

having located me behind the packing case, flew over it several times.

Occasionally both birds perched on the clothes-line, and seemed to take counsel together. After noon they began to collect food—midges, small moths, and one or two grasshoppers—with which they approached the nest, only to lose heart when within a few feet of it. This continued for half an hour, when the female, always the bolder of the pair, alighted on the edge of the coil of wire netting and fed one of the chicks. Her confidence increased, and she returned with food five or six times. I despaired of getting a photograph of the male, but at the eleventh hour he summoned sufficient courage to spend a second at the nest; the shutter clicked, and my long vigil was rewarded.

Last season (1915), on Kulkyne station (Vic.), I again attempted to photograph White-browed Wood-Swallows. The nest was about five feet from the ground, in a gum-tree stump, and contained two eggs. The birds were even more wary than those of Jerilderie, and I had to be content with a photograph of the nest, though the camera was in position for some hours.

In January, 1916, a large number of White-browed Wood-Swallows nested in a paddock at Greensborough (Vic.) Most of the nests were low down in sweetbriar rose bushes. All the birds, judging by the nests observed, laid about the same time. Photographs of nestlings were secured, but the parent birds eluded the camera. This paddock, with its little gully covered in briar bushes, dogwood, and eucalypt saplings, was a haunt of many birds besides the Wood-Swallows.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne, 6/2/16.

Stray Feathers.

Range of Rosella—Since my article upon *Platycercus splendidus*, Gould, appeared in *The Emu* * I had occasion to visit a property owned by my firm, situated about 60 miles due east of Scone and 30 miles inland from the coast. There I found *Platycercus splendidus* to be the local "Rosella," confirming my theory that the range of the bird extends to the ocean, or thereabouts.—H. L. WHITE. Scone (N.S.W.)

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Bell Miners.—With regard to the statement made by Messrs. Campbell and North, to the effect that the Bell Miner (*Manorhina melanophrys*) is extremely local in its habit, I noted at our North Coast property that a colony of the birds never moves, apparently, from a certain bend in a brush-covered creek. For the past three years I have visited the spot pretty regularly, and found the Bell Miners always present, while the man in charge states that during

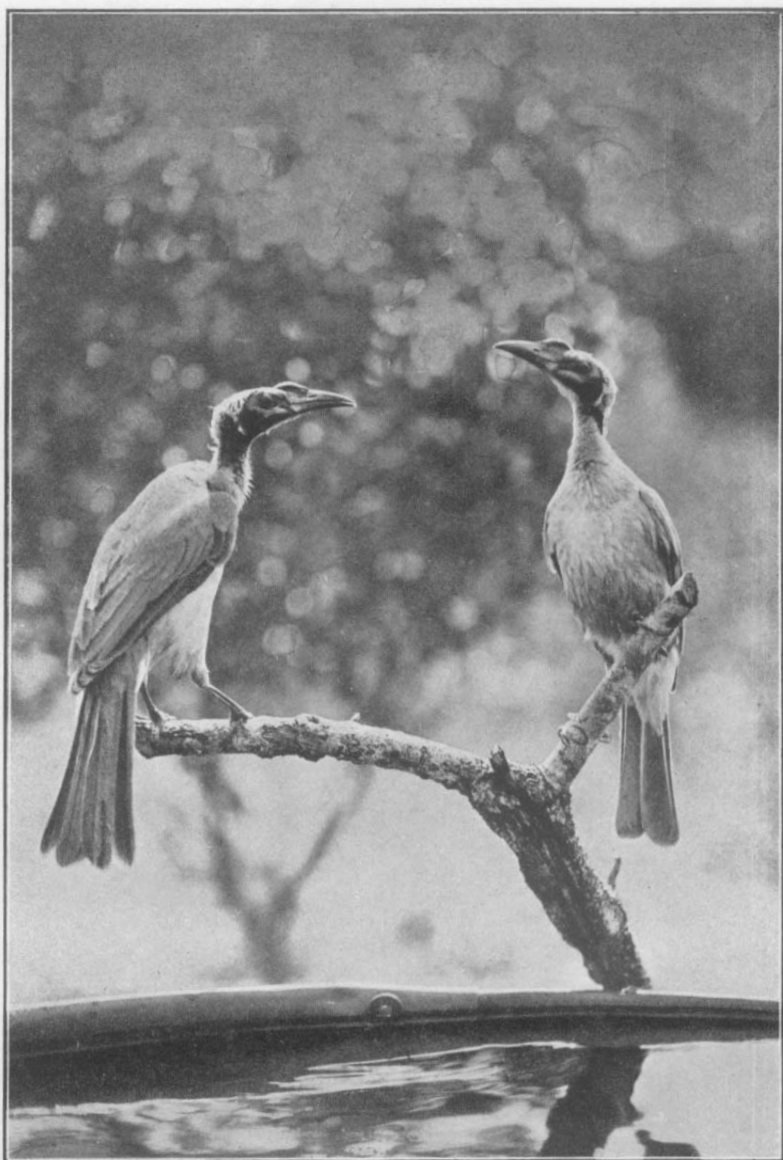
his five years' residence he has never noted their absence. The birds' haunt is close to a favourite camp and watering place for the cattle, so is visited rather frequently by the overseer. He knows of no other colony on the estate. The area occupied is not more than 30 acres. It is covered by a dense growth of the usual North Coast scrub timber, as well as by many lofty eucalypts. It is almost isolated by ring-barked and scrub-cleared lands, but there is plenty of similar country within a mile.—H. L. WHITE. Scone (N.S.W.)

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Rapacity of Owls.—Recently, when exploring a dense gully, I found a Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) perched in a wattle-tree, and having in its talons the body of a black "flying squirrel" (*Phalanger*). A few small stones caused the bird to take flight, carrying its prey with it. The latter, however, caught in the twigs, and was dropped. On examination it was found that the head, internal organs, and the fore half of body were missing, having presumably been devoured. As the flesh was fresh, the animal had evidently been killed on the previous night. The "squirrel" was a large one of its kind, and probably weighed $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. when alive. As it was more than three-parts devoured, and allowing half a pound for bones and skin, &c., the Owl's meal had consisted of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. in weight, eaten in, say, 12 hours at a long estimate. I have also seen the Boobook Owl (*N. boobook*) flying with a ring-tailed possum, apparently as large as itself. It would appear that the Owls carry a larger prey in proportion to their size than do the Hawks. On moonlit nights the Podargus (*Podargus strigoides*) is frequently seen on a fence overlooking a ditch full of frogs. If these birds take an occasional frog, then the name "Frogmouth" is doubly appropriate.—A. E. RODDA, R.A.O.U. Warburton (Vic.), 16/11/15.

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Birds Observed on Barrington Tops, N.S.W.—The Maitland District Scientific and Historical Research Society, in December, 1915, organized an excursion to the Barrington Tops, a plateau lying between the Hunter and Manning Rivers, and from which the Barrington, Gloucester, Karuah, Paterson, Williams, and Chichester Rivers rise. The plateau is the highest land mass, except isolated peaks in New South Wales, outside of the Kosciusko region. The average height of the part visited was between 4,500 feet and 5,000 feet in height. For five or six months of the year snowfalls occur, and midsummer frosts are not rare. The chief object of the expedition was to ascertain the geology of the region, and, if possible, get information that would throw light on our glacial problems. Entomologists, with a botanist, geologist, and conchologist, accompanied the expedition to the plateau, which, scientifically, was unknown. It is visited only by hunters and a few cattlemen. The southern part of the district which the party visited is without



Helmeted Friar-Birds.

permanent residents. There are two selectors there, who occupy their holdings during the summer months. Mr. S. A. Hanscombe, R.A.O.U., was to have accompanied the party as ornithologist, but unforeseen events prevented him at the last moment. The accompanying list of birds observed on Barrington Tops, 27th to 30th December, is by Mr. John Hopson, jun., of Eccleston, who for many years has been a keen observer of birds and their habits:—Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*), Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaëthus audax*), Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea berigora*), Nankeen Kestrel (*Cerchneis venchroides*), Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*), Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*), Crimson Parrot (*Platycercus pennanti*), Laughing Kingfisher (Jackass) (*Dacelo gigas*), Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*), Spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura caudacuta*), Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*), Victoria Lyre-Bird (*Menura victoriæ*), Tree-Martin (*Petrochelidon nigricans*), Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroica phænicea*), White-shafted Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*), Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra nitida*), Coach-whip-Bird (*Psophodes crepitans*), Rufous Song-Lark (*Cincloramphus rufescens*), Yellow-tailed Tit-Warbler (*Acanthiza uropygialis*), White-browed Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis frontalis*), Wren-Warbler (*Malurus cyaneochlamys*), Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Black-throated Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus nigrogularis*), White-throated Tree-creeper (*Climacteris leucophaea*), White-eye (*Zosterops dorsalis*), Red-tipped Diamond-Bird (*Pardalotus striatus*), White-naped Honey-eater (*Melithreptus lunulatus*), Spinebill Honey-eater (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*), Singing Honey-eater (*Ptilotis sonora*), White-eared Honey-eater (*P. leucotis*), Noisy Miner (*Myzantha garrula*), Wattle-Bird (*Anthochaera carunculata*), Satin Bower-Bird (*Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus*), Short-billed Crow (*Corvus bennelli*), Pied Bell-Magpie (*Strepera graculina*), Spur-winged Plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*). A nest of the Rosella was found. It contained four young birds; two were of the normal colour, the others were what is popularly called "sports"—that is, where the green should have been yellow, the black and blue changed to white, the red had not altered.

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Procellariiformes in Western Australia.—In *The Emu** Mr. W. B. Alexander has, under the above title, given a list of Petrels authentically known from Western Australia, as well as a list of species whose inclusion in the Western Australian avifauna is open to question. During a recent voyage to England and back I twice passed along the Western Australian coast, and made careful notes of the species observed, as far as identification was possible without handling specimens. I noted the following species:—

Thyelodroma pacifica chlororhyncha, Lesson (*P. sphenurus*,

Gould).—This is probably the species which was commonly seen approaching Fremantle. Alexander gives Rottnest Island as a breeding-place.

Hemipuffinus carneipes carneipes, Gould (*P. carneipes*, Gould).—A yellow-billed Shearwater was observed off the south-west coast, in the vicinity of Chatham Island; probably it was this species.

Aestrelata lessonii leucocephala, Forster (*Æstrelata lessoni*, Garnot).—Mr. Alexander records one specimen obtained at Cottesloe. I observed this bird frequently in the western half of the South Indian Ocean, but the nearest record to Western Australia was on 20th January, in 40° S. 120° E.

Daption capense australe, Mathews (*D. capensis*, Linné).—This bird was observed on 29th August in some numbers. The ship was at the time approaching the south-west corner of Australia from the east, and land to the east of Albany was sighted during the afternoon.

Diomedea exulans chionoptera, Salvin (*D. exulans*, Linné).—Wandering Albatrosses certainly occur on the Western Australian coast, and are probably referable to this sub-species. Several specimens were seen on 22nd January, when in the vicinity of Chatham Island, and also off the Leeuwin on 24th January.

Nealbatrus chlororhynchus carteri, Rothschild (*D. chlororhynchus*, Gmelin, and *D. carteri*, Rothschild).—This species was met with in some numbers off the Leeuwin, both in August and January. Most of the specimens seen at all closely had a marked yellow culmen, but several were seen with an entirely black bill.

Thalassarche melanophrys impavida, Mathews (*Diomedea melanophrys*, Temminck).—This species is common in the Great Australian Bight, but does not seem to occur on the west coast. Coming westward, it was interesting to note the sudden change in the species of "Mollymawk" following the vessel. From 27th August to 29th August *T. melanophrys* was abundant. On the latter date one specimen of *N. chlororhynchus* was seen towards sunset, the vessel being then close to Albany. On the following day we were off Cape Leeuwin at 7 a.m.; *T. melanophrys* was scarce, but *N. chlororhynchus* was very numerous.

Phæbetria fusca campbelli, Mathews (*P. fuliginosa*, Gmelin).—Specimens were seen on the morning of 22nd January, and land near Chatham Island was sighted near noon of that day.—EUSTACE W. FERGUSON, M.B., Ch. M. Sydney.

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Notes on the Mistletoe-Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*).—Here, in the heart of East Brisbane, a Mistletoe-Bird is calling outside my window. It has been a frequent visitor to this spot for more than two months past. There is only a male bird to be noted; if his consort is about, I have not had the pleasure of seeing her. In Victoria I did not find *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* so partial to

habitated areas; the birds were always a mile or two from any town.

The Mistletoe-Bird's nest is the only one I have searched for repeatedly without success. In November, 1912, a pair of the bright little birds came about the Maryborough (Vic.) cemetery. To them I devoted many hours. I found them hard to locate when the ecstatic male did not chance to be in talkative vein. But that was not often. He always kept to the tree-tops, and freely gave voice to a hard, sweet, penetrating note, that sounded like "A-white-a-whit-a-whit." Then would come usually a rapid run of notes—"Tang-tang-tang-tang-tang-tang." The ventriloquial element in the notes made it difficult to place the bird, and then he would flit away so rapidly, and at such a height, that the eye could not possibly follow him.

Throughout the following winter I heard and saw nothing of the birds, but they were in evidence again in the spring of 1913. "Tar-tar-tar" the male called in greeting, and this was followed quickly by the "Whit-a" run of notes. The South Australian session of the R.A.O.U. intervened just then, and when I returned the birds were in possession of three grey and white fledgelings, which actively followed their parents. Evidently the adult birds did not leave the locality in the following autumn. On 3rd April and 10th May, 1914, I met the male bird again. He was as happy as ever, and sat preening his feathers in a eucalypt; but on both occasions the ecstatic spring note was absent. In its stead, however, the bird uttered a run of sweet notes, rather richer than the usual somewhat hard bar. (It was on this occasion that I saw one of the prettiest sights afforded me by a bird. A flash of red went past, and the next moment a Scarlet-breasted Robin perched on the bowed head of a graceful angelic marble figure, which, with outspread wings, surmounted a grave.)

I was not able to see much of the Mistletoe-Birds in the spring of 1914, and, after that, did not renew acquaintance with them till 6th October, 1915. On that day I heard a note akin to the frog-like rattle of the Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*). It came from a male *Dicaeum*, which sat in a low sapling preening its beautiful red and blue feathers in the sunshine. Within the next half-hour both male and female visited a dozen different bushes about the hillside, but always their circles brought them back to one particular cluster only four feet from the ground. Close examination of this bush showed me the faintest little cluster of soft threads suspended from a branchlet. These "foundation" strands were not added to during the next few days, and I had to leave Victoria without having secured a "sitting" from the birds. All the more cordially, therefore, do I congratulate Messrs. Lawrence and Littlejohns on the splendid photographs of *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* published in *The Emu*.*—A. H. CHISHOLM. East Brisbane (Qld.), 19/2/16.

* Vol. xv., part 3. p. 166.