

in hot, dry localities on the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range should check on any *Gerygone* calls that may sound a little different from those of the more widely-distributed White-throated Warbler. Careful observation is essential because there is a similarity in their calls and both species may be seen in the same tree, as I have observed on more than one occasion.

A grey-plumaged warbler (*Gerygone*) was seen at Plump-ton, about thirty miles west of Sydney, on March 1, 1955. It uttered a call like the first few notes of the song of the White-throated Warbler as it fed unobtrusively in open forest country. It appeared to be larger than the Western Warbler and to have a stouter and longer bill. However, the matter of identification was not satisfactorily settled despite an examination of museum specimens. The bird was either a Mangrove Warbler (*G. cantator*) or a Western Warbler, and in either event was a straggler well outside its normal range.

Whether both the Western Warbler and the Mangrove Warbler are regular migrants, partial migrants, or nomads is a matter that needs to be further investigated. The subject has been discussed by A. H. Chisholm in the case of the Western Warbler (*Emu*, vol. 47, p. 203) and by K. A. Hindwood and A. R. McGill in the case of the Mangrove Warbler (*id.*, vol. 56, p. 145).

It may be noted that in the south-west of Western Australia, where the Western Warbler is common in coastal areas, some dubiety appears to prevail regarding the species' seasonal movements. Thus Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*) refer to its song as being heard in Perth gardens 'in spring and summer', and quote E. H. Sedgwick as saying that in the wheatbelt the melody is heard only from May to September, which may indicate that the birds leave the area in the summer months.

Stray Feathers

Dust-bathing of the White-winged Chough.—The method of dust-bathing used by the White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) and noted by J. Douglas Gibson (*Emu*, vol. 54, p. 279), is, I believe, quite regular. I have frequently seen Choughs apparently 'anting', but on examination of the ground have been unable to find any ants. The last occasion was on April 10, 1957, at Berrigan, New South Wales.

A party of eighteen Choughs was feeding at the edge of a recently-ploughed paddock. The turning of the tractor at the perimeter of the paddock had left a strip of very compact earth, some of which had crumbled into fine dust. Two of the Choughs started picking up beak-fulls of this dust and placing it amongst their feathers exactly as described by

Gibson. Gradually the other Choughs in the party joined the original two, and soon all eighteen were busy dust-bathing in a very tight mob. This continued for about ten minutes, the birds busy but quiet all the time. Then with an outburst of grating calls the whole party took flight, each bird making a puff of dust as it flew. I examined the ground where the birds had been and found it covered in powdery dust in which the imprints of the birds' feet were plainly visible. In addition, there were about six small holes dug into the more compact earth. Beak-marks were to be seen at the bottom of each hole and it seemed obvious that dirt had been pecked out in the form of dust. The holes were $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and about 1 inch wide. They were completely circular in form. There were no ants to be seen within 30 yards of this spot and there was nothing to indicate that this particular area had ever formed an ant-nest.

It is interesting to speculate whether this method of dust-bathing evolved from the 'anting' habit or the reverse. To date I have not seen Choughs actually 'anting'.—JOHN N. HOBBS, Finley, N.S.W., 7/5. 57.

The Wood Sandpiper in South-west Australia.—In a recent review by K. A. Hindwood and A. R. McGill (*Emu*, vol. 53, pp. 1-13) of the occurrence of the Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) in Australia, all available records from the south-west, which are in actual fact centred around the Swan River district, were discussed. Since then, J. Warham (*W.A. Nat.*, vol. 4, p. 92) has added another record of the species in the Swan River district, and it was generally believed that the lack of competent observers in other areas of the south-west was mainly the reason for the species not being recorded further south.

During a visit to Dumbleyung with P. J. Fuller and W. C. Ford on September 23, 1956, when the R.A.O.U. annual camp-out was in progress, I collected a specimen of *Tringa glareola* two miles east of Lake Gundaring, for the Western Australian Museum. The specimen (W.A. Museum Coll. no. A7894) had the following dimensions: total length 234 mm., culmen 29, tarsus 38, wing 125. The beak was black; legs, greenish-yellow; iris, brown.

The bird was one of fourteen Wood Sandpipers seen on a very shallow, slightly-brackish stretch of water, covered with samphire. Paper-barks, she-oaks, and eucalypts were growing in the water, and fallen logs were numerous—an ideal habitat for Wood Sandpipers. Prominent field markings were the yellowish-green legs, white eye-brow line, the well-defined spotted pattern on the back and sides of wings, and the conspicuous white rump which was clearly visible whenever the birds were flushed. The Wood Sandpipers gained height rapidly, when disturbed, fanning their tails and calling loudly. Characteristic behaviour was noted when

they bobbed frequently, jerked their tails and perched on logs. On one occasion a bird alighted in a tree three feet above the water.

It is of interest to note that this record constitutes the largest group of Wood Sandpipers seen in Australia.—
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Reviews

The World's Dabbling Ducks.—Volume 2 of Jean Delacour's work on the Anatidae, *The Waterfowl of the World*, is concerned with 43 species which in 1945 Delacour and Ernst Mayr classified, with one exception—*Merganetta armata*, the Torrent Duck—into the tribe Anatini ('The Family Anatidae', *Wilson Bulletin*, vol. 57, March 1954; reviewed *Emu*, vol. 45, p. 95). Delacour uses the comprehensive vernacular 'Dabbling Ducks' because of that distinctive normal feeding habit of practically all species of the tribe.

Volume 2 has 232 pages, including names, indexes and 29 distribution maps. The 24 full-page full-colour plates by Peter Scott, provide a frontispiece typical of waterfowl-in-marsh tradition, and illustrate 26 monotypic species and 59 subspecies of the remaining 17 species, both sexes and eclipse plumages, and all known downy young. It was published in late 1956: volume 1 in 1954 (reviewed *Emu*, vol. 55, p. 162). The work will be completed in three volumes (each 8 inches x 10), £5/5/- stg. a volume. Publisher is Country Life Ltd., London.

Thirty-eight of the 43 species are of the genus *Anas* and labelled 'true' dabbling ducks. Delacour states in the introduction: "Although the numerous species grouped here in the genus *Anas* are sometimes considerably different, they are nevertheless linked by intermediates and they form a closely connected group. Further generic distinction would obscure the concept of their relationship." Two species occur in Australia, New Zealand and New Guinea—Black Duck and Grey Teal; one is confined to Australia and New Zealand—Blue-winged Shoveler; one to New Guinea's mountains—Salvadori's Teal; one in these days is confined to southern Australia—Chestnut Teal, and one to New Zealand and its southern islands—Brown Teal (some make the two species conspecific).

The remaining five species of dabblers are monotypic and "aberrant . . . tentatively placed here as we are still unable at present to understand clearly their position in the general system of genera and species of Anatinae sub-family". They are Australia's Pink-eared and Freckled Ducks, New Zealand's Blue Duck, South America's Torrent Duck (of six subspecies) and the Pink-headed Duck of eastern India and Pakistan.

As with all such comprehensive works, adequate appraisal of the detail of Delacour's and Scott's *Waterfowl* requires methodical assessment and comment at length. It will be useful when such occurs; whoever undertakes it must necessarily wait until volume 3 is issued, not only because it will complete the Anatidae, but also it will 'round up' with a "general account of the family Anatidae and include chapters on morphological, anatomical and biological characters; on history, sport, conservation, acclimatization, care and breeding, and a bibliography". As one reviewer of volume 1 has stated in anticipation: "Let us hope that it will be a large volume!"

The *Waterfowl* is really impressive in beauty and information of illustration, and quality of 'make-up' in typography, paper, printing and binding. It joins the fine works on ornithology and will draw the admirers and collectors of such now and onwards. Owners and curators of waterfowl collections will benefit substantially from the considerable and authoritative detail of 'Captivity' comment. But there are doubts enough that the systematist has been equally well served; a sub-