



MACGILLIVRAYORNIS CLAUDI.

The Emu

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"Birds of a feather."

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A New Honey-eater: *Macgillivrayornis claudi*.

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Macgillivrayornis claudi.

A small Passerine bird of the Honey-eater family. So far it is known to inhabit only the tropical scrubs bordering the Claudie River, which empties itself into Lloyd's Bay, on the eastern side of the Cape York Peninsula. This bird was first described by Mr. G. M. Mathews in the *South Australian Ornithologist*, April, 1914, from a specimen obtained by Mr. W. M'Lennan and myself on the 10th November, 1913.

The generic characters are:—Bill equal to the head in length. First primary half the length of the second, which is two-thirds the length of the third; fourth, fifth, and sixth primaries are equal and longest.

Specific characters:—General colour above, including the wing coverts, greenish; primaries brown, edged with green; tail blackish-brown; throat grey; remainder of the under surface yellow; under wing coverts lighter yellow; narrow ring of feathers round the eye white.

Measurements, taken in the flesh, of type specimen:—Length, 116 mm.; wing, 55 mm.; culmen, 14 mm.; tarsus, 18 mm.; middle toe and claw, 12 mm.

The sexes are alike in colouring.

Only found in the dense scrub; usually seen threading its way among the leaves and twigs high up under the canopy of tropical vegetation, where its small size and protective colouring render it a very inconspicuous object. The honour of discovering this bird belongs to Mr. M'Lennan, whose ear, keenly attuned to every bird-note in the scrub, detected an unfamiliar one from among the medley of bird-calls and other noises on the day after my arrival at his camp on the Claudie. We had been down the river in the dingey to bring up a load of our baggage, left on the previous day, and landed at a patch of scrub, in order to replenish our larder with a few Torres Strait Pigeons. After threading our way through the scrub, finding a nest and eggs of the Rifle-Bird, Mr. M'Lennan heard and detected this species, and soon had two specimens in his hands.

The birds are not plentiful, though we afterwards obtained several specimens.

Dissection proved that these birds feed mostly upon small insects, and the state of the sexual organs seemed to indicate that the nesting season is in the summer months, after the beginning of the wet season. Nothing, however, is yet known of the nidification of the species.

Notes on the Yellow-bellied Shrike-Tit, *Falcunculus frontatus*.

BY A. H. CHISHOLM, R.A.O.U., MARYBOROUGH, VIC.

MANY years ago the Yellow-bellied Shrike-Tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*) was probably as plentiful about the Maryborough (Vic.) district as Mr. A. J. Campbell reports it to have been adjacent to Melbourne. Its fearlessness, however, made the showy bird an easy target for thoughtless boys, and, accordingly, its numbers soon markedly decreased. When the persecution lessened the bird became noticeable again, and was casually known to us boys of a later generation as the "Yellow-hammer"—this by reason of its bark-hammering proclivities. But we knew nothing of its nest till, a little over ten years ago, Mr. Donald Macdonald wrote this passage in a Melbourne magazine:—

"The gem nest to which I refer is beautiful alike in structure and colour. I saw it for the first time last week, built in the frail, topmost bough of a gum-tree. It was the nest of the Crested Shrike, a bird conspicuous by its yellow breast and thick, strong bill. It builds generally in a gum sapling too frail to bear the weight of even the smallest boy, and that yellow nest, placed just out of reach, has tantalized many a collector, for it is the find of a lifetime. . . . At first glance you would assume that the outside of the nest was made entirely from pickings of a new hempen rope. The material is apparently fibre, for, even among the dried grass-blades of many colours round about, you can find nothing exactly like it. This is bound closely together outside, the general line of the material being up and down. Inside, much the same material is used, but it runs in threads round and round the structure, the whole making a warm and beautifully symmetrical nest."

"The find of a lifetime!" Was not that enough to further warm the enthusiasm of a bird-nesting boy? I looked at the Shrike-Tit with a new interest after that. Not till several years later, however, did I see the nest *in situ*. I observed a pair of the birds with a trio of fledgelings about a certain belt of timber in the spring of 1912, and in the following year gave that locality close attention. The Shrike-Tits are constant to a favourable locality, and, sure enough, the pair in question ceased their happy-go-lucky wanderings in August and came again about a fossicker's