

MICROTRIBONYX VENTRALIS.—On the river.

BURHINUS GRALLARIUS.—From July, 1902, to June, 1903, I only heard a single bird; after that they were to be heard almost every night.

ÆGIALITIS MELANOPS.—26/4/03.—Flock of about a dozen Dottrel on river; appear to be the Black-fronted, besides another species.

PLEGADIS FALCINELLUS (?).—There were a few Ibis about in the spring of 1902. I think this was the species. Saw none in 1903.

NOTOPHOYX NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ.—Common on the river.

NOTOPHOYX PACIFICA.

NYCTICORAX CALEDONICUS.

ARDETTA PUSILLA.—28/11/03.—Nest with three fresh eggs in rushes on river; nest consisted merely of a handful of fragments of rushes, and fell to pieces on being removed. I had unfortunately neglected to photograph it. 30/11/03.—Flushed bird at same place; discovered another egg on ground close by where the nest had been.

DUPETOR GOULDI.—Saw the Black Bittern twice on the Swan. Reported also from Helena.

PHALACROCORAX CARBO, P. HYPOLEUCUS, P. MELANOLEUCUS.—Cormorants always plentiful on the river; *P. hypoleucus* the commonest. 2/3/03.—Noticed a Cormorant on a log in the river; it remained in a peculiar attitude, swaying in the wind with both wings half-spread for a long time, as if it were trying to dry them in the breeze.

PODICIPES POLIOCEPHALUS.—Reported on river.

CHENOPIS ATRATA.—Have only heard Black Swans flying across.

NETTION GIBBERIFRONS (?).—Saw a small flock on the Swan once only.

NYROCA AUSTRALIS.—Saw none in 1902; very common in the early part of 1903, after which they gradually grew scarcer as the year advanced, but they never disappeared altogether; no doubt they left for breeding. 19/3/03.—Large flock on river, a considerable difference in the shading of the birds; the general body colour of some individuals was chestnut, while that of others was very dark. The white under tail coverts were very conspicuous as the birds swam about.

BIZIURA LOBATA.—Reported on river.

Extinct Tasmanian Emu.

BY D. LE SOUËF, C.M.Z.S., &c., MELBOURNE.

FOR some time past I have been trying to obtain information regarding any remains that may still exist of the extinct Tasmanian Emu, and have advertised twice in all the Tasmanian newspapers to that effect, but without eliciting information of any value.

A specimen lived for some years in the City Park, Launceston. Mr. Wm. M'Gowan, the Superintendent for Public Reserves in that city, informs me that the bird was received there about thirty years ago, and that it lived for about ten years in confinement, but that the person who buried it on its death has since died, therefore its burial place is unfortunately not

known. Mr. M'Gowan, speaking from memory, considers it was quite as large as the mainland species. This bird was supposed to be the last of the Tasmanian Emu, but as apparently nothing authentic is known as to where it really came from, it may very probably have been imported from Australia, as there are records of Emus having been sent across to Tasmania over fifty years ago from Victoria.

Two eggs are known to be in existence. Both are considerably smaller than those of the mainland variety, one measuring 4.85 x 3.40 inches, and the other 4.80 x 3.50 inches, whereas the size of a typical egg of the mainland Emu is 5.56 x 3.63 inches, which would seem to point to the insular bird itself being also smaller, but two eggs are hardly sufficient to prove the point.

Mr. H. H. Scott, the Curator of the Victoria Museum, Launceston, kindly forwarded me a bone he had found in a limestone quarry. It is the femur of an Emu, but is too damaged to be of any value, except that it is smaller than those from the mainland.

Emus were originally plentiful in Tasmania, as they are often mentioned by early settlers. For instance, the late Rev. R. Knockwood mentions an Emu and six young ones in his diary in 1803, and Mr. T. Stephens, of Adelaide-street, Hobart, has kindly sent me the following notes regarding them. Mr. John Meredith, of Cambria, East Coast, says:—"I remember perfectly Emus being caught in this neighbourhood prior to 1830, and for a few years subsequently also between this place and Avoca. I saw a pair at Circular Head on 'Black Thursday' (1851). They were full grown, and had with them half a dozen young ones. The old birds had been caught when young near Circular Head and reared and tamed."

Mr. Ransom, of Killymoon, in the Fingal district, remembers hunting Emus with kangaroo dogs about 1840, when he was a young man of 18. He remembers Captain Hepburn, of Roy's Hill, finding an Emu's nest with eight or nine eggs. A little later these were hatched under a Turkey hen. From these were bred others, and a pair of them was given to the late Baron von Steiglitz, of Killymoon, one of which survived until 1873, when it was drowned in trying to cross a flooded river. With its death, the Tasmanian Emu, Mr. Ransom believes, became extinct.

An old resident of Avoca, who knew Captain Hepburn, used to say that the Tasmanian Emu was much taller than the Australian, but the general opinion of old colonists is that the two species were identical.

In the "thirties" they were habitually hunted and killed for food on the east coast and elsewhere. Gould, writing about 1846, says that the Emus were then almost extirpated from Tasmania. He clearly regarded them as of the same species as those of Australia. Mr. Stephens also says that in the early

"fifties" Mr. James Cox, of Clarendon, imported one or more from Victoria along with two Native Companions, and others were introduced somewhat earlier.

When in 1802 some members of Baudin's French expedition landed on King Island they were informed by a sealer named Cowper that small, dark Emus were plentiful on that island, and that he himself had killed about three hundred, consequently some have thought that the Emu which used to exist on that island was identical with the extinct Black Emu (*Dromæus ater*) of Kangaroo Island, while some bones lately received by the National Museum of Melbourne from King Island* also bear out the same thought, as they are very much smaller in every way than the mainland birds, and approximate closely to those of *D. ater*, but more bones must yet be received before the matter can be settled.

It is much to be regretted that so little information can be obtained about the extinct Tasmanian birds, and it is to be hoped that our Tasmanian members of the Aust. O.U. will still endeavour to discover some Emu remains.

Description of a New Sub-species of *Mirafra*.

BY ROBERT HALL, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S.

EIGHT specimens of *Mirafra*, or Bush-Larks, from Broome, N.-W.A., agree among themselves while conspicuously varying from other species in so far as there is no rufous colouring, with only the palest isabelline over portions of them. The lateral or terminal parts of each feather, which are either strong rufous or pale rufous in the known Australian species, are in these birds almost white, while the greater portion of each feather is brownish-black, so that the contrast is great.

What attracts the eye at once is that these specimens appear black and white dorsally and pale cream ventrally. The Australian *Mirafra* that I have so far handled have been dorsally strong or pale rufous or brownish, and ventrally strong or pale rufous. Consequently these birds appeal to me as representing a sub-species. It is a well-known fact that certain desert birds distinctly guard themselves in the matter of colouration by agreement with their surroundings. My correspondent, Mr. J. P. Rogers, has collected these particular eight birds on ground that has the birds assimilating in colour with it. He further states to me that on a part of the Fitzroy River, N.-W.A., where the ground is greyish the birds are greyish, but that the majority on the Fitzroy are chocolate, because the ground is of that colour. On the Robinson and Meda Rivers, Mr. Rogers further states, the birds are brown, in agreement with the brown soil. On the Ashburton River, near Onslow, from where Mr. A. W.

* *Emu*, vol. iii., p. 113.