Having accomplished his task, Cornwall returned to his native State, but did not stay long. The magic spell of the tropical North was in his blood, and when the migratory birds went north in the fall, he packed up his belongings and followed suit. His first venture brought him to Townsville, where he met a young English lady who later became his wife. He then went to Cairns as manager of the Red Arcade, and remained in that place for several years. He was instrumental in forming the Field Naturalists Club of Cairns, and became the first president of that society. Subsequently, he was appointed to the managership of Messrs. Shaw and Son's business in Mackay, which position he occupied until the date of his retirement.

In his earlier years, Cornwall contributed several articles to *The Emu*, and many of his articles were published in other papers under the pen-name of "Mopoke."

After retiring from business, he developed a latent talent for lecturing, and his bird lectures were always a prominent feature of the bird-day movement in Mackay. Cornwall was a keen amateur photographer, evincing a genius for bird-studies, and wherever he went he always used his camera as a means of perpetuating the memories of his ramblings in the vast realm of nature. His fine series of wild-life studies taken on the Barrier Reef and elsewhere have definitely placed him in the front rank of Australian nature photographers.

Cornwall represented Queensland on the Council of the R.A.O.U. for several years, and also held the office of State secretary for Queensland.

He is survived by his wife and one adopted daughter, and several grand-children.—W. G. HARVEY.

Stray Feathers

Pterodroma macroptera in Western Australia.—The note in the last number of this journal by Mr. C. Allen in which he gives us information regarding a breeding site of this species off the south coast of Western Australia, is more valuable than the appearance of the note would indicate. Actually Mr. Allen's information is the first we have on the nesting habits of this form, which Gregory Mathews named *P. m. albani* in 1912—"Additions and Corrections to My Reference List to the Birds of Australia" (*Aust. Av. Rec.*, I, p. 30).

The first record of this species from Western Australia was on April 2, 1905, when Mr. G. C. Shortridge collected two female specimens on Rabbit Island, King George's Sound. His collections were "written up" five years later by the late W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, then in charge of the bird collection in the British Museum, in *The Ibis*, 9th series, vol. III, October, 1909, and January, 1910. He recorded only sex, date of collection, colour of soft parts, and some

measurements. Mr. Shortridge added some field-notes to the effect that "The Great-winged Petrel was found breeding on Rabbit Island, King George's Sound, in company with the Little Penguin, *Eudyptula minor*. It is locally known as the 'Mutton Bird'." This field-note is not initialled by Mr. Shortridge as is the case in his notes to other species in the article.

There is a discrepancy between Ogilvie-Grant's records and those of Gregory Mathews'. The latter, when dealing with this form in his *Birds of Australia*, says: ". . . Mr. G. C. Shortridge . . . found one of the burrows locally ascribed to the Penguins to be tenanted by a *pair* of these birds, hitherto unrecorded from West Australia." The word "pair" would indicate scientifically male and female, yet Ogilvie-Grant recorded both specimens collected by Shortridge as females.

Mathews then proceeds to record that, at his request, the late Tom Carter made a trip to Rabbit Island and procured specimens. Carter has left no field-notes, his only remarks on the subject being in his "Birds of the Broome Hill District" (*The Emu*, vol. XXIII, 1923, p. 131), where he said: "*Pterodroma macroptera albani*. Western Great-winged Fulmars bred on Rabbit Island, close to the mainland outside Albany Harbour, where I personally obtained living specimens, June 24/11." Mathews's type of *P. m. albani* was provided by one of these specimens. Although the finding of Petrels in burrows provides circumstantial evidence of breeding, actually Mr. Allen is the first to record the finding of eggs within the Western Australian range of the species, and his description of their nesting habits proves that there is no variation in this regard from the habits of the species when it breeds on islands off the eastern coast of North Island, New Zealand. Let me here draw attention to that valuable paper by R. A. Falla in the first volume of the *Records* of the Auckland Museum, 1934—"The Distribution and Breeding Habits of Petrels in Northern New Zealand." Allen found eggs on June 18; Falla says laying takes place at the end of July and early in August, while on Tristan da Cunha eggs are obtained in June and July. See "The Birds of Tristan da Cunha," by G. M. Mathews, in *Novitates Zoologicæ*, vol. 38, 1932.

Years ago, in 1885, Reischek published some field-notes on this species in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, in which he stated that eggs are laid in the beginning of September. This date has never been substantiated by later observers, and it seems safe to ignore Reischek's statement and to conclude that eggs are laid from June to August. —H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 24/4/38.

Little Grebe in the Scrub-lands.—Amongst the several birds I hardly expected to see on my arrival at Caldervale station, Charleville, is the Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*). Considering this locality is comprised chiefly of scrub and

open forest lands with practically little or no surface water (apart from dams, a few small holes and an odd creek pool, and the sub-artesian bore troughs), it seems strange that such a bird should find its way over miles of dense scrub to such a small body of water as a dam. Nevertheless, such is the case, for one day last week (March 22) I observed a single bird of this species on a dam in an open, dry gully about three miles from the homestead. Although the Grebe's flight is feeble and laboured, the bird apparently travels great distances in search of a new temporary habitat. The Grebe is probably nomadic and not a totally stationary species as is quoted in many bird books. I remember seeing Little Grebes on lonely Mallee dams west of Swan Hill, Victoria, and am convinced that it is quite a wanderer, despite its feeble flight and ungainliness on land.

Apparently the Little Grebe is content with any type of country, provided there is sufficient water and food to last for an indefinite period. Bird banding is the only successful method of determining the movements of our birds, and it is to be hoped that Australian ornithologists will give attention to carrying out experiments in this direction.—N. H. E. McDONALD, Caldervale Station, Charleville, Qld., 29/3/38.

Rainbow-birds in the Interior.—That feathered aristocrat, *Merops ornatus*, has frequently brought disgrace on itself by indulging a penchant for eating bees, which was responsible for its former vernacular name. I am happy, therefore, to record an item to its credit. During the last twelve months, many species of birds in eastern Australia have forsaken, wholly or in part, their regular articles of diet in favour of grasshoppers. Such widely-differing species as Ibis, Wood-Swallows, Trillers, Figbirds, Butcher-birds, and Magpies have proved their worth as destroyers of the pest, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that *Merops* is sufficient of an opportunist to do the same.

Its appetite, or perhaps capacity, is out of all proportion to its size. A two-inch "hopper" presents quite a problem to even a Butcher-bird or Magpie, but is very "small beer" for *Merops*. A quick swoop and click of bill, an equally speedy return to fence or telephone line, a gulp—and the number of grasshoppers has decreased by one.

I recently watched several Rainbow-birds, perched on a heap of bones where a dead sheep had been burnt, picking up and swallowing small pieces of bone, about the size of a pea. Whether this was to correct a lack of lime in the birds' systems, or merely an aid to digestion, is not clear; possibly both reasons play a part. At any rate, while he is content with grasshoppers and burned bones—*vivat Merops*. —A. C. CAMERON, Hungerford, Qld., 16/3/38.

Cat Island "Gannetry."—Mr. A. L. Butler has forwarded the following extracts from Senior Constable Berryman's

report, dated February 9, 1938, on the Gannet rookery on Cat Island:

"I respectfully report that I have this day inspected the Gannet rookery on Cat Island. I found that there was approximately 800 or 900 young Gannets on the rookery, between 80 and 100 of which were very young, some of them only about a fortnight old.

"Most of the young birds are now partly feathered and are moving about the rookery: a few already have left and gone to sea. By the end of February I estimate that 50 per cent. of the young birds will have left the rookery and gone to sea, but there will be some, though not many, on the rookery until about the middle of April.

"From appearances of the young birds, I should say that 90 per cent. of them will have left the rookery by about March 20, and I respectfully suggest that the services of Special Const. Nillson be retained until that date.

"While at Cat Island I took several photos. of the Gannet rookery. When the snaps were taken there were only young birds on the rookery. All the old ones flew away on my approach."

The following is an extract from Special Constable F. Nillson's report, dated March 1, 1938:

"On the 19th [? February] noticed the first Gannets to take off the water and fly about quarter of a mile. There are approximately 400 birds to leave the rookery of which 120 have white down on. There was a loss of 18 young birds and 3 old birds died on the rookery during the present season. Quail chicks are plentiful."

Mr. Butler writes further that the Fauna Board has expended over £100 on the island this year (1937-38). Messrs. Fowler and Burgess state, he says, that there is a large Gannet rookery on the top of Pedra Branca (which has never been climbed, so far as known to Mr. Butler) three times as large as the Cat Island colony.

Partial Albinism of Male Lyrebird.—Yesterday (May 14, 1938) when passing through National Park, Sydney, I noticed a male Lyrebird (*Menura novæ-hollandiæ*) scratching on the edge of the Carrington Drive. As the bird walked in to the scrub an area of white feathers was noticed on its back and another patch on its abdomen. The locality was not more than a few hundred yards from where a male bird, having similar markings on its back, was seen five years previously, a fact duly recorded in *The Emu*, vol. XXXIII, 1933, p. 113. In 1933 the bird was viewed from above and therefore no white markings could be seen on its abdomen. It is reasonable to suppose that both observations refer to the same distinctively-marked bird, from which it may be inferred that individual birds, and perhaps most Lyrebirds, are of sedentary habits.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Willoughby, N.S.W., 15/5/38.

Silver Gulls.—While driving along the north-west coast of Tasmania near the Detention River, my brother, Dr. Bruce Anderson, and I witnessed an unusual sight. About a hundred yards inland from the sea two bushes of the "white currant" (*Leucopogon parviflorus*) were literally smothered with Silver Gulls (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) greedily feeding upon

the berries. Owing to the slenderness of the twigs and to the unsuitability of their feet for perching the birds were obliged to keep their wings constantly flapping. The effect so produced of a mass of semi-suspended Gulls rapidly pecking at the "currants" was rather striking. Although the "white currants" abounds on many parts of our coast, neither my brother nor I had previously seen Silver Gulls feeding upon them.—G. MURRAY ANDERSON, Hobart, Tas., 18/2/38.

Noisy Friar-bird building.—Lying underneath a tree on the shores of Moreton Bay in August, 1937, I watched a Noisy Friar-bird trying to weave about half a yard of pink ribbon into a nest in course of construction. The bird worked patiently—but not silently—for some time. The ribbon, about an inch wide, must have been of stiff texture, for it would not work in. A call from the builder brought a mate along, and together they tackled it again. At last, after plenty of "argument," they decided to leave the ribbon hanging in streamer fashion. Then followed a strange performance. Facing each other, with their bills wide open, they rested the extreme points of the mandibles together and stayed in that position for nearly two minutes.—L. M. MAYO, South Brisbane, Qld., 18/5/38.

Feeding of "Twenty-eight" Parrots.—This year (1937) a few of the marri trees (*Eucalyptus calophylla*) in the forest fruited very heavily. The fruit of the marri is roughly spherical, with a distinct neck at the top, and is frequently two inches in length and one and one-half inches in diameter —a giant among gum-nuts. By July and August the nuts were developed to their full size, but were still green and fairly succulent. At this stage the "Twenty-eight" Parrots (*Barnardius semitorquatus*) commenced feeding on the nuts and, although the Parrots were not very plentiful, it was not long before the ground under the favoured trees was littered with mutilated nuts. Only the fleshy part of the nut was eaten. A strong odour of oil of eucalyptus impregnated the air for some distance round about. Under one tree, in which Parrots were still feeding, I estimated the freshly-fallen nuts to number at least 24,000, yet I did not see more than two Parrots feeding in this tree at one time.

About the same time I watched a Red-capped Parrot (*Purpureicephalus spurius*) feeding in a jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and found that it was removing the mature fruit, extracting the seeds and dropping the empty nuts. In passing, I would remark that in September, 1931, I recorded a single Red-capped Parrot at Chinocup, far from the jarrah and marri forests, which appear to constitute the normal habitat of the species, and over forty miles east-north-east of Broome Hill, where Carter recorded the species in somewhat similar country.—ERIC SEDGWICK, Wellard, W.A., 4/11/37.