

## Bird Observations in Bass Strait.

By EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U., Adelaide.

IN October, 1926, Mr. A. J. Campbell and the writer visited the famous Mutton-Bird (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) rookery, at Cape Wollomai, on Phillip Island, Victoria. The object of the visit was to assist in having that rookery made a national reserve. Staying at Woolomai House, the residence of our host (Mr. J. B. Cleland), was a Mr. John Burgess, the skipper of a ketch that is engaged in the cray-fish industry among the Bass Strait Islands. Mr. Burgess has spent most of his life amongst these islands, and was able to furnish us with a detailed account of the bird rookeries throughout that area.

Fairy Prion (*Pachytila turtur*), ? sp.—On Albatross Is., 6 miles west of Hunter Is., estimated 2,000 nesting pairs; Hunter Group, on rock 200 yds. west of Three Hummock Is.; Penguin Is., about 40 nests; Passage Is. and Bird Is., small rookeries on each; Moncoeur Is., 8 miles S.E. of Wilson's Promontory; Sentinel Is., off the N.W. end of Flinders Is., small rookery, the only nesting-place in the Flinders Group; Furneaux Group, nesting on most of the small islands, notably Isabel Is.; only small rookeries in this group; Mourode Is. (?), 7 miles south of St. Helen's Point, a large rookery.

White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*).—Albatross Is.; Hunter Group, on a reef north of Stack Is.; Stackhouse Is., off Babel Is. (? Flinders Group); Furneaux Group: Sentinel Is., Middle Is. of the Pascoes, a small rookery. The only rookery on the mainland of Tasmania known to Mr. Burgess is Crappie Point, opposite Waterhouse Is., 20 miles from Gladstone.

Cape Barren Goose (*Cereopsis novæ-hollandiæ*).—Anser Group, off Wilson's Promontory: Wattle Is.; Hogan Group: Long Is.; Kent Group: North East Is.; Furneaux Group: all small islands of this group; Kangaroo Is., seen 60 to 70 nests in this island; Goose Is., seen 10 to 16 nests in this island; Armstrong Sound: Forsyth Is., Passage Is.

Australian Gannet (*Sula serrator*).—Cat Is., off Babel Is.

Australian Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*).—Penguin Is., in the Hunter Group.

White-capped Albatross (*Diomedea cauta*).—Albatross Is., 6 miles west of Hunter Is.

In addition to Prions, Storm-Petrels and Albatrosses Mr. Burgess has seen, on Albatross Island (which is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile long and 125 feet high), the following birds breeding: White-

breasted Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax fuscesens*), Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*), Pacific Gull (*Gabianus pacificus*), Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroæetus audax*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Australian Crow (*Corvus coronoides*) (*cecilæ*).

Mr. A. J. Campbell took particulars of all the Mutton-Bird rookeries, so these are not included in this paper but will be published later by Mr. Campbell.

### MIGRATION OF BIRDS ACROSS BASS STRAIT.

In addition to data relating to bird-rookeries on islands in Bass Strait, Mr. Burgess supplied me with some interesting notes on the migration of birds across the Strait.

Swamp-Harriers (*Circus approximans*), he has often seen flying both ways across the Strait.

Robins and Silvereyes are often observed when the ketch is returning to the Victorian coast with a load of crayfish from the islands; they are always seen at dawn, and chiefly 10 or 12 miles off the Victorian coast, coming from the direction of Tasmania. These occurrences are very common and observations extend from Wilson's Promontory to Cape Otway. Silvereyes he has at times seen in hundreds near the Victorian coast and at other times out of sight of land, but always heading for Victoria. The Silvereye will be the Grey-backed Silvereye (*Zosterops halmaturina*). The Robins that were identified were the Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroica phænicea*). These birds usually flying singly. They only settle on board the ketch when in a fog. On the north coast of Tasmania Mr. Burgess has never seen either Robins or Silvereyes taking off from the land or coming in from the sea. He expressed the opinion that the birds coming from Victoria reach the Tasmanian coast before dawn and those making the northward trip take off after dark.

He asserts that Quail always fly across the Strait in the dark. Once he saw one flying in the direction of Victoria, 30 miles from land, half-way between Curtis Is. and Pyramid Rock. He has also seen Black Swan (*Chenopsis atrata*), start off from the north of Flinders Is., and make a direct course for the Gippsland Lakes. His father used to have the lease of Three Hummocks Is., which is distant from King Is. 40 miles, and he well remembers seeing there three examples of the Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*).

---