

## On the Nest and Eggs of the Kent Island Scrub-Wren

(*Sericornis frontalis gularis*, Legge)

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The Kent Island form of the mainland White-browed Scrub Wren (*Sericornis frontalis*, Vig and Hors.) has always been an interesting species to the ornithologist. Owing to the limited area of its range, and the fact that the Kent Group is so seldom visited by natural history workers, the species has not had a very great deal of attention paid to it. Some information was gathered when the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria visited the Kent Group in 1890, and in the *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. xiii., p. 84, Colonel Legge proposed the specific name of *S. gularis* for this form.

Mr. A. J. Campbell ("Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," p. 245) refers to the differences which are to be found in the insular form, but does not describe the nest and eggs separately.

Recently I wrote to Mr. Campbell on the subject, and in the course of an instructive reply concerning the species he stated that he believed the nest and eggs were undescribed to date.

Recently Mr. Hollingsworth, of Glenorchy, asked me to describe the nest and several clutches of eggs of this species, which he had obtained some time ago. He also supplied me with the date, etc., concerning the time of taking the eggs.

The general appearance of such specimens as I have for comparison tends to show that the Kent Island eggs differ somewhat from the mainland *S. frontalis*—in fact, in some cases they tend towards the appearance of the eggs of the Brown Scrub Wren (*S. humilis*) of Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands, but it would need a longer series of specimens of each species than I have at my disposal before this could be accepted as a true general characteristic. Another point is that the Kent Island variety appears to lay but two eggs in each clutch, whereas with the mainland *S. frontalis* the usual clutch is three.

The exact position of the species or sub-species needs to be determined, but this requires further material than is available at present. The following brief description of the specimens submitted by Mr. Hollingsworth may prove of interest:

*Nest*: Of the *Sericornis* type, roundish, compact-looking, in spite of the fact that it is loosely constructed of grass woven together with very fine twigs and small roots. Lining composed of fine grass and a thin layer of feathers. External dimensions: Vertical diameter, 160 mm. ( $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches); entrance, 30 mm. ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches).

*Clutch*: Apparently two, stout oval in shape. The general colour being very pale buff with spots and blotches of umber,

and purplish brown; in most cases the markings are pale, but are more pronounced near the apex. In some cases the apex with the exception of the extreme point, is generally purplish to amber in general coloration.

Dimensions in millimetres of four clutches:—

Clutch A.	Clutch B.	Clutch C.	Clutch D.
(1) 23 x 17 mm.	(1) 23 x 17 mm.	(1) 22.5 x 17.5 mm.	(1) 24.5 & 17
(2) 24 x 17.5 mm.	(2) 23 x 18 mm.	(2) 22 x 18 mm.	(2) 24 x 17.5

The specimens were collected by Mr. T. McGuire, who supplied the following information, which Mr. Hollingsworth forwarded with the specimens:—

"I have the pleasure of informing you that I have been successful in finding the five clutches of eggs and the birds. The first nest was found on the 9th September with two young birds, and on the 14th with two young birds. And the second nest was found on the 15th, with two eggs in, and another one on the 20th and 25th September, and October 6th and 13th, all with two eggs, so I think they lay only two eggs. They were found by my eldest son, Jack.

"I am sending you two birds, one old and one young. The young one is this year's. They were found north-east of the jetty in some scrubby grass, and low bushy trees."