

many districts. In open country particularly, large numbers are seen, lending colour to this view. In the vicinity of Inverleigh, near Geelong, last month, I saw no less than 79 birds feeding on a grass paddock of about 10 acres. I never saw so many of the White-backed species together before. But on inquiry, and from observation, I find that very few of these birds nest. They are practically all the year in flocks, which do not split up in spring and disperse into timbered country to breed. Where, then, is the increase? It seems to me that the birds are just congregating about the clearings out of the falling forest, and, being hardy and long-lived, only appear to be increasing because seen in larger parties.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the readers of *The Emu* to inquire into this matter of bird inhabitants, and systematically to collect all such data as will tend to show the decrease or increase of any given species, so that, in a few years, an estimate or bird census might be made of the feathered inhabitants of this fair land, having reference also to their usefulness or otherwise, before the time arrives when their natural habits and habitats will be so altered as to be lost.

Stray Feathers.

PALLID CUCKOOS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.—15th July.—Small boy who climbs for me and knows the bird stated that he had seen it already at Flemington (Sydney); 11th August, heard the bird myself at Flemington in the distance; 25th August, saw and heard several birds at Blacktown; 26th August, saw and heard several birds at Sutherland.—L. HARRISON. Sydney.

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PALLID CUCKOOS IN VICTORIA.—Heard last week in July, at Hopetoun (M'Lennan)—*vide Argus*; 4th August, seen and heard at Dimboola; 6th August, at Stawell, none to be heard; 18th August, plentiful at Stawell; 28th August, first heard at Burnley, Melbourne.—A. G. CAMPBELL.

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PALLID CUCKOO, &C., IN TASMANIA.—*Cuculus pallidus* was first noted in the Devonport district on the 14th September, in the morning. At the same time I observed twelve individuals of *Graucalus parvirostris* coming from the north-west, a seaward direction, and proceeding rapidly, against the wind, towards the south-east, as if their course was plainly marked out. The great majority of these interesting birds leave our north-west coast in April and arrive again in spring. If they do not cross to the mainland, where do they winter? From the direction in which

they come, King Island seems the only reasonable alternative. On 23rd September in a previous year I noticed five *Graucali*, apparently just arrived, flying high and proceeding in exactly the same direction—from north-west to south-east—as those seen yesterday; in this case, however, they had the wind in their favour, it being from the north-west at the time. An individual of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cuculus flabelliformis*) was observed yesterday to alight in a small peppermint gum. Immediately all the *Acanthizæ* in the neighbourhood began to hurl violent abuse at the larger bird, as though intuitively aware of her intentions, and very soon a pair of these tiny Tits vigorously attacked the Cuckoo, and put her to flight.—H. STUART DOVE. W. Devonport, Tasmania, 15/9/06.

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A CUCKOO'S EGG AT MIDWINTER. — There is in my collection a clutch of three eggs of *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa* (Yellow-rumped Tit) with an egg of *Chalcococcyx plagosus* (Bronze-Cuckoo), taken at Flemington, near Sydney, on the 14th of July this year. Mr. L. Harrison, of Sydney, who forwarded me the set, points out that the date when the eggs were obtained shows that the Bronze-Cuckoo was in the vicinity of Sydney at that time of the year. He further adds that those who assert that *C. plagosus* is strictly migratory will need to reflect.—A. MATTINGLEY. Melbourne, 27/8/06.

* * *

NOTES FROM MELBOURNE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.—A pair of Cape Barren Geese hatched out four young ones early in June. In July five eggs were laid again in the same nest, the former young being six weeks old. The bird which did not happen to be sitting looked after the young, but they clustered round the sitting bird at night, so were removed and given to an unattached male to be looked after. The second brood were duly hatched in July, and are now doing well. These birds evidently lay two clutches a year. Two Emus are also sitting, the male bird doing most of the work of incubating. The Brush-Turkeys (*Talegallus*) have made a very large nesting mound early this year, or rather the male bird has, as the hen only looks on. If she comes near he drives her away.—D. LE SOUËF. Zoological Gardens, Melbourne.

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SOME WESTERN DISTRICT NOTES.—One night in July a little common Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) found its way into the dining-room. It at first seemed bewildered, but on getting used to the light and surroundings became more at its ease. It commenced flitting about, once on the lap of a lady by the fire.

At last it disappeared behind the piano, but the maid on coming into the room discovered it fast asleep on the wick of a candle standing near the door. I closed my hands over it and put it out of a window, on the sill, where it sat much dazed. This afternoon I saw a Magpie (*Gymnorhina leuconota*) sitting on a Lincoln ram's back, dragging out beakfuls of the wool. We wondered if it were after ticks. During January last, when the bees were swarming, I watched the White-plumed Honey-eaters flying through the swarm, catching the bees, then back again through for others, when they would hide in a tree on the opposite side. I have also noticed the hen Robin with a bee in her beak, having a great time with it before she managed to swallow it.—M. PRINGLE. Merrang, Hexham, 5/8/06.

* * *

MALLEE (VICTORIA) NOTES.—This is the earliest season for birds nesting that I have experienced—that is, taking all the birds together. Mallee Parrots—in fact, all Parrots in this region—have been nesting for the last six weeks. This also applies to the different Cockatoos about here. Hylacola, Scrub-Robin, and a few more of the October birds I have found with big young in their nests two or three weeks back. The little Red-throat I observed young in the nest six weeks ago, but they are always among the early birds to nest. I saw a few of the White-shouldered Lalage here on the 5th of this month (August)—that is the earliest I knew them to put in an appearance here. Another strange thing this season is that the Pallid Cuckoo was the last of its tribe to make its appearance. The scrub for the last few weeks is ringing with all the Cuckoos' shrill notes. I saw a large flock of Black Cockatoos to-day—about 400 of them. They come here every year about this time to feast upon the honeysuckle scrub blossoms. Their screeching notes when flying and floating from one bunch of blossom to another can be imagined.

I am writing this near the camp fire in the bush while my quart pot boils for my noontide meal, and an old Emu is walking around me, only about 20 yards off—no doubt wondering what the strange object is—uttering its characteristic booming note all the time.—CHAS. M'LENNAN. Pine Plains, 18/8/06.

* * *

CLARKE ISLAND (BASS STRAIT) NOTES.—It is a noteworthy fact that both land and aquatic birds down here were unusually late in nesting last year, for no accountable reason; also, that a large proportion of those species which are in most seasons very numerous, such as the Grey Shrike-Thrush, Thickhead, and a host of smaller varieties, were conspicuously scarce. The Brown Quail was most noticeably so, whilst the Painted Quail was not

seen at all. The following instances will give some idea of how the birds have deviated from their usual nesting time. I noted a clutch of cygnets in April which were only half fledged. The Swan lays in August and September, but chiefly in the former month. The last year's clutches of the Brown Quail are only flying well now, and I have noted a great many which are none too strong on the wing. They lay with us in November or December. The Thickhead and Grey Shrike-Thrush were a couple of months late, in company with many others.

22nd April.—Saw the Swifts in large numbers on Cape Barren Island, but only a few visited Clarke Island. They do not nest here.

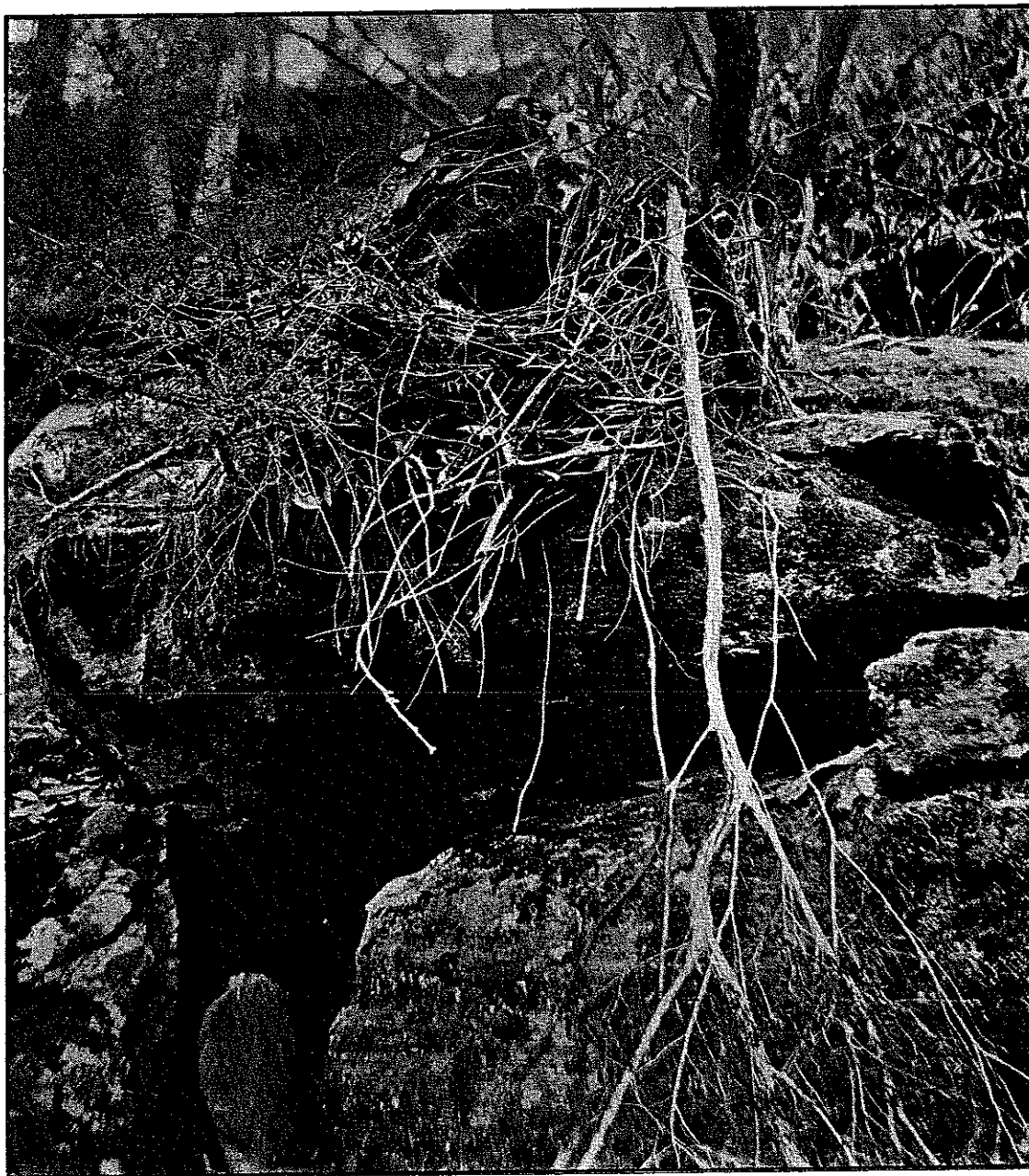
4th May.—The Goose appears very numerous this year. Saw fifty (50) in one flock on Preservation Island, and am informed that on Balky Island as many as two hundred (200) are sometimes to be seen. Ornithologists need not alarm themselves about this bird becoming extinct, for they breed well and are seldom disturbed in any way ;* also their erratic nesting is a good protection. I have secured fresh eggs in June, and also in September. The Black-cheeked Falcon, at all times a rare bird, appears to have left us altogether. The Black Duck, Teal, and Shoveller have been here in fair numbers through the dry months, but are fast leaving with the autumn rains. Of course some Ducks nest here, chiefly Teal and Musk-Duck. The Mutton-Birds are very large and fat this year, and plenty of them, but the sale price is so low that it hardly repays the labour of preparing them for market.—J. D. MACLAINE. 12/5/06.

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NEST OF *MENURA SUPERBA* (LYRE-BIRD).—As this beautiful bird is found plentifully in the National Park, close to Sydney, I determined during the present breeding season to try and observe some of its habits and characteristics, so on 22nd July, in company with Mr. Clifford Coles, I journeyed out to the Park, some 20 miles by train, and in a rowing boat went about 4 miles up that charming stretch of water known as the freshwater portion of the Port Hacking River. The country consists of steep sandstone hills, supporting many eucalypti, grass-trees, banksias, and a light, varied undergrowth, with occasional patches of tropical vegetation—palms, ferns, creepers, &c.—on small rich flats near the river bed.

When quietly rowing along we observed a hen Lyre-Bird bathing in the shallow water close to the bank ; she appeared to be much enjoying a complete bath, and reluctantly left the water as our boat drew on. Upon effecting a landing half a mile further on abundant traces of the birds were seen in the

* This may be due, in a measure, to the action the Union has already taken regarding the Cape Barren Goose.—EDS.



Nest of the Lyre-Bird (*Menura superba*).

FROM A PHOTO. BY A. S. LE SOUEF.

scratched surface of the ground, and we cautiously approached one bird as it was feeding and chattering among the undergrowth; it turned out to be a fine male, and his wonderful mimicking powers were well put forth as he repeated the notes of many birds in quick succession with extraordinary accuracy, now and again introducing his own particular call—two long high notes followed by three short ones. (I have never heard the *M. superbus* utter the shrill note common to Victorian birds; when disturbed, they give a low "Croak, croak"). Their ordinary note is similar to that of the Southern form. The following are the actual calls heard, taken down on the spot as uttered:—Bower-Bird, Whip-Bird, Grey Shrike-Thrush, own note (repeated), own, own, own, Jackass, Honey-eater, Thrush, Bower-Bird, Jackass, own, Black Cockatoo, own, Parrot, Thrush, Cuckoo-Shrike, Bower-Bird, Whip-Bird, Scrub-Tit, Thrush, Bower-Bird, Jackass, Bower-Bird, Black Cockatoo, Parrot, Bower-Bird, own, Black Cockatoo, Parrot, Thrush, Cuckoo-Shrike, Jackass, Bower-Bird, own, Friar-Bird, Black Magpie, Jackass, Thickhead, Scrub-Tit, Whip-Bird, Honey-eater. Upon walking up to him he quietly stalked off some fifty yards and again commenced his chatter, evidently upon one of the Lyre-Bird playgrounds, which were numerous in the locality.

We then started a careful search for nests, and located about ten old ones in various stages of disrepair; they were without exception placed upon a ledge of rock, and faced the north-east, the rising sun. The birds preferred the dry hillside for a nesting place to the shady gully. We were at last rewarded by finding a lovely fresh nest, placed upon a rock, about 3 feet from the ground, just at the head of a short, steep gully. The hen bird flew out as we approached, and on investigation we found the darkly-mottled purplish-grey egg very far incubated. The nest was composed of sticks interwoven with grass and leaves and lined with fibre from the cabbage palm and green moss, while the egg rested upon a handful of the soft vent feathers from the parent bird. The nest measured—outside, length 30 inches, depth 28 inches; inside, length 15 inches, depth 10 inches; entrance, 8 by 5 inches. The hen bird quickly reappeared and approached to within a few feet of us as we stood by her home, and then unconcernedly started to search for food. We again visited this nest on 26th August, and found the young bird well grown and just getting the flight feathers. Its shrill scream on being disturbed at once brought the parent bird to the rescue, and she hurried round, just out of reach, now and again answering her baby with a reassuring call.

The Lyre-Birds in the National Park have quickly learnt to appreciate the full protection afforded them. All credit is due to the trustees for this bird sanctuary.—A. S. LE SOUËF.
Zoological Gardens, Sydney, 27/8/06.

BIRD CENSUS OF THE STAWELL DISTRICT.—

Astur approximans	Dicaeum hirundinaceum
Uroaetus audax	Pardalotus ornatus
Hieracidea orientalis	„ punctatus
Cerchneis cenchroides	Hirundo neoxena
Ninox boobook	Petrochelidon nigricans
Corone australis	Anthus australis
Strepera cuneicaudata	Artamus sordidus
Corcorax melanorhamphus	Staganopleura guttata
Grallina picata	Ægitha temporalis
Collyriocincla harmonica	Mirafrans horsfieldi
Graucalus melanops	Podargus strigoides
Micræca fascians	Dacelo gigas
Petroeca leggii	Cuculus pallidus
„ phœnicea	Cacomantis flabelliformis
„ bicolor	Chalcococcyx basalis
Smicrornis brevirostris	„ plagosus
Malurus cyaneus	Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ
Rhipidura albiscapa	Glossopsittacus concinnus
„ tricolor	„ porphyrocephalus
Sisura inquieta	„ pusillus
Acanthiza nana	Cacatua galerita
„ pusilla	„ roseicapilla
„ lineata	Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ
„ chrysorrhoa	Platycercus elegans
Sericornis osculans	„ eximius
Pomatorhinus superciliosus	Psephotus hæmatonotus
Cinclorhamphus cruralis	Phaps chalcoptera
Ephthianura albifrons	Coturnix pectoralis
Xerophila leucopsis	Antigone australasiana
Gymnorhina leuconota	Burhinus grallarius
Cracticus destructor	Lobivanellus lobatus
Falcunculus frontatus	Ægialitis ruficapilla
Oreoica cristata	„ nigrifrons
Eopsaltria australis	Recurvirostra novæ-hollandiæ
Pachycephala gutturalis	Heteropygia acuminata
Climacteris leucophæa	Gallinago australis
„ scandens	Carphibis spinicollis
Sittella pileata	Platalea regia
Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris	Herodias alba
Zosterops cœrulescens	Ardea novæ-hollandiæ
Melithreptus lunulatus	Botaurus poicilopterus
„ brevirostris	Phalacrocorax carbo
Glycyphila fulvifrons	Chenopsis atrata
Ptilotis fusca	Anseranas semipalmata
„ chrysops	Chenonetta jubata
„ leucotis	Casarca tadornoides
„ penicillata	Anas superciliosus
„ auricomis	Nettion castaneum
Meliornis australasiana	Spatula rhynchotis
„ novæ-hollandiæ	Malacorhynchus membrana-
Manorhina garrula	ceus
Acanthochæra carunculata	Biziura lobata
Entomyza cyanotis	Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ.
Philemon corniculatus	

—C. F. PAWSEY, Stawell.

BIRDS OF THE GRAMPIANS, VICTORIA.—The Grampian Mountains and the Sierras in western Victoria are a unique formation. Built entirely of sandstone rock, they stand out from the plain country, tier after tier of peaks of almost similar size and contour. Mt. William, in the north, rises to 3,800 feet above sea level, and the Sierras, extending away to the south in a series of fifty or more pointed peaks like teeth of a giant saw, culminate in Mt. Abrupt (2,700 feet). These mountains are famous the world over for their wild flowers. Hundreds of species are found nowhere else but on their sandy foot-slopes or on the steep rock faces or precipitous ravines that everywhere occur, and it might be expected that bird-life too would be distinctive, but it is not so. It is not a happy hunting ground for birds, and the species that are below recorded confine themselves mostly to the tea-tree-margined creeks and scrub-lined gullies. The most remarkable bird of all is, perhaps, the Emu. Their droppings are frequently observed, consisting entirely (at this time of the year) of the bright-red flowers of *Styphelia sonderi*, which seem to pass unaltered in shape through the body, nothing but the colour, and doubtless the nectar, being extracted by the digestive juices. The birds probably pick much of the flower from the ground where it readily falls, but they have also been seen plucking them from the bush.

<i>Corone australis</i>	<i>Sittella pileata</i>
<i>Strepera graculina</i>	<i>Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ</i>
<i>Gymnorhina leuconota</i>	„ <i>australasiana</i>
<i>Collyriocincla harmonica</i>	<i>Melithreptus lunulatus</i>
<i>Micræca fascians</i>	<i>Ptilotis leucotis</i>
<i>Rhipidura tricolor</i>	„ <i>chrysops</i>
<i>Petræca leggii</i>	<i>Acanthochæra carunculata</i>
„ <i>phænicea</i>	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>
„ <i>bicolor</i>	<i>Manorhina garrula</i>
<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	<i>Dicæum hirundinaceum</i>
<i>Smicrornis brevirostris</i>	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	<i>Pardalotus ornatus</i>
„ <i>nana</i>	„ <i>punctatus</i>
„ <i>pusilla</i>	<i>Chalcococcyx plagosus</i>
„ <i>chrysorrhoa</i>	„ <i>basalis</i>
<i>Sericornis osculans</i>	<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>
<i>Geocichla lunulata</i>	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	„ <i>eximius</i>
<i>Pachycephala gutturalis</i>	<i>Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
<i>Climacteris leucophaea</i>	<i>Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ</i>

A. G. CAMPBELL. Melbourne, August, 1906.

Addition.—My visit to the Grampians was during the winter, which may account for the small list of birds. But I find in a back number of *The Victorian Naturalist* (vol. viii., p. 193, April, 1892) a long list of birds noted during a camp-out of the Naturalists' Club, when an exhaustive search of the Grampians

was made by several members. Besides most of those in the above list, the following species were recorded :—

<i>Uroaetus audax</i>	<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>
<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	<i>Anthus australis</i>
<i>Falco melanogenys</i>	<i>Artamus sordidus</i>
„ <i>subniger</i>	„ <i>superciliosus</i>
<i>Hieracidea orientalis</i>	<i>Staganopleura guttata</i>
„ <i>berigora</i>	<i>Ægitha temporalis</i>
<i>Cerchneis cenchroides</i>	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>
<i>Astur approximans</i>	<i>Merops ornatus</i>
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	<i>Alcyone azurea</i>
„ <i>boobook</i>	<i>Dacelo gigas</i>
<i>Grallina picata</i>	<i>Halcyon sanctus</i>
<i>Graucalus melanops</i>	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>
<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>
<i>Myiagra nitida</i>	<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>
<i>Acrocephalus australis</i>	<i>Callocephalon galeatum</i>
<i>Amytis textilis</i>	<i>Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
<i>Stipiturus malachurus</i>	<i>Glossopsittacus concinnus</i>
<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	„ <i>pusillus</i>
<i>Megalurus gramineus</i>	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>
<i>Pomatorhinus temporalis</i>	<i>Geopelia tranquilla</i>
<i>Epthianura albifrons</i>	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>
<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	<i>Ibis molucca</i>
<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	<i>Ardea novæ-hollandiæ</i>
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	<i>Hypotaenidia philippinensis</i>
<i>Climacteris scandens</i> (?)	<i>Chenopsis atrata</i>
<i>Zosterops cærulescens</i>	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>
<i>Ptilotis auricomis</i> (?)	<i>Casarca tadornoides</i>
„ <i>cratitia</i> (?)	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>
„ <i>penicillata</i>	<i>Phalacrocorax novæ-hollandiæ</i>

A total of 98 species. I have queried some, which were in all probability seen *en route* from Stawell, and not in the Grampians proper.—A. G. C.

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NORTHERN NOTES.—The following field notes, which I have culled from a letter, dated 7th June, 1906, from Mr. C. E. May, of Port Keats (aboriginal name “Witney”), Northern Territory, will, I think, interest your readers. Mr. May is a great lover of his “feathered friends,” and probably no student of bird life has previously visited the locality. I have substituted the names in Hall’s “Key” for the vernacular ones used in the letter :—

“The Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus intermedius*) I find only visits here during the wet season; they are plentiful and very fat. I presume that they take their departure to more permanent water, there being only native wells in this locality. The Red-collared Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus rubritorques*) is very numerous, and is here all the year round. The Crimson-winged Lory (*Ptistes erythropterus*) is not too plentiful, and only visits us during the

dry season. Kite Hawks, probably White-headed Sea-Eagle (*Haliastur girrenera*)—a specimen of this bird was secured by Mr. May—"are numerous, but only visit here after the wet season. Whistling Ducks (*Dendrocygna eytoni* (?)), of a bright plumage—a few pairs were shot during the wet season. I saw one Jabiru (*Xenorhynchus asiaticus*) in May last travelling north-west. I heard a few Native Companions (*Antigone australasiana*) during the wet months. Saw a few Wood-Ducks (*Chenonetta jubata*), black and white. The Fawn-breasted Kingfisher (*Dacelo cervina*) is numerous. The Crested White Cockatoo and the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus macrorhynchus*) are both plentiful, and remain during the whole year. Honey-eating birds are very numerous. The Finches only visit here during the dry season. The Great Bower-Bird (*Chlamydodera nuchalis*) is plentiful. Doves of all kinds are very numerous. The Black-and-White Fantail (*Rhipidura tricolor*) is very numerous, but only visits us during the dry months. The black and white Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*) is also numerous, but only seen during the dry months. The Cockatoo-Parrakeets (*Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ*) I saw in thousands in November, 1905; I expect them in a few months again. Jungle-Fowl (*Megapodius duperreyi*) are common. I saw only one Black Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus quoyi*) and only one Emu (*Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ*) shot while I have been here. The Varied Lorikeet (*Ptilosclera versicolor*) is numerous, but only visits here during the dry months. I have collected two Pigeons with beautiful green wings, with white feathers on each shoulder (*Chalcophaps chrysochlora*); they are always in the jungle, and I have only seen them in the wet season. The Fruit-Pigeon with the crimson cap (*Ptilopus ewingi*) is here, but very shy indeed. I have only seen one shot; it seems a much smaller bird here. Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) are plentiful, and only visit us during the dry months. Hawks are very numerous. I have collected two very large Hawk eggs (Wedge-tailed Eagle, *Uroaëtus audax*) from a huge nest 25 feet high in a gum tree. Graucali, Nightjars, Dollar-Birds (*Eurystomus australis*), Rufous-breasted Thrush (*Collyriocincla rufiventris*), and hundreds of other birds are very plentiful here. I saw a few Ibises one evening, but think that they were only visitors for the night, as I have not seen them since. The Fruit-Pigeon I sent you—Nutmeg-Pigeon (*Myristicivora spilorrhoea*)—only visits us during the wet season. I have seen a few Sacred Kingfishers (*Halcyon sanctus*), and I heard a few black and white Geese (*Anseranas semipalmata*) flying over our camp in the evening.

"The 'Mopoke' is numerous, as are various other night birds. There are numerous small kangaroos about, but I observed when I came to Port Keats that they have had a hard time in

the summer. I found many of them dead, probably owing to the want of green grass.

"I collected a little Rainbow Pitta (*Pitta iris*), such a lovely bird. They are plentiful about here, usually in the thick jungle. Crows are not numerous. Curlews and Large-billed Stone-Plovers (*Orthorhamphus magnirostris*) are common at night."—EDWIN ASHBY. "Wittunga," Blackwood, S.A.

From Magazines, &c.

ALEXANDRA PARRAKEET.—Mr. Herbert Astley writes from Italy to *The Avicultural Magazine* (May) that his hen *Spathopterus alexandræ* was then sitting on five eggs in a nesting-box in his aviary.

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BIRDS AT OLINDA.—*The Victorian Naturalist* for August contains a pleasantly written paper by Mr. C. L. Barrett on the "Bird Life of the Olinda Creek," near Lilydale, Victoria, illustrated with photos. of the dancing mound and nest of the Lyre-Bird (*Menura victoriæ*).

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THE YOUNG CUCKOO.—A note in *The Victorian Naturalist* for July states that on 16th October, 1905, Miss B. Keartland noticed two Superb Warblers (*Malurus cyaneus*) and two Yellow-rumped Tits (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*) feeding a young Bronze-Cuckoo.

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THE LAUGHING JACKASS.—Mr. John M'Alpin, of Yea (Vict.), writing to Mr. Donald Macdonald ("Nature Notes," *Argus*, 31/8/06), states:—"I was not aware that the Jackass was fond of small birds until lately. A large Jackass caught and killed a Black-and-White Fantail, and flew off with it, followed by two other Jackasses. They evidently thought it a prize. If those birds are in the habit of killing the useful little birds it is about time the law was altered which protects them."

* * *

ISOLATION v. NATURAL SELECTION.—A paper in *The Auk* for July, by Dr. Leonhard Stejneger, discusses the causes which have brought about the several sub-species of American Hairy Woodpeckers. His theory is that the existing differences were caused not so much by natural selection (the usually accepted origin of such differences) as by "environmental stress"—that is to say, isolation—acting on plastic materials. At the same time the writer does not deny that some auxiliary influence on the development of the various forms may have been exercised by natural selection.