

- 378 Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*).
- 380 Square-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis variolosus*).
- 459 Little Green Pigeon (*Chalcophaps chrysoclorus*).
- 462 Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*).
- 548 White-fronted Heron (*Notophoxyx novæ-hollandiæ*).
- 570 Land Rail (*Hypotaenidia philippinensis*).
- 577 Black Swan (*Chenopsis atrata*).
- 585 Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*).
- 597 Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*).
- 653 Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax hypoleucus*).

A further excursion was taken during the same session of this Congress to the Tuggerah Lakes district, situated half-way between Sydney and Newcastle, when a large number of birds were identified and many interesting notes taken. The account of this excursion will appear in the next issue of *The Emu*.

Field Notes on Some Birds of the Casterton District (Victoria).

BY (DR.) E. A. D'OMBRAIN.

PART II.

TAWNY FROGMOUTH (*Podargus strigoides*).—The nest of this bird was discovered on eight occasions during 1903. The only noticeable facts about them were that in one instance the nest was in a "spout" of the tree and contained the unusual clutch of three eggs.* Time of season, August to November.

BROWN KINGFISHER, OR LAUGHING JACKASS (*Dacelo gigas*).—Birds and nests very numerous. The only note of interest is that these birds play great havoc with poultry chicks. An acquaintance of mine wondered what was taking his brood of chickens, set a watch, and found a pair of Laughing Jackasses helping themselves. They had taken all but four out of fourteen chicks.

HOARY-HEADED GREBE (*Podiceps poliocephalus*).—My friend Mr. W. M'Lennan watched a pair building in a reedy dam. Both birds assisted in the building. The nest site was in the reeds, about 5 yards from the end of the dam. The structure was of brown weeds growing in the water near the edge. The birds dived for the weeds, and on reappearing dived again, and came to the surface near the nest. Not much time was spent in placing the weed on the nest, and the birds then dived off the nest. Date, 8/II/03. On 10/II/03 nest completed, but no sign of birds anywhere about, nor on 19/II/03. The question as to the flight of these birds is sometimes raised. Mr. M'Lennan, on the same dam, in March, 1904, saw one of these Grebes, and sat down to observe it. It was very inquisitive, and swam within a few yards of him, making a chirping noise. On throwing a piece of earth

* Instances of three eggs to a clutch are recorded in "Nests and Eggs" (Campbell), p. 540.—EDS.

at it the bird rose out of the water and flew about 80 yards, alighting in the water. On throwing at it once more it again flew, and then tried diving, as if it had decided to trust no more to its small wings.

FLYCATCHERS—BLACK-AND-WHITE (*Rhipidura tricolor*), RESTLESS (*Sisura inquieta*), and BROWN (*Micraea fascians*).—Has any naturalist ever noticed that these birds are as capable of infinite change of mind as the ladies? That they do alter their intentions very frequently the following notes will show:—

9th September, 1903.—Pair of Black-and-White Fantails seen building. Six days later the birds had pulled the nest to pieces, but had not selected a site for new nest apparently. Later the nest was found with three eggs in it.

10th September, 1903.—Pair of Restless Flycatchers seen building. On 27th nest appeared to have been finished and deserted, for the birds were building again in another tree. This nest was now about half-built. On 9th October there was no sign of the second nest. On 23rd October the nest was found a third time, with three eggs in it. It was in the same tree as the one that contained the second attempt.

October, 1903.—Restless Flycatchers seen building. On next visit (17th October), first nest pulled to pieces and another built. Bird sitting on the nest.

30th September, 1903.—Restless Flycatcher starting to build in tea-tree. 10th October, nest destroyed, and birds building in a red gum tree.

Brown Flycatcher.—27/9/03.—Birds still adding cobweb to the nest, which contained two eggs advanced in incubation.

The above-mentioned nests were not in the haunts of those who would interfere with them; consequently the birds either were dissatisfied with their surroundings or are, as I said, fond of change.

Whilst on the subject of nest-building it may be of interest to record the following fact about a Crow (or Raven) whilst building. The bird was observed collecting twigs for the structure. It was noticed that although dead wood was plentiful upon the ground the Crow would have none of it, but was busy breaking off the ends of the smaller branches of a dead tree. During the work it came upon some which it could not manage to snap off with its beak. Crows are proverbially knowing, and this one was no exception, for, finding the twig too tough for its bill, the bird deliberately got out on the extreme end of the twig and swayed up and down till it broke off.

BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*).—The difficulty of fixing a close season for game is made apparent by the following dates of breeding:—6th September, 1903.—Two broods seen. One about four or five days old; the other nearly fully fledged. 11th September.—Nest with three eggs. 4th October.—Two nests, one with thirteen eggs, other eleven. 25th January, 1904.—Brood of nine ducklings about two weeks old.

To show with what ease the young Black Ducks can reach the water without their parents' aid, on 25th September, 1903, a nest was discovered in a hole in a tree. Height of hole was about 20 feet; tree in a creek. On climbing up seven young ones and two eggs were seen; one young bird, taking fright, jumped out of the nest into the water. The remaining six "stampeded" and "followed their leader," and reached the water apparently none the worse for their hasty descent.

MUSK-DUCK (*Biziura lobata*).—On a dam Mr. M'Lennan saw what was to him a peculiar-looking Duck. The bird fluttered along the surface of the water for about 20 yards, then rose up, and was making off, when he shot it. On picking it up it turned out to be a Musk-Duck. It is seldom these birds are seen in actual flight.

LESSER MASKED OWL (*Strix delicatula*).—Since my last notes on this bird appeared* Mr. M'Lennan found a nest of the species in a curious way. He flushed a bird from a dead tree. This bird flew at once to a hole in a green tree close by. In the hole were four fresh eggs, which he collected for his cabinet. Exactly a month later he revisited the tree, when an Owl flew out of the hole. Again climbing the tree he found another clutch of four eggs, which he left to incubate. In a full three weeks' time he inspected the hole to see if the young were ready for my camera, when to his astonishment there were now five eggs in the hollow! The bird had flown off, and we think that either the four eggs proved non-fertile and the bird had commenced another clutch or else had laid another egg, completing a clutch of five, soon after the visit to the hole.

Birds of the Upper Yarra.

BY A. G. CAMPBELL, MELBOURNE.

IN the list which is given hereafter are tabulated only those birds which were identified during a ten days' trip early in the month of December, but as this list includes doubtless all the regular inhabitants, it will prove useful for reference.

In the mountainous and heavily-timbered regions about the head waters of the Yarra birds are not in abundance—in fact, it seems to hold good that the heavier the timber the scarcer the bird-life, and there are tracts that are practically forest solitudes. As one proceeds up the valley from Contention Creek, the last tributary of any importance, birds such as *Gymnorhina* and the *Strepera*, which love the more open country, where the river flats and gently sloping hillsides abound with food, are left behind, and the feathered inhabitants, without such common birds among them, are then less noticeable. *Graucalus*, *Malurus*, *Rhipidura tricolor*, *Ptilonorhynchus*, *Cracticus*, *Pachycephala rufiventris*, *Acanthochera*, the *Artami*, *Ægitha*, *Dacelo*, and *Ægialitis* are also left behind, and as the ranges narrow in and become still more pre-

* *Emu*, vol. iv., p. 127.