

✓ *NEOCHMIA PHAETON* (Crimson Finch).

This beautiful bird is resident and fairly plentiful about all the creeks and springs from Napier Broome Bay to the Drysdale River. The nests are generally built in pandanus palms, or in the forks of large cajaput trees, at from 10 to 50 feet from the ground. Plate XXXIV. shows the sites of three nests in the bark of a fallen tree. The materials used in nest-building are partly decayed leaves of a coarse swamp grass or cajaput bark on the outside, with feathers or grass as lining. Both sexes assist in building their large and roughly constructed nests. Flower buds and seeds of many small plants, honey from the flowers of *Grevillea*, and grass seeds form the chief articles of diet. Green tree-ants (*Ecophylla smaragdina*) destroy many eggs and young of this species.

✓ *ORIOLOUS AFFINIS* (Northern Oriole).
Uncommon.*ORIOLOUS FLAVICINCTUS* (Yellow Oriole).

I saw a few pairs at Parry Harbour and on Mary Island, in the densest foliage, where they are difficult to locate on account of their protective colouring and habit of remaining motionless when approached.

Measurements of birds in mm. :—

| | Total length. | Wing. | Tarsus. | Bill. | Tail. |
|-------|---------------|---------|----------|--------|-------|
| ♂ ... | 295 ... | 139 ... | 23.5 ... | 30 ... | 107 |
| ♀ ... | 282 ... | 136 ... | 25 ... | 28 ... | 105 |

✓ *CHIBIA BRACTEATA* (Spangled Drongo).*

Were fairly plentiful near Parry Harbour, but very uncommon in other localities.

Measurements of birds in mm. :—

| | Total length. | Wing. | Tarsus. | Bill. | Tail. |
|-------|---------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| ♂ ... | 324 ... | 156 ... | 26 ... | 35 ... | 135 |
| ♀ ... | 292 ... | 154 ... | 27 ... | 35 ... | 132 |

✓ *CHLAMYDODERA NUCHALIS* (Great Bower-Bird).

Seen at Napier Broome Bay and Parry Harbour. Several bowers were found in both localities, at some distance from the coast, amongst thin, stunted scrub. Most of these were ornamented with coral and shells, or quartz crystals and freshly picked fruit of eucalyptus trees. Their food consists principally of wild figs, grapes, and other fruits.

CORVUS CORONOIDES (Crow).

Were seen in all localities I visited, including the islands. Locusts and lizards only were found in the crops.

Measurements of birds in mm. :—

| | Total length. | Wing. | Tarsus. | Bill. | Tail. |
|-------|---------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| ♂ ... | 534 ... | 362 ... | 62 ... | 57 ... | 204 |
| ♀ ... | 494 ... | 350 ... | 64 ... | 51 ... | 190 |

Bird Day.

BIRD Day was celebrated throughout Victoria on Friday, 28th October, 1910. The Minister for Education, Mr. A. A. Billson, had suggested that on that day school work should proceed as usual in the morning, but that a special programme should be carried out in the afternoon, as follows:—School song; brief statement of the aims of the Gould League of Bird Lovers; enrolment of members of the Gould League of Bird Lovers;

recitation; school song; short address by visitor or teacher on "Birds: their Value and Interest"; rapid revision of the school bird list and the list of last Bird Day; where convenient, an excursion, about half-past 2, to visit haunts of birds, nests previously noted. A list of birds seen should be made, in two columns—(1) birds positively identified; (2) birds about which there is a doubt. In city schools, where the excursion may not be practicable, the programme may be extended, and may include a composition exercise.

This was adhered to in the majority of schools, and the pupils learned a great deal about bird-life.

Members of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, the Bird Observers' Club, the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, and kindred societies visited different schools and delivered brief addresses about birds and their habits, &c., impressing on the children the necessity for protecting bird-life for its economic value, besides its beauty and interest. Some of the bigger schools of the metropolis were favoured by visits from leading members of the Union. But there was in some instances a little overlapping of lecturers, not likely to recur in future.

In the country districts, generally, Bird Day celebration was a success, and, with the facilities offered for open-air lessons, in many instances the scholars had a most interesting and instructive afternoon. At Drouin West State school Mr. Isaac Batey, the veteran bird observer, and Mr. Swan were in attendance to judge essays for which prizes had been offered. The subject was—"What I Have Seen in the Bush," pupils of the fourth, fifth, and sixth classes competing. The examiners were pleased with the quality of the essays submitted. During the afternoon Mr. Batey explained interesting features regarding different specimens of birds displayed, and read an essay on nature study. At Maryborough Mr. Alex. H. Chisholm did good service in a similar direction, as did Mr. A. G. Campbell at Stawell and Mr. G. E. Shepherd in the Mornington district, and these instances of Bird Day celebrations in the country are fairly typical of a large number of others. At Ballarat four large schools met in the Athenæum Hall, where the Rev. A. Greenwood lectured agreeably on "Birds: their Homes, Habits, Uses, &c." At the Mortlake State school, where an instructive paper was read by "F. R," the Rev. Mr. M'Bride, according to *The Mortlake Despatch* (2/11/10), is reported to have stated "that one of the chief characteristics of Australian birds was that they are songless." Surely the reverend gentleman must have been misreported.

In connection with Arbor and Bird Day, the following letter from Captain S. A. White, of Wetunga, Fulham, South Australia, which appeared in *The Register*, 24th August, 1910, is of interest:—

"With the greatest pleasure I read in *The Register* an article headed 'Arbor and Bird Day.' I have been waiting for this move a long while, and at last it has come. It is only through the children that we can hope to educate the coming generations to recognize the great part our native birds play in the welfare of the State, quite apart from preventing much cruelty in destroying our feathered friends. It is a fitting thing that Arbor Day and Bird Day should be held at the same time, because one depends on the other. It has been a great wonder to me that this fact has not been noticed before. Much has been done and said (quite rightly, too) by our Forest Department and National Park Board, but how strange that bird protection has not come into the question, when we know that science, and also many thousands of practical demonstrations, have shown us that the flora is dependent on the birds for its existence as much as the birds are dependent on it. They are the eradicators of hundreds of different kinds of pests and blights which attack our timber trees and our flora in general, and their fertilization, also, is almost dependent on the native birds in many cases. The Education Department is to be heartily congratulated on this important undertaking. It has a wonderfully energetic officer in Mr. Edquist, who has only lately taken to this study, but is rapidly furnishing himself with a practical knowledge of our native birds. All the many ornithologists in South Australia will do all they can to help the movement. I am proud to think of being one of the original members of the first Ornithological Association of Australasia—the S.A.O.A.—which has done an immense amount of work, not only in the advancement of ornithological science, but also for the protection of birds. The South Australian Education Department is the first to form school clubs, and may this increase each year; but the Victorian Department has had two annual 'Bird Days,' and has started the Gould League for the protection of native birds. The membership up to date is 25,000."

Stray Feathers.

GROUND-LARK'S NEST ON HIGHWAY.—Whilst strolling down the Chadstone-road here last week I flushed a Ground-Lark (*Anthus*). On looking down I found the nest in a clump of onion weed, with three eggs in it, right in the roadway—in fact, only two yards from the centre, and over which spot numbers of horses and cattle pass every day.—J. F. BRADLY. Murrumbena, 22/9/10.

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FOSTER-PARENT OF FAN-TAILED CUCKOO.—I have received from Mr. C. E. Ortin, a new member of the R.A.O.U. in Western Australia, a letter with the following postscript:—"While my men were engaged in scrub-cutting a few days ago in the densest thicket, they flushed a bird from a nest which turned out to be a Redthroat's (*Pyrrholæmus brunnea*), containing two eggs, also egg of Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*). I believe this is a new foster-parent for this Cuckoo."—J. A. ROSS. Melbourne, 30/9/10.

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PLUMAGE OF THE FEMALE PINK-BREASTED ROBIN (*Petræca rhodinogaster*).—Mr. O. L. Adams obtained one of the above species, when on one of his surveying trips to the