

Another incident was seen at 16.00 hrs on May 29, 1961. This time the Shrike-Thrush, which had been perched in a fallen dead tree, quickly seized a male Scarlet Robin (*Petroica multicolor*) from a foraging flock of this species, as they moved past. I intervened hoping to examine the robin, but was unable to make the Shrike-Thrush drop its prey. At my approach it flew farther away and continued to bang the corpse on a log or rock. Finally it began to tear pieces off the robin by prolonged shaking and banging.

A third instance was brought to my attention by Mr. Ian Rowley (pers. comm.), who was able to photograph an attack on a stuffed male Superb Blue Wren being used for behaviour studies at "Gungahlin", Canberra, A.C.T. This occurred during the afternoon of June 22, 1958. The Shrike-Thrush seized the dummy after thrusting upwards at it with its bill, but was unable to fly off with the "wren" as it was securely wired to a substantial branch.

It is of interest to note that all three attacks occurred during early winter (in the A.C.T.) and in each case the brightly coloured male of the species was taken. It seems from this that the Grey Shrike-Thrush may have a more varied diet than has been suspected previously. If it can catch adult wrens and robins it would have little trouble catching many other species of similar size and habits.—R. A. TILT, C.S.I.R.O., Wildlife Survey Section, Canberra, 22/9/61.

Review

Bird Doctor, by Katherine Tottenham, 1961, 160 pp., 13 black-and-white ill., Thomas Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh, A25/-.

Most ornithologists have, at one time or another, been confronted with an oiled or injured bird. The poor victim is handed in with the sublime assurance that it can be saved because "you like birds." Unfortunately, caring for sick or injured birds is not easy, but anyone who acquires *Bird Doctor* by Katherine Tottenham will have a much better chance of success.

Mrs. Tottenham describes the treatments she has used for some 40 species of English birds. Her methods would apply equally well for similar Australian species. She says quite frankly that treatment in most cases had to be by trial and error, dictated by commonsense and what she could read of their food and feeding habits.

In a book dealing with birds as individuals there is always the risk of becoming emotional and sentimental in writing about them—"twee" as the author describes it. While the birds treated by Mrs. Tottenham certainly emerge as creatures with their own individualities, the whole subject is dealt with briskly, practically, and with no false sentiment. It includes a short history of oil pollution and warns of the risk to wildlife from the increasing use of chemical pesticides.

The publisher's notes say that Mrs. Tottenham as an amateur has become well-known on radio and television for her "bird doctoring", but it does not give any indication of any specialized medical or similar training she may have had, although parts of the book suggest it. It would have been helpful to know more of her background for the work.

Bird Doctor is interesting, very readable, and gives information not readily available elsewhere.—I.M.W.

The date of publication was May 31, 1962.