mallee and similar areas. That being so, I was astonished to hear the voice of a 'Gilbert' in a heathland above Bayview, 20 miles north of Sydney, on August 30, 1953.

The call came from a group of trees growing on a sandstone knoll surrounded by scrub. As soon as I heard it I 'propped', scarcely able to believe the evidence of my ears. Mr. G. R. Gannon then joined me, and, when the bird called again, he, too, was convinced at once that the voice was that of the Gilbert Whistler. Skirting the knoll, I tried by 'squeaking' to persuade the bird to show itself, but the only effect of the advance was to cause the stranger to fly off (thereby revealing itself to be the right size) towards a group of trees a few hundred yards away. We followed it to that spot and there again heard the call, but again we failed to see the bird. Another search in the area a week later was fruitless; we neither heard the airy voice nor saw its author.

Although this is merely a 'sound' record I have no doubt at all regarding the bird's identity. I have known the Gilbert Whistler since youthful days, and am not likely to confuse its voice with that of any other bird, certainly not any bird near Sydney. Moreover, it is to be noted that the visitor to Bayview was alone, manifested the shyness of a stranger, and did not attempt to descend to the thick heathy vegetation. How it found its way to such a spot, within a mile or so of the coast, is a matter for speculation. I should have thought that the Gilbert Whistler would not be seen or heard, in New South Wales, within about two hundred miles of the sea.—A. H. CHISHOLM, Sydney, N.S.W., 8/5/54.

Unusual Habitat of the White-headed Stilt.—The margins of lakes and swampland generally are the usual types of country frequented by the White-headed Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*). A check through published material in *The Emu* shows no noticeable deviation from such a habitat. At any rate I can find no previously-recorded instance of the species having been seen on exposed coastal reefs, so the

observation of five birds at Boat Harbour on October 3, 1953, is of interest. The reef and adjacent beach at Boat Harbour, a few miles south of Sydney, is one of the best-known local wader habitats, and a list of species recorded there was recently summarized by K. A. Hindwood (*Emu*, vol. 48, pp. 323-324).

The small flock of White-headed Stilts seen there on October 3 gave me a pleasant surprise. They were first located standing on the northern edge of the reef where the incoming waves broke over their long legs and frequently caused them to move quickly backwards. While I remained there they appeared timid and restless, and on a few occasions flew off ocean-wards, probably being disturbed by my close presence, or driven away by the numerous Silver Gulls (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*). The Gulls proved pugnacious towards them, evidently sensing a stranger. However, on every occasion they flew away they presented a fine sight, flying low over the ocean surge and calling frequently. They appeared loath to go far and always returned soon to the reef-edge. When I eventually departed they were still there. I did not see them attempt to gather food at any time.

During the months previous to, and following, the Boat Harbour occurrence, small numbers of White-headed Stilts were seen about the Hawkesbury swamps, where they occasionally nest, about 30 miles west of Sydney. However, during that time those at Boat Harbour were the only ones recorded closer to the city. In fact, that small flock, and an observation of a single bird on a mud flat near Cook's River by Jeff Clyde on January 21, 1946, appear to be the only occurrences of the White-headed Stilt within the Sydney metropolitan area since 1895.—A. R. McGILL, Arncliffe, N.S.W., 18/7/54.

The death has occurred of Mr. A. G. Campbell. An obituary will be published in the next issue.

Reviews

Australian Hawks.—Taxonomic reviews of Australian bird groups have often been based on material in overseas museums and conducted by overseas workers. In 'Taxonomic Notes on Australian Hawks', by H. T. Condon and Dean Amadon, *Records Sth. Aust. Mus.*, vol. XI, no. 2, May 28, 1954, pp. 189-246, we have a comprehensive presentation of observations, based on overseas and local skins, by an American and an Australian ornithologist each of distinction. Despite the sources of material, including the Mathews collection in New York, the lack of specimens from Western Australia, southern Queensland and Tasmania is deplored.

The authors assert that because of its long isolation Australia has served as an important area for differentiation. It was probably the focal point of evolution of some groups.

All our diurnal raptors are dealt with other than *Falco berigora*, *Circus approximans* and *Pandion haliaetus*, which have been otherwise