

Borrooloola) being the chief cause. Several nests of the Little Wood-Swallow (*Artamus minor*) were found in holes in the sandstone cliffs, but they all contained young. Also numbers of old nests of the Fairy Martin were seen in caves or under overhanging rocks. Realizing that I was too early for the birds, I decided to revisit the locality in about 10 days' or a fortnight's time, when I shall hope to do much better. When I returned to Borrooloola I had tramped over 70 miles for a single pair of eggs!

A Visit to the Gosford Scrubs.

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IN company with my brother, Mr. Frank T. A. Jackson, I spent a few days camped on his property near Gosford, N.S.W., during the last Christmas holidays. Notwithstanding the then unusually dry state of the country, in all 62 species of birds were noted in and about the bush close to our camp, the more elevated portions of which are covered with blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*), blue gum (*Eucalyptus*, sp.), sweet-scented wattle (*Acacia pruinosa*, a late flowering species), forest oak (*Casuarina*), &c.; while in the beautiful scrub-clad gullies below the camp were tree-ferns, bangalow and cabbage-tree palms, stag-horn ferns (*Platycerium grande*), &c. Here the water-vines (*Vitis hypoglauca*) drooped over the moss-covered logs, and climbed up and linked together the tall and shady scrub trees, such as the maiden's blush tree (*Echinocarpus australis*), bean-ball tree (*Castanospermum australe*), black apple tree (*Sideroxylon australe*). The moss on everything in the scrub was parched, and not of its usual beauty when glistening with moisture. Many broken land-shells—snails (*Helix greyi*, *Helix strangei*, &c.)—were strewn about on the ground in the scrub, and these fragments were no doubt the result of the work of the Lyre-Bird (*Menura*), which, like the beautiful Dagoon-Bird or Pitta (*Pitta strepitans*) of our more northern scrubs, is a great snail-eater, and usually breaks them on a stone. We observed a female Regent Bower-Bird (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*) frequently fly over our tent into a clump of mistletoe (*Loranthus*) growing in a forest oak (*Casuarina*) on the edge of the scrub. In this parasitical growth the bird had its nest, which contained young. The female alone was noticed feeding them, and the male was not observed near the nest. Several beautiful nests of the White-shafted Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) were found, with the birds sitting on eggs or chicks. It was most pleasing to watch the little birds going to and from their nests, which were built on dead limbs of wattle (*Acacia pruinosa*) and turpentine-trees (*Syncarpia laurifolia*) on the recently burnt-off land beside the scrub. Other nests were found, but none of any importance; in fact, most birds had, no doubt, finished breeding,

as it was so late in the season. In a small bush known as native holly (*Oxylobium trilobatum*) a nest of the Yellow-faced Honey-eater (*Ptilotis chrysops*) was found, which was neatly hidden in the prickly bush. Two eggs were in the nest, but were not interfered with. Strange to say, we did not see any Parrots. Amongst the birds met with in the gullies were — Lyre-Bird (*Menura superba*), Yellow-bellied Shrike-Tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*), Black-faced Flycatcher (*Monarcha carinata*), Yellow-eared Honey-eater (*Ptilotis chrysotis*), White-throated Tree-creeper (*Climacteris leucophaea*), Cat-Bird (*Ailurcedus smithi*), Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis citreigularis*), White-throated Thickhead (*Pachycephala gutturalis*), Little Green-Pigeon (*Chalcophaps chrysochlora*), Brown Fly-eater (*Gerygone fusca*), &c., but none of these was plentiful; in fact, only one specimen of the Lyre-Bird was observed.

The Brown Fly-eater, though a very small bird, livens up the scrub with its sweet twittering song, which resembles "Two tid ed ed, two tid ed ed, two tid ed ed," and is uttered rapidly, the "tid ed ed" being of a higher tone than the first note. The peculiar and familiar notes of the Black-faced Flycatcher awakened us at daylight, and the most usual note of the bird is, as near as I can describe it—"Give us a chew, whack, give us a chew." Often it is repeated several times quickly without the "whack," but ultimately it is brought in.

Bell-Miners (*Manorhina melanophrys*) were fairly plentiful in one pretty dell near our Gosford camp, and their notes simply charmed us. It is delightful to enter the forest where these birds abound, and where their clear, sweet, bell-like jingle falls upon one's ears. The incessant notes resemble the distant jingle of many sheep-bells, the silvery sounds of which go straight to the bird-lover's heart, and crowd his memory with thoughts of stately trees, drooping ferns, and delightful mossy dells, while all the magnificent beauty of the Australian forest and scrub passes along in fanciful procession before him. Shortly after sunset, and before dusk, their bell-like notes generally become silent, and in their place louder and less musical notes are rendered, of quite a different character. The bell-like note is a short, sharp whistle, and is often most difficult to locate. The birds call one after the other in quick succession, and their notes, being apparently of all different keys, cause the bell-like effect. On an early summer's morning, as a light breeze gently fans the valleys, and the golden tints from the rising sun strike the top-most branches of the trees, and before the pulsating and noisy buzz or rattle of the so-called locust (*Cicada*) has begun, then, above all times, the exquisite notes of these birds are heard to perfection. They always keep together, the whole year in the same locality, which may cover an area of only a few hundred yards or so in breadth, and probably no more of their dingley dells will be met with for many miles. I have met with the birds in the bush generally close to the sea. They are difficult to see while

feeding amongst the leaves in the bushy trees, owing to their greenish tinge, and also because they do not fly about much. They appear to have a decided preference for country where the timbers of the forest and scrub meet, intermix, and form a sort of jungle. A few of their neat but old cup-shaped nests were found, placed in ferns and vines only a few feet from the ground, yet they often build very much higher. Nine years ago I found these birds very plentiful in the Gosford district, but since then, I am sorry to say, their numbers have become considerably lessened. In the near future these and other of our native birds will be a thing of the past about Gosford as well as other places, if the "juvenile pea-rifle bird-killing crusade" is still allowed by the Government authorities to so openly carry on its wanton and ruthless destruction. Just below our camp the Bell-Birds chimed sweetly all day as they fed in the bushy branches of the blackbutt and blue gum (eucalypt) saplings on a slope beside the scrub, and the loud crack of the Coachwhip-Bird (*Psophodes crepitans*), the pulsating, buzz-like sound of Jardine's Caterpillar-eater (*Edolisoma jardinii*), the loud call of the Roller or Dollar-Bird (*Eurystomus pacificus*), the very peculiar whistle or call of the Ground-Thrush (*Oreocincla lunulata*), as well as the clear ringing notes of the Grey Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), were all pleasant music to us.

At night the Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*), Boobook Owl (*Ninox boobook*), and White-throated Nightjar (*Eurostopodus albugularis*) often called in proximity to our camp, and on New Year's Eve, in the stillness of midnight, a Koel (*Eudynamys cyanocephala*) "cooe-ed" the old year out and the new year in. A person who has been living in the district for over fifty years informed me that the Koel was known to him as the "Christmas-Bird," as it usually started to put in an appearance and call about Christmas.

Like many portions of the rich scrubs on the eastern coast, those of the Gosford district are still being rapidly cut down, burnt off, and completely demolished, and the farmers and orchardists are all busily tilling the fertile land and putting in various crops. In time, and before long, the scrub-frequenting birds must move to other parts, where they will probably become more concentrated, provided the pea-rifle fiends and ruthless sportsmen do not slaughter them.

Stray Feathers.

Eagles.—About two months ago I saw two large Eagles (*Uroaëtus audax*) near the Werribee Gorge, Victoria, and estimated the wing-spread of each at 10 feet. In the following week one of the birds was shot by the boundary rider, and was measured by Mr. Robert Honnan, pastoralist and owner of the station (late Staughton's). The wings measured 11 feet from tip to tip. Part of the plumage was nearly jet black. The remaining Eagle still haunts the locality.—W. GUBBINS ROCHE. Melbourne, 21/1/14.