

for a considerable time. Several other bird photographers visited the nest later, but with disappointing results. Perhaps the bird was aware of the frailness of her tree, and the wind blowing at first had the desirable effect of bringing her more readily to her home. — H. C. BARRY. R.A.O.U., Wahroonga, New South Wales.

Stray Feathers

Early Nesting of Birds in North-eastern Victoria.—The present early season has had a marked effect on the nesting of many birds. During the early part of May, I was surprised to observe in the Chiltern district, Eastern Rosella Parrots (*Platycercus eximius*) preparing nesting hollows in fence posts—a favourite site, since the available natural hollows have been polluted by Starlings. On 8th May, a pair of Eastern Shrike-Tits (*Falcunculus frontatus*) had a nest almost ready for eggs. Several nests of birds of prey, probably Whistling Eagles (*Haliastur sphenurus*), which were examined, contained fresh green eucalyptus leaves, indicating that the nests were soon to be occupied. Bird life was prolific in the district, a list of seventy species being made during a fortnight's observation. Twenty-four species were noted in an afternoon outing with the scholars of Cornishtown State School.—N. A. R. ARNOLD, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

Migrants to Northern Tasmania in 1928.—Although the Welcome Swallows, Wood-Swallows and most of the Pipits left at the end of March (there was a spell of rain and cold during the first week of April), yet one pair of Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) remained about the streets right through the winter, and seemed to pick up a good living. The same species was also noted in Launceston. In Hobart one individual was seen on a building at the corner of two principal streets on 3rd July, so that a few pairs evidently winter with us throughout the island, and not only in the comparatively mild north-west. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) was heard in a Launceston garden at the end of June, and on 7th July, a warm, spring-like morning, one was sitting on my garden fence, uttering the double-whistle, which is the representative of the "Cuckoo" note of the British bird. This individual had a bright rufous throat and breast, much more so than the usual run of these birds. On 6th May, several Pipits (*Anthus australis*) appeared, feeding in a cultivated paddock, and on 25th June three more were seen in a rough grass paddock. On 28th July, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo was calling with the soft trill, as distinguished from the double-whistle previously heard. No Spine-tailed Swifts (*Hirundapus caudacuta*) were seen last summer (Dec., 1927, to April, 1928) by myself, although a friend told me that on 14th March he saw a small party pass over Devonport at 6.30 p.m., flying fast, and heading north-west, as if

migrating. A pair of Summer-Birds (*Coraciina nova-hollandiae*) wintered with us, frequenting a large garden, which is sheltered by Sequoias and other conifers. Last month (July) I noticed one of these beautifully-plumaged birds fly to the foot of a paling fence, pick something (probably a caterpillar) from the grass there, and fly to a fence across the road to dispose of the captive.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., W. Devonport, Tas., 10th August, 1928.

A Nestling Kookaburra.—After a severe storm we picked up a nestling on a remote country road beyond Orbest. Kookaburras (*Dacelo gigas*) were flying overhead, and from the noise they made we knew it was a young Kookaburra. The adult birds followed us for about two miles. Arriving at our destination, we fed the young bird with worms. At the end of four days he had learnt to swallow. In the daytime we kept the nestling in a wire-netted enclosure. Adult Kookaburras found him there, made a great deal of noise, then commenced to bring him food, consisting of frogs and beetles. The young one kept up a constant whine. It was interesting to see the colour come in to the wings and the brown deepen on the bird's head. The Willie Wagtails (*Rhipidura leucophaea*) used to fly into the enclosure and attack him, so when he seemed fully grown we set him free, and eventually he went away with a mate.—Miss E. C. CAMERON, Melbourne.

The Hovering Trait of the Tawny Frogmouth.—One evening towards the end of May I was on the cottage verandah just as dusk was falling, when a Tawny Frogmouth (*Podiceps strigoides*) flew to a paling fence near by. After sitting there a little, he flew diagonally upwards to near the top of a Cape Wattle, which grew near the fence, and, hovering in front of a twig, picked off an insect and returned with it to his former perch. In a couple of minutes or so, he repeated the performance, hovering in front of a twig near the first one, and returning to the fence to dispose of his capture, after which he flew away towards a clump of Silver Wattle. The action reminded me of a Spinebill Honeyeater (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) hovering in front of fuchsia flowers, but was not so prolonged.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., W. Devonport, Tas., 9/6/28.

The Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptrorhynchus funereus*) seems to have developed a new habit, or discovered a new source of food supply. Last summer the Monterey Pines (*Pinus insignis*) throughout the forest were visited, and the green seed cones were crushed and stripped, either for the seed or some wood-borer's larvæ that had attacked the cones.*—G. GRAHAM, R.A.O.U., Scott's Creek.

*Probably the latter. On the Bunya Mountains, at the R.A.O.U. camp-out in 1919, Crimson Rosellas (*Platycercus elegans*) were discovered by Captain S. A. White to be removing insect larvæ from the developing cones of the Bunya pines.—[Eds.].

The Australian Ground-Thrush.--- A very pleasing and hitherto-unrecorded visitor to our home shrubberies was identified this morning in the form of a fine specimen of the Australian Ground-Thrush (*Oreocincla lunulata*), which was observed sitting with its characteristic immobility on a bough well inside the shelter of a large laurel bush, not 15 yards from the front door. Some weeks ago, Mrs. Legge, who, like myself, is a great lover of all the feathered tribe, mentioned to me that she had noticed a large strange bird in the grounds around the house, but, as it had taken flight immediately it became aware of her approach, she was unable to give me anything like an adequate description, and beyond a mere speculation, I gave no further thought to the matter. Yesterday afternoon, however, Mrs. Legge had a full and close view of this beautiful bird, which was standing upon a fallen pine-cone. Whilst she kept still, so did the bird, and during the close scrutiny it received, from a distance of about 20ft., Mrs. Legge was able to memorise its markings, bill, and especially the round full eye, so that she gave me a good description, which left no doubt at all in my mind as to the identity of the bird. Accordingly, this morning after breakfast, we sallied out to search. I was shown the spot where the bird was seen, and proceeding to what I took to be a likely shelter, a very wide-spread laurel, I first noticed the familiar splashy droppings on an old dead bough on the ground, and in the next half-minute, I espied my friend sitting up in the bush as described above, keeping perfectly still, and in no way shy of Mrs. Legge's approach, when I called her to look at him. How this bird ever made its way into the haven of our homestead I cannot understand, for Cullenswood is surrounded by open pasture lands and sparsely timbered rises and flats of tussock, the nearest thickets likely to harbour a bird of this species being quite $1\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 miles distant to the south, and the same distance to Mt. Nicholas gullies on the north. The only theory I can offer is that during a terrible north-east monsoonal storm, with over 6in. of rain, and a full gale of wind behind it, which we experienced in this valley during July, the bird may have been driven out of its secluded haunts in the foot-hills of Mt. Nicholas. As the summer brings its dry time, I expect this lovely visitor will depart, if it does not fall a prey to a domestic cat beforehand. — ROBT. W. LEGGE, R.A.O.C., Cullenswood House, Cullenswood (Break O'Day R.), Tas.

Bird Notes from Southern Tasmania.—Numbers of the Spine-tailed Swift (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) passed over, travelling to the north-west (24.2 '28). On 14.4.28, a nest of the Australian Ground-Thrush (*Oreocincla lunulata*), built in the top of a tree fern, was found, containing two young birds, which were partly feathered. It is a puzzle to decide whether this is an early or a late record in nesting. A Superb Blue Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) was sitting on a nest containing three eggs. This nest was found when a patch of scrub was being cleared.

It was built in a clump of starfern, growing by a tussock. Though the spot was left untouched, the bird was afraid to return (16/2/28). The pair of these Wrens which frequented my garden reared three clutches last season. They brought their young ones to the doorstep in search of bread crumbs. They readily ate these when they are crumbled very small. A pair of Crescent Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera*) built their nest and reared their young in a low Pelargonium bush growing in the garden. The nest was only a foot away from a path that was constantly used (September-October, 1927). Another interesting nesting site, but this time of the Yellow-winged Honeyeater (*Meliornis nova-hollandiae*), was between the spreading leaves of a large cabbage. The nest was not found until the young were almost ready to leave. When I asked about making a photograph of this extraordinary situation for a nest, I found that the cabbage had been cut for the table, and the part containing the nest had been cast away. For the first time in three years the Red-capped Dotterel (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) nested on this beach, hatching its young safely (February, 1928). I have discovered here a haunt of the Lewin Water-rail (*Rallus pectoralis*). Owing to the illness of my sister during the last six months of 1927, in consequence of which I took charge of her school, I was unable to study the locality and ascertain if any differences occurred between this southern range of the bird compared with its family life, as I knew it in its north-eastern habitat. On 20/3/28, I found a large Albatross dead on the beach. We had had a rough sea for several days. The bird was very large, and quite white, with the exception of some of the wing feathers. Its colouring appeared to agree with the description of the Snowy Albatross (*Diomedea chionoptera*), as described in Lord and Scott's book, *The Vertebrate Animals of Tasmania*. I informed Mr. Clive Lord by telephone of my belief in the identity of the bird. He expressed a wish to see it, so I sent the Albatross to the Museum. Mr. Lord recorded this in the last issue of *The Emu*. A bird resembling the Blue Petrel (*Halobæna carulea*) was also brought ashore during the storm, but it was in a very damaged condition. — Miss J. A. FLETCHER, R.A.O.U., "Lyeltya," Eaglehawk Neck, Tas.

Obituaries

WILLIAM LEON DAWSON.

A letter has been received from Mrs. Frances E. Dawson announcing the death of her late husband, William Leon Dawson, in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., on 30th April, 1928. He was 55 years of age, and was in good health a week before his death, which was due to pneumonia. He had been a prominent member of the American Ornithologists' Union, and a member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and his fame as an ornithologist and oologist was world-wide. In 1902-3 a work