

The call also is somewhat similar to that of the Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, but rather louder and shriller.

Another "*Graucalus*" or *Coracina* was described by Mr. N. B. Kinnear on March 12, 1924, at the annual dinner of the British Ornithologists' Union as follows:—

"*Graucalus papuensis wilkinsi*, sub-sp. nov.—Similar to *Graucalus hypoleucus*, Gould (type loc., Port Essington), from Cape York and Cairns District, but larger and darker grey above. On the underside the lower throat, breast, and upper abdomen are pearl-grey, as opposed to white, washed with grey, and the flight feathers are black instead of blackish-brown. Type in the British Museum, No. 63 ♂, May, 1923. Mount Driven, South Central Queensland, collected by Capt. (now Sir) G. H. Wilkins."

No form of this Cuckoo-Shrike appears to have been recorded south of the Cairns district, and its occurrence in the interior of South Queensland is therefore of considerable interest. For a copy of the description of this bird I am indebted to the Hon. Secretary of the Union, Mr. D. J. Dickison. In addition to the two specimens collected by Wilkins, there is a third, collected by Mr. T. V. Sherrin at Eidsvold in 1922.

The description of the bird obtained by Wilkins is very meagre, and certainly does not apply to the bird obtained by Mr. Ashby. The bird taken by Wilkins is, in my opinion, the common Central Queensland form. Many years ago skins of the bird from the Dawson River, Central Queensland, were described by the late Dr. E. P. Ramsay as *C. hypoleucus*, and later as *C. mentalis*. They are now known in the Official Checklist as *C. robusta*. The Central Queensland bird is not *C. hypoleucus*, of Cape York, and I very much doubt if it is *C. robusta*, of southern parts. Only comparison of authentic skins from the different localities would prove this.

Unusual Nesting Sites.—It is not uncommon during the breeding season to find birds which have, through no apparent reason, selected unusual positions on which to build their nests, although at times the paucity of suitable trees will often compel them to build in strange places. In many cases the spread of settlement has had an important effect upon the nest-building habits of some birds, especially those which have readily adapted themselves to the changed conditions. For instance, the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) has become so accustomed to building its nest under bridges and verandahs that it has now almost entirely disdained the sites where it had probably nested for centuries before the advent of the white man. In some country districts, where

suitable nesting trees are not available, Magpies (*Gymorhina*) will often build their nests among the wires on tops of telegraph posts. A few years ago the Victorian Railways officials sought permission to destroy some of these birds which were causing short circuits on the outer suburban railway lines by building their nests on the steel works supporting the overhead equipment. Several years ago, in Gippsland, a pair of Magpies selected the top of a tall tree fern as a nesting site, but when the new fronds began to spring up the nest was pushed out of position, and it was eventually blown down before the birds had time to hatch the eggs. A similar fate also awaited a pair of Grey Shrike-Thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*), which had built their nest on a small tree fern in a gully.

Bronzewing Pigeons (*Phaps chalcoptera*) have also been known to place their frail nests of twigs in some quaint places, but the top of the bulky nest of a ring-tailed 'Possum is often used for this purpose. Such positions afford the nest a certain amount of concealment, and unless the sitting bird is flushed it is quite unlikely that the nest will be found. In the Kilsyth district, during December, 1923, one of these birds was observed high up in a large messmate tree sitting on an old nest of the White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*). The Pigeon, which had built its own nest in this large mud nest, was not at all timid, and would only fly off when a stick was thrown into the tree. Other birds, besides Pigeons, use these old mud nests for their own purposes. During last September, 1929, in a lightly timbered paddock near the Mooroolbark railway station, a Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) selected one of these old nests as a site for its own nest, and when found towards the end of that month it was sitting on two fresh white eggs from which two young ones were eventually hatched. On climbing the tree I was surprised to find the sitting bird made no move to fly off, and when I approached within a few yards of the nest it began to show considerable resentment at my intrusion. With its neck stretched out, mouth wide open and uttering cries of anger, it viewed me in this position for several minutes before reclining back into its natural appearance again. It was only through lifting it off the nest that I was able to take a photograph of the eggs. A little over a week after the young were hatched they were both found dead on the ground beneath the nest. The Tawny Frogmouth is a very awkward bird in its movements, and often, when leaving the nest, it will accidentally knock an egg or one of the young ones off. Probably these two young ones met with a fate of this kind. As is well known, these birds generally select a horizontal branch or a fork on which to place their frail nest of dry sticks, and the fact of it using



Nest of Tawny Frogmouth, built on old nest of White-winged Chough.
Photo by D. J. Dickison, R.A.O.U

an old nest of the White-winged Chough is very unusual. There is a record of a pair which built in a Magpie's old unused nest.

In the same paddock, and less than two hundred yards away from where the Frogmouth was nesting, a pair of Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Coracina novæ-hollandiæ*) was using an old weather-beaten nest of the Magpie Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) as a site for their own nest. They had covered the top of the mud nest with a thin layer of their own nesting material, and when found they had hatched out three young ones. Ten days later, when I went to photograph the nest, I found the young ones had developed very rapidly and were within a few days of leaving the nest. When arranging the camera in a suitable position two of the young ones became alarmed and flew out into the surrounding trees, but the youngest and weakest one remained and I was able to secure a photograph of it and the nest.—D. J. DICKINSON, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

Stray Feathers

A Swift Weather-bound.—During a visit to the Bogong High Plains in the Christmas holidays, 1929, a Spine-tailed Swift (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) was observed in the following circumstances not far from the summit of Mount Fainter, which has an altitude of 6160 feet above sea level.

after two days of very heavy fog and rain, and as we were

The morning of December 29 proved to be quite fine following the cattle pad around the end of the Fainter Range at about 11 a.m. we saw the Swift sitting close to the track in the very stunted scrub (not more than 9 inches to 1 foot in height) which covers the ground at those altitudes.

The track at this part swings round to the right in the lee of the range, and it is just possible the bird may have been sheltering from the coming storm notwithstanding the fact that it was not actually covered by the scrub. The bird did not appear to be injured in any way nor was it a sick bird. It was perfectly visible and the whole seven of us were able to approach to within two or three feet; the bird, though alarmed, made no effort whatever to escape. We have been told that no record of a nest of this bird in Australia has yet been obtained, nor are there any definite records of the species settling to rest at night. Near the same spot we found the nest of a Pipit (*Anthus australis*) containing three young, in the snow grass.—(MISS) A. PATERSON, Melbourne. Communicated by A. G. CAMPBELL, R.A.O.U., Kilsyth.