

# Notes and Observations from the Launceston District to 30th June, 1902.

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1902.—May 5.—An occasional Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) is still to be seen on the southern outskirts of the district.

May 14.—On several moonlight nights recently I have heard flocks of Plover passing overhead, seemingly some considerable distance up. From their cries I would say they were Spur-winged Plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*).

May 24.—Observed a male Long-tailed Blue Wren (*Malurus gouldi*) still in full summer plumage by the rifle butts, to the east of the district. All other males of this species I have seen have long since assumed their winter coat.

May 25.—Counted a flock numbering 47 Lesser White-backed Magpies (*Gymnorhina hyperleuca*) feeding on the ground in a small paddock not far from the house. Such a flock is most unusual.

May 30.—This is the first autumn in which the Spine-tailed Swifts (*Chaetura caudacuta*) have been so scarce round about this district. Usually numbers are to be seen nearly every evening towards the end of summer, either wheeling high in the air or skimming close along the ground very swiftly. The occasions on which I have observed them this autumn have been few and far between. I can only remember having seen one really large flock; among it were a number of White-rumped Swifts (*Micropus pacificus*), whose forms I could readily distinguish as they dashed close by.

June 3.—Observed a Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) in the bush towards the southern outskirts of the district. As this is the second autumn in which I have observed this species after all the other migrants had long since departed for warmer climes, I am of opinion that certain individuals of this species, at least, must be in the habit of wintering here.

June 8.—Observed a flock of some twenty or thirty White-fronted Bush-Chats (*Epthianura albifrons*) feeding in a field in South Launceston. When disturbed they flew some distance, uttering sharp cries. This is the first occasion on which I have either seen or heard of so many individuals of this species being so close to the city.

Also observed a small flock of Ground-Larks (*Anthus australis*) feeding close by. It is somewhat unusual for this species to be in the vicinity at this time of the year. A Yellow-rumped Tit (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*) was seen

carrying food in its bill into a large conifer, presumably for its young. As the tree was on the other side of a fence in private grounds I was unable to investigate the matter. This species was exceptionally plentiful in the fields about this portion of the district.

June 25.—Observed a large flock of Silver Gulls (*Larus nova-hollandiæ*) passing over Launceston in a north-westerly direction towards the sea. In all probability they were returning from feeding at some temporary lagoon formed by the late heavy rains. During some winters it is no uncommon sight to see large flocks, often numbering several hundred birds, of this species passing up the valley of the North Esk as far as St. Leonards, on the south-east limits of the district, where they, in company with Crows (*Corvus coronoides*), Ravens (*Corone australis*), and Magpies (*Gymnorhina hyperleuca*), feed all day long in the flooded paddocks. Towards dusk they take flight, and either pass over Launceston or return the way they came, taking a short cut to the lower reaches of the Tamar. The distance from the open sea to the feeding grounds is about 46 miles.