

Date.	Court.	Offence.	Fine.
1/3/07	.. Horsham (2)	.. Killing Wild Duck	.. 10s., £1
4/4/07	.. Hopetoun " "	.. 10s.
20/5/07	.. Serpentine Creek " "	.. £2 5s.
9/4/07	.. Mortlake (2)	.. Killing Quail	.. ea. £2 2s. 6d.
21/2/07	.. Rokewood	.. Killing Wild Duck	.. £1 10s.
24/8/07	.. Portland (3)	.. Destroying Swan eggs	ea. 6s.
13/11/07	.. Birregurra	.. Killing Wild Duck	.. £1
7/11/07	.. Geelong Killing Jackass	.. 10s.
1/11/07	.. Nagambie Killing Wild Duck	.. 10s.
27/6/07	.. Edenhope " "	.. 15s.

[Grand total, £156, which does not include "costs" obtained or £3 fine at Geelong (22/1/07) for having an illegal gun.]

Stray Feathers.

EMUS IN THE GRAMPIANS.—Constable Curtain (Stawell West), in a recent report for the Chief Commissioner of Police, states:—"There are a good many Emus in the valleys of the Grampians. They are very tame—a good sign that they are not chased or shot at. I will keep a good look-out and see that they are not interfered with."

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SPINE-TAILED SWIFTS.—In the July issue of *The Emu*, page 39, there appears a statement that some Spine-tailed Swifts (*Chaetura caudacuta*) were observed making southward. I have been observing the aërial movements of the birds of these parts for over 12 years, and have seen Spine-tailed Swifts appear and disappear scores of times, but never once have I seen them disappear to the southward. They have always come from south to south-east and have gone north to north-west.—F. M. LITTLER. Launceston (Tasmania).

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CORMORANTS *v.* YABBIES, &c.—I had occasion to visit a district of north-west Victoria which is intersected by irrigation channels, in which I noticed many Cormorants feeding. I remarked to a resident of the district who was accompanying me—"I suppose there are fish in these channels?" "Oh, no," he said, "there are not any fish in them!" "Well," I said, "what are the Cormorants feeding upon?" "Oh, yabbies (*Crustacea*) and shrimps," was the laconic reply. "Do the yabbies bore through the walls of the channel and allow the water to run to waste?" "Yes." "Then the Cormorants, by destroying the yabbies, save much water for the irrigationist?" "Yes, millions of gallons!"—J. A. ROSS. Melbourne.

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WHITE-BROWED BABBLERS AS PILLAGERS.—While in the Coolgardie district, about the end of July last, I observed a pair of the above birds (*Pomatorhinus superciliosus*) pulling at what appeared to be the remains of some old nest in a low bush, while four *Acanthizas* were fluttering round them in a very excited state.

On my approaching the scene of operations, the Babblers and one pair of *Acanthizas* "moved on," the other pair remaining. I then noticed that the apparently "old" nest was the "new" one of the remaining pair of *Acanthizas* (*A. apicalis*), and that the side and bottom of it had been pulled out by the Babblers, the freshly-broken eggs (3) lying on the ground beneath. Is this a usual custom of the Babblers? I have never noted it before.—CHAS. G. GIBSON. Perth (W.A.)

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KESTREL MIMICKING ROOT.—Whilst walking along the Namoi River, unfortunately without my usual companion, the camera, I saw what at first sight appeared to be a gnarled root projecting from the bank. But, being uncertain, and to convince myself, I walked towards it, and found it to be a Nankeen Kestrel (*Cerchneis cenchroides*). It was sitting almost erect, with its head turned slightly to one side, resembling broken roots in the vicinity. It allowed me to approach within 10 feet of it before it flew away. In flying I noticed that one of its legs was missing—possibly it had been shot off, and apparently for some considerable time. I am of opinion that the Kestrel, through this deficiency, found it rather difficult to perch on the trees, so took to roosting on ledges of the river banks, where it has acquired the art of root-mimicking.—HARRY BURRELL. Manilla (N.S.W.), 7/8/08.

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MALURUS FIGHTING ITS SHADOW.—On several occasions last month I noticed a female Blue Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) fluttering like a moth at the window leading into our garden. She would then fly to a rose-bush close by, where the male bird was sitting watching her. After she had rested awhile she would fly straight back and repeat the performance. I stood inside the room close to the window watching her. But apparently in her excitement she could not see me, as she did not stop her strange antics. On another occasion I heard fluttering, so I quietly drew the curtains aside and watched her again. A Persian cat jumped on to the table in front of the window and watched her also, but even that had no effect. After sending the cat outside, I waited for the bird to return to her mate, who was then hopping about excitedly. I then pulled the top sash down silently. After a few minutes I closed the window again, when she evidently caught sight of it, for she came back and hammered away at the glass until she fell, almost exhausted, with outspread wings, on the window-sill below, where she stopped for a few seconds before returning to her mate, who seemed greatly excited all the while. At first I thought the bird had mistaken the glass for space; but, if she was so anxious to come in, why not try when the window was pulled down? I have come to the conclusion that it was nothing but pure jealousy that caused her to fight so hard her own reflection in the window.—HARRY BURRELL. Manilla (N.S.W.), 11/8/08.

"MANY a year has come and gone since we first knew Heidelberg, and listened to the Bell-Birds pealing their chime of wood-notes wild from the huge eucalypts which, in the days of Batman and Fawkner, fringed the banks of the winding stream. Below the town still flows the Yarra, perennial as of yore, fed by mountain streams and unfailing rivulets. But how changed are the woods and fields and the reed-fringed lagoons which in earlier days followed its winding course. The girdling reed-beds which sheltered the wild-fowl have disappeared before the encroaching live stock. A bare pond-like outline alone remains where once lay the mysterious mere—haunt of the Bittern, the Heron, the Ibis, and the Pied Wild Goose."—ROLF BOLDREWOOD, *The Australasian*, Melbourne, 13th June, 1908.

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MORE ABOUT CORMORANTS *v.* FISHES.—I was much interested in Mr. Mattingley's paper on "Cormorants in Relation to Fishes,"* and agree with him that the harm done by these birds is altogether over-estimated. Fishermen are too prone to attribute the depletion of the fishing beds and streams to the depredations of the Cormorant. They will not admit that the shoals of fish taken in the nets from these same fishing grounds have anything to do with the diminution of their numbers. They simply scout the idea. The whole of the blame is laid upon the poor defenceless bird, and the exaggerated tales of its misdeeds are accepted without question by most folk, either because they have no opportunities of observing the bird's habits, or do not take the trouble to investigate for themselves. It is man all the time who is responsible for the decrease in numbers of the fish. In Tasmania there are many inland streams never visited by a Cormorant, yet a wise Fisheries Board of Commissioners have found it necessary to restock the streams with ova and fry to prevent them being a useless asset, so far as angling is concerned. Our fishermen complain of the growing scarcity of the fish on the East Coast—blame the Cormorants, of course. On the West Coast fish are abundant, but the West is rough and stormy, and seldom is it safe for the fishing boats to venture there. The East, on the contrary, is sheltered, and the waters are calm, consequently, the fishing craft are always along the Eastern Coast. The Cormorants are equally as numerous on the western shore as on the eastern. Why, then, are fish more abundant at the former place if the Cormorant is such a destroyer as they would have us believe? It is almost useless trying to vindicate the bird—one invariably meets with ridicule. Few have a good word for the "Shag," as it is commonly termed; it is the most despised of birds. With a companion I cycled to a swamp, some 12 miles from town, to observe Musk-Ducks, but we were unsuccessful in our quest. An old fence runs through the centre of the swamp, which covers

* *Emu*, vol. viii., p. 18.

an area of about 120 acres. On the top of nearly every post was perched a White-breasted Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax leucogaster*). The attraction could not be fish, there being none in the lagoon excepting eels, and it is rather too early for them to be moving. Evidently the birds were after frogs, &c., which abounded there.—ARTHUR W. SWINDELLS. Hobart, 25/8/08.

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FULHAM (S.A.) NOTES.—

17th April, 1908.—First appearance of Red-capped Robin (*Petræca goodenovii*), travelling south.

19th April.—First appearance of Flame-breasted Robin (*Petræca phænicea*), travelling south.

10th July.—Found Spur-winged Plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*) nesting—three eggs.

22nd July.—The first Pectoral Rail (*Hypotaenidia philippinensis*) has put in an appearance for the season.

27th July.—Discovered Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) nesting in rushes near water—nine eggs. Another Rail (*H. philippinensis*) has joined the one which came on the 22nd.

28th July.—A flock of Swans (*Chenopsis atrata*), numbering 40, passed over my house at 5 p.m. I have not been out in the swamps one night lately without seeing several flocks; they seem to be increasing rapidly since totally protected.

9th August.—Pair of Grey Shrike-Thrushes (*Collyriocincla harmonica*) appears, making a great noise, and calling for hours in their melodious way.

10th August.—Shrike-Thrushes open attack upon Black-Birds (introduced).

13th August.—Heard first call of Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*).

14th August.—Discovered Whistling Eagle's (*Haliastur sphenurus*) nest in course of construction in large isolated gum-tree; observed four birds in the vicinity.

23rd August.—Eagle's nest contained a clutch of three eggs. Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) started to build under verandah.

9th September.—Swallows (*H. neoxena*) commenced to line with gum leaves old nests which are situated under verandah. Discovered nest of Tawny-shouldered Podargus (*P. strigoides*) constructed of quite a bunch of dry twigs, placed on a horizontal fork not 3 yards from roof of house. These birds last season brought out two young ones in same place, but during a stormy night lost one. The remaining young bird could be seen perched between the old birds any day for the last 12 months.—(CAPT.) S. A. WHITE. Fulham (S.A.), 5/9/08.

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NEST AND EGGS OF CALAMANTHUS MONTANELLUS (Rock Field-Wren, Milligan, *Emu*, vol. ii., p. 201).—As I believe the eggs of this species are hitherto undescribed, I append account of the finding of a clutch to-day (28th August, 1908). Mr. Milligan and party only

met with this species on barren, rocky ground at the Stirling Ranges, about 60 miles south-east from here, in September, 1902, but on 3rd November last year I found them numerous on a sand plain a few miles east of the railway, where there is absolutely no rock or stone. The old birds were busy attending to their recently fledged young. I procured two of the birds, and sent them to the Perth Museum, and they agreed with specimens obtained at the Stirling Ranges, excepting a slight difference in shade of colour. This year I determined to discover the nest and eggs of the species, and on my third trip out to the sand plain was successful. After driving with my buggy and tramping many miles through the shorter vegetation (about 1 foot in height), I decided to try where the scrub grew much thicker and to a height of 5 to 10 feet. In a fairly open patch in this scrub an undoubted *Calamanthus montanellus* crept rapidly out of sight, without my being certain of the exact spot from which it had started. After searching awhile, I marked the place, and gave the bird an hour's grace. Returning, the bird, to my surprise, twisted itself away and out of sight almost instantly from what seemed an almost bare patch of ground, but which I was certain now contained a nest. Until I got down on my knees, and sighted the aperture of the nest, there was absolutely nothing to catch the eye. The nest was of almost globular shape, about 4 inches in diameter, and placed in a slight hollow (about 1 inch deep) in the ground. The entrance was almost level with the ground surface, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide by 1 inch in height, and faced almost due north. The nest was built between two thin branches of a coarse dry grass, and the top of it resembled one of the small ant-heaps occurring on sand plains, built up of short lengths of dry grass. Probably the resemblance was intentional, for protection. I cannot recollect any nest being so inconspicuous in appearance. It was rather loosely put together, and made mostly of coarse, dry grass-stems, with a few dry leaves and old flower heads and stalks intermixed. It was well lined with feathers, among which were many blue, green, and red ones from Rosellas and Yellow-banded Parrakeets. The eggs were three in number, of a buffish-salmon tint, with a clouded zone at the larger end of a darker shade. They much resemble the plate (11) in Mr. A. J. Campbell's "Nests and Eggs" of the Striated Field-Wren (*C. fuliginosis*), but the spots were not so well defined, and the small end not so pointed, as in the plate. Although I had twice seen the bird leave the nest, and had no doubt as to its identity, I thought it best to be absolutely certain, so concealed myself about 10 yards from the nest. In 20 minutes the female suddenly appeared on a dry stick that lay close to the nest, having crept so far, quite unobserved, along the ground. Before I could shoot she suddenly appeared, as if by magic, on a twig within 4 feet of my elbow, and immediately afterwards the eggs were identified beyond doubt. The song of the male bird is very similar to that of *C. campestris*, with which I was long familiar in the north-west of this State, and is a very pleasant and melodious one.—TOM CARTER. Wensleydale, Broome Hill (W.A.), 28/8/08.

CAN GULLS DIVE?—Lately this subject has been discussed through "Nature Notes and Queries"—a column weekly in a daily paper, *The Argus*—and to my way of thinking it is one that is apt to be rather confusing, especially to those not knowing the difference between birds scientifically known as divers and those that simply perform a dive brought about by momentum.

One contributor to these notes stated that he witnessed many Pacific Gulls (*Gabianus pacificus*) rise into the air, and the momentum gained in their downward flight enabled these birds to secure their prey about 4 feet below the surface, and, as far as he was concerned, settled the question regarding this particular species as a diver. Acknowledging that performances like these come within the meaning of the word dive, this does not certify that they belong to the family of divers. Because a bird rises into the air and the momentum acquired in its downward course enables it to dive below the surface and secure its prey at a depth no greater than the momentum thus gained enables it to reach, and upon that power being spent is forced back to the surface, actions like these do not in my opinion classify them among the divers. For example, take a glance at any of the birds belonging to such genera as *Phalacrocorax*, *Plotus*, *Podiceps*, *Anas*, *Nettion*, *Catarrhactes*, and others—why, a single glance is enough to satisfy the most pessimistic observer that these birds are specially adapted and moulded by nature for diving, also swimming while submerged. Take the wings of a diver: the shoulders are set well forward, while the primaries are short; and the legs are set well back. Have the Gulls Terns, or Gannets these qualities? No.

Any naturalist who has exercised any degree of observation knows that the swimming of birds is nothing more than a walking in the water, where one foot succeeds the other, as on the land, while under water they impel and row themselves forward by a motion of their wings as well as by the impulse of their feet. These actions I have frequently watched while attempting to secure Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) that I have wounded upon a clear pool of water. Although well acquainted with the Gulls, Terns, and Gannets, and upon several occasions having slightly winged one of these birds, I have never yet seen a single bird attempt to go under while trying to evade capture. The question arises—Are they able? The Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) and Terns, in performing this dive of theirs, upon reaching the water always, as far as my observations go, open their wings—an action, I take it, that lessens the shock and at the same time prevents them from going under. With the Gannets it is just the opposite—they keep their wings closed, thus enabling them to dive to a considerable depth. Regarding Terns, although these birds are web-footed it is rarely they are

seen resting upon the water, their resting-place being either a spit of sand or a rock. These graceful birds flit over the waters, and it is partly through their resemblance in flight and Swallow-shaped tail that they get the name Sea-Swallow. The food of these birds consists chiefly of small fish, which they pounce upon; also molluscs and insects. Gulls, in my estimation, are nothing but scavengers of the high seas.

In conclusion, I trust that I have made myself clear in attempting to define what I consider is the difference between birds that dive by momentum, such as Gulls, Terns, and Gannets, and those which nature has physically moulded for and are known to ornithologists as divers.—C. F. COLE.

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THE RAVEN AT CHARLOTTE PLAINS.—Bird-life as a whole is comparatively quiet in the vicinity of this town (Maryborough) at present, perhaps the liveliest quarter being the open country at the Charlotte Plains (some 12 miles out), and in that locality there is more quantity than variety.

A Word for the Crow.—With the exception of the ubiquitous White-backed Magpie, the most noticeable bird on these plains is the Crow (*Corvus coronoides*)*. This bird is always very plentiful hereabouts, but this year they are simply swarming. The recent extreme cold, following hard upon the unusually dry autumn, has been the means of killing off scores of sheep and young lambs, and this is the reason of the Crows being so numerous.

Crows as Scavengers.—Almost every paddock is studded with the dead bodies of the unfortunate animals, and on each carcass is invariably perched half a dozen Crows, tearing off and eating the flesh. In each case the eyes of the beast are always the first to go; then the wool is pulled off, the skin torn open, and the flesh eaten to the last scrap. If a Hawk or any other bird comes near the feasting Crows, the latter attack the intruder in a body until it is driven off.

Fox *v.* Crow.—We were fortunate enough to observe a decidedly interesting chase, illustrating the pugnacious disposition of these Crows, a few weeks ago. Driving along a road adjoining an open paddock, we were surprised to see five Crows swooping viciously at a fine big fox, which, judging by its actions, fully realized the seriousness of the situation. Adopting the usual ruse of a small animal when thus attacked, Reynard would wait for the Crows to swoop, crouching low on the ground; and each time the birds rose in the air he dashed on for about 20 yards,

* Read Raven (*Corone australis*).—EDS.

till the second party of birds forced him down again. Had there been but one or two birds attacking, the fox would have no doubt escaped easily, but five had a decided advantage over him, for when two birds struck at him together the other three were ready to dart down on the ascension of the first two. Every bird struck at the animal's head, but as the fox kept this flat on the ground, he was not harmed. This "duck and run" procedure was kept up for the space of some 300 yards, when Reynard reached a sanctuary in the shape of a clump of thistles. The disappointed Crows circled round for a while, cawed dismally at the landscape, and departed.

Crow *v.* Rabbit.—This is not the first time I have witnessed such an exhibition of pugnacity on the part of the Crow. A few months ago I saw a somewhat similar chase with a rabbit as central figure.

The Usefulness of the Crow.—These two animals, the fox and rabbit, are the two principal pests of the farmers hereabouts, and if the Crow (or any other bird) could be proved to be instrumental in diminishing their rapidly increasing numbers the bird would be far more favourably looked upon than it is just at present.—A. A. CHISHOLM. Maryborough, Vict.

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AMONG BRISTLE-BIRDS.—November has many attractions in the field. Taking advantage of a public holiday early in the month, two of us wheeled away from Geelong to the south coast outside Port Phillip, covering the distance in about three hours against as stiff an ocean breeze as one cares to face on the cycle. Thence south-west we followed the coast down toward Cape Otway. Evening was coming on, the wind was rising, with every promise of a stormy night, and on we hurried, skirting the steep cliffs, anxious to find suitable cover for the night. Necessarily we travelled "light," having a little plain fare and a rug apiece, ready even to do without water in this man-forsaken tract, that we might observe in its curious home the Bristle-Bird (*Sphenura broadbenti*). Leaving the track at the top of a spur, we made down to the coast, a mile distant, and there met some thick brakes of tea-tree just as the last light of evening waned, but not too late to hear a welcome loud-voiced warble of a Bristle-Bird not far away.

The gale increased, the sea lashed on the long line of reef off shore, where the *Inverlochy* had perished some months previously, and the waves moaned on the beach, where they had cast up in all odd corners the wooden wreckage of the vessel. In the thickest part of the tea-tree we passed the night. By the side of a roaring fire, fed from the wreckage on the beach, we lay down to rest, though not to sleep much, for we were alter-

nately roasted on one side and frozen on the other, so cold and draughty was our camp, and night watch was called frequently to add more fuel to the fire. However, the gale died away in the early morning, and the dawn broke fair and promising, with Singing Honey-eaters whistling their tuneful calls. The first bird out of the tea-tree brake saw us demolishing our morning meal, and by the time the sun came up, thrusting his rays like long red fingers through the horizon clouds, the Bristle-Birds were awake and calling to one another about the scrub.

The tea-tree here is not the coastal broad-leaf *Leptospermum* common on the east shore of Port Phillip, but a fine-leaved bottlebrush-flowering *Melaleuca*. It grows shorter and denser, its branches much from the ground, and the tops in some places grow so thick and matted that sunlight is excluded. They are very difficult to push through, often the easiest way to examine them being to crawl about beneath. Clumps and belts of this tea-tree clothe the wind-blown slopes of Bristle-Bird Point, otherwise known as Point Addis, a triple-headed limestone bluff about half-way between Port Phillip Heads and Cape Otway. This seems to be the limit to which a small party of Bristle-Birds have ventured out from their tangled forest home in Cape Otway. It is, in fact, remarkable that such a unique bird, and a ground dweller in heavy forests, should find congenial surroundings in a patch of wind-swept scrub by the sea-shore. We examined the patches and belts of tea-tree for some two miles south-west, and in all were located one or more pairs of birds. In some places the tea-tree approaches on to the high-water mark, and then it is thickly matted in with long coastal sword-grass, which also makes a tangled home for the Bristle-Bird. That morning the persistent calls of a bird in the clump where we passed the night led us to make a search therein first, with the result that its bulky nest was discovered, containing one large, red-speckled egg. A continued search revealed the fact that there were in all five nests in the clump, presumably all belonging to the same birds; three were of last year or older, and one other was this season's, having had a fledgling in it. It had also an addled egg, which, though it had lost some colour, made a good cabinet specimen. Here was a point that emphasized itself the more we became acquainted with the Bristle-Bird: one egg in every clutch was infertile. Several old nests were found, like this one, with an addled egg. One nest contained a young bird and an addled egg, and in two nice pairs of eggs one was partly incubated and the other not so. It would be interesting to know if this occurs in the Otway, the true home of the species. There may be some food element lacking here.

The notes of the Bristle-Bird have a great likeness to those of the Pilot-Bird in being loud and melodious—the call-song is

almost identical in the two birds, except that one is in a sharper key. The Bristle-Birds feed on beetles, earth grubs, and cranberries, and could be photographed in their home with ease. The Bristle-Bird is found at Anglesea, and also at Airey's Inlet, two tidal creeks between Point Addis and the Otway forest. There appear now to be no further belts of tea-tree north of Point Addis into which the birds can spread, so this fact will always keep them a remarkable restricted colony, which we trust will be of perennial interest to bird observers, and which we hope (being the nearest Bristle-Birds to Melbourne) will not suffer decimation at the hands of city folk.—A. G. CAMPBELL.

[N.B.—This is additional to notes in *Emu*, January, 1907, page 134.—A. G. C.]

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NOTES ON *AMYTIS (AMYTORNIS) VARIA*, OR MARLOCK GRASS-WREN.—When walking through one of my paddocks on 13th June, 1908, hoping to get a shot with a 440 Winchester rifle at some Wedge-tailed Eagles (*Uroaëtus audax*) that were killing lambs, my attention was attracted by what, at first glance, appeared to be a small banded ant-eater (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) running, as is their custom, at great speed with tail erect from some rough ground towards a clump of marlock scrub. A driving rain was falling at the time, which helped to form this impression, but immediately after a dark-coloured bird ran or fluttered close behind the supposed ant-eater, and then I knew I was watching something uncommon in bird-life. The clump of marlock was only about 12 yards by 2 yards, but a considerable amount of trampling heavily through it was necessary before the birds darted out from almost under my feet. One of them hopped on to a dead log at a short distance, and gave me a good view, for a moment or two, but, not thinking it any use to risk a shot with the 440, I hurried home (1½ miles) for my gun, but rain and wind increasing caused me to defer further investigations for that day. On three occasions shortly after the above date I systematically tramped all over the small stony hillock where the birds were first seen, but only once sighted them. They darted out of the same small patch of marlock as at first, after much trampling, and, coming out somewhat behind me, gave no chance of a shot. As with *Amytis striata* (which I had met in the north-west of this State), the speed of the birds is extraordinary. 21st June found me at the same locality, and almost immediately one bird was sighted in a fresh patch of marlock, but for some little time it gave no chance of a fair shot, and then disappeared in a tangle of fallen white gum limbs and dead leaves, which was surrounded by clumps of marlock in full bloom. Among these blooms numbers of *Melithreptus brevirostris* (*leucogenys*, Milligan) were busily feeding, and a bullying Wattle-Bird (*Acanthochæra carunculata*) kept making angry dashes

through them to drive them away from the honey-laden flowers. Apparently the commotion above frightened the Grass-Wren, for it suddenly darted out, and, pausing momentarily in the shelter of the marlock stems, gave me the chance of a successful shot. Several subsequent visits failed to reveal any more of the Grass-Wrens, and it seems to me that the pair originally seen had, for some reason, been driven from, or left, their usual haunt, and temporarily lived on this small, barren hillock, over which I have tramped scores of times, no other marlock or similar class of scrub growing within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. *Query*, What became of the other bird? Probably a cat had taken it, as domesticated cats, gone wild, have been seen near that hill on different occasions. Two persons used to the bush, to whom I have shown the specimen secured, assure me they have seen the same bird (or very similar), but always in marlock, which, with mallee, mallet, and similar growth, stretches for miles east of the Great Southern railway. A description of the bird shot was read at the meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria on the 10th August, and a detailed account has appeared in *The Victorian Naturalist* for September (vol. xxv., p. 86). Since the description mentioned above was forwarded by me, the Director of the Perth Museum has courteously sent me a skin of *Amytornis gigantura* (*megalurus*, Sharpe) on loan, for comparison with mine. *A. gigantura* was procured at Day Dawn in 1903, and described by Mr. A. W. Milligan as new. Day Dawn is situated 450 miles almost due north from Broome Hill, and is a much hotter and drier district than this, the average rainfall there being probably considerably less than half of what occurs here—viz., 8 inches against 22. As a full description of *Amytis varia* has already been published, there is no occasion to repeat it here, but comparison with the skin of *gigantura* shows the following points of difference in *Amytis varia*:—The whole plumage is much darker and richer in tone, the head especially being almost black, and the abdomen and flanks much darker than in *gigantura*, where the centre of abdomen is very light fawn. No trace of the rich chestnut side patches which occur on each side of the chest of *gigantura*. No reddish lores as in *gigantura*. The white striations on the head, hind neck, and mantle are much more numerous, and they are also more pronounced on the flanks in *varia*. Measurements of tail and wings are considerably larger in *varia*. I may remark that the numerous small bars across the tail feathers occur in *both* skins, and apparently are present in most of the species of *Amytornis*, though not always mentioned in descriptions by writers. With regard to "marlock," I have adopted this spelling, as Mr. Milligan used it in connection with his trip to the Stirling Ranges, and Mr. A. J. North has spelt it marlock in describing the scrub where Mr. C. Masters obtained specimens of *Malurus pulcherrimus*, although I am informed by a botanical expert that, according to philologists, the accepted orthography of the word is "maalok" or "maaloch," an aboriginal word signifying thicket, and that to spell it "mar" is wrong (although aborigines have no written

language), and that the shrub appears to be a variety of *Eucalyptus obcordata*. Whoever is correct, there is no doubt that the thickets composed of it are "happy hunting grounds" for ornithologists. Last week I secured in that growth specimens of *Malurus pulcherrimus* and of an Emu-Wren (*Stipiturus malachurus*).*—TOM CARTER. Wensleydale, Broome Hill (W.A.), 31/8/08.

From Magazines, &c.

"A NIGHT WITH THE BIRDS ON LAWRENCE ROCKS" is the account of a romantic outing by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., which appeared in *The Victorian Naturalist* for May, vol. xxv., pp. 12-24. Lawrence Rocks are situated at the entrance of Portland Bay, Victoria, and are the breeding-places chiefly of Gannets, Cormorants, Petrels, and Penguins. Mr. Mattingley took his excursion last Christmas, when he found the majority of the birds with downy young. The article is accompanied by reproductions from excellent photographs, namely:—"Gannet (*Sula serrator*) Rookery," showing a congregation of about 400 birds, with some on the wing, and "Dove-Petrel (*Prion desolatus* (?)) and young." General readers, as well as naturalists, will enjoy Mr. Mattingley's very descriptive and entertaining article.

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BIRDS OF INKERMAN (N.Q.)—An article, interesting to Australian ornithological students, by Mr. Collingwood Ingram, F.Z.S., appears in the July (1908) *Ibis*, entitled "The Birds of Inkerman Station, North Queensland." The collection contains 93 species, including two new to science—namely, *Neositta magnirostris* and *Sphecotheres stalkerii*.

Inkerman is situated approximately 50 miles south-west of Townsville and about ten miles from the Burdekin River, and is described as "covered with an open forest, but in many places the gum-trees are very thinly scattered over the ground. The two commonest species, and those that give character to the landscape, are the Moreton Bay ash and the blood-wood; the former being by far the most numerous. But here and there are also trees of other kinds—pandanus, leichhardt, acacia, bottle-tree, and others; although, of course, the typical *Eucalypti* always predominate. Situated at wide intervals over nearly the whole of the station are narrow sheets of water—'lagoons,' as they are locally termed. These are often deep and sunk between steep banks, and not a few are thickly grown with blue water-lilies or with the more luxuriant lotus-lily."

* The Western Australian form of the Emu-Wren differs from the eastern bird by the general upper surface being lighter coloured (greyish instead of brownish), and by the width of each curious tail-feather being only about half the width of those of the eastern examples.—A.J.C.