

It is difficult for one to chronicle the birds seen by all members of a party, and that difficulty must be considered the reason for any omissions in this account. The botanical notes in the foregoing were all supplied by Miss Smith, to whom I am indebted therefor.

Notes on the Western Bower-bird

By ANGUS ROBINSON, Coolup, Western Australia

These notes were made over the last ten years on the Hamersly and Barlee Ranges and the country in between. I first made the acquaintance of the Western Bower-bird (*Chlamydera guttata*) at Woolamooka, a well on the main road between Kooline and Peake stations. There were two or three wild peach trees alongside the road, which formed a favourite camping place at mid-day for passers-by. The trees have a berry a little larger than currants and are very much favoured by the Bower-bird. It was whilst lying under these trees that I was first deceived by the mimicry of these birds. One gave, whilst perched in the tree above me, a very good imitation of the call of the Whistling Eagle. From my experience later, I believe that the imitation of the Eagle's notes is very common. After this I was ever on the look-out for the Bower-birds, and nearly always found them around permanent water in the ranges, especially if there were any wild figs about—another fruit to which they are very partial. I rarely saw the birds in numbers—generally one to six—although I have seen up to sixteen drinking at a spring at the one time.

The first two bowers that I saw were on the road from Peake Station to Rocklea—one at Cheerlah Spring and the other at Mundarra Spring. The one at Mundarra, on the Hardey River, was out in the open, and not two feet off the road. At Cheerlah it was situated in an *Acacia* thicket where I often watched a bird play. Although I have noted as many as six birds looking on I have only ever seen one at a time play in a bower. The play seems to consist of shifting the stones about—in to the arch and out again. The bird keeps up a chattering noise all the time whilst playing.

I found the Bower-birds one of the most inquisitive of birds. I noticed that if I stopped quite still a bird would sometimes come within two or three feet of me, peering this way, then that, in a fashion resembling the movements of a snake.

The bower is generally placed under a shady bush, particularly a bush which comes down close to the ground and has dead branches touching the ground. It is never far from water—mostly springs or natural waters in the ranges—but I have seen birds build bowers close to windmills.

Bowers might face in any direction. The arch is made of sticks and lined inside with long thin leaves like pine needles. The platforms of sticks—at both ends of the bower—vary in size and height one from the other. A platform is sometimes made as high as three inches above the ground. It is not always directly in line with the arch, but may come up to either end at an angle. The bottom of the arch is generally higher than the platform, although at times it is barely noticeable. The stones used for ornamentation are always of a greyish colour inclining to white and there are green berries, leaves, etc., in season.

The birds build a new bower every two or three years. It is always close to the last structure—sometimes only two or three feet away—but they do not shift the stones used for playing purposes. At some of the springs one sees a small heap of bleached stones in the vicinity of a bower in use which denotes the whereabouts of a past bower. There is a good deal of difference in the way the bowers are kept, some being very neat and others having a very unfinished appearance. The playing articles, besides being placed in the depression in the centre of the arch, may also be placed in a cleft in one of the walls, four or five inches up from the floor of the arch.

At midday on April 7, 1934, I camped for lunch under the shade of a jam tree some ten yards from a newly-completed bower. I had only been sitting there a few minutes when I heard what I took to be the "meow" of a cat and thought it strange to hear a cat in that locality. I heard the cry repeated a few times about twenty yards away; then a Bower-bird flew up close to the bower, mimicking the call of a Butcher-bird. After scrutinizing me he hopped into the bower and started preening, every now and then sticking his head over the top of the walls to have a look at me. My horse, moving, frightened him away a few times, but he soon came back. When disturbed he uttered the cry of the Brown Hawk or Butcher-bird in a manner that suggested a threatening attitude. Whilst in the bower he hopped all the time, even when turning. Once or twice he gave the cry of the Blue-winged Kookaburra. All these imitations were perfect, but, with the exception of the call of the Butcher-bird, they appeared to be in a weaker voice. There were two Butcher-birds calling occasionally and I could hardly tell the imitation from the real cry. After half an hour of this performance I decided to try and get a photograph, so took up a position seven feet from the bower. I did not have to wait long before the bird was back again, and although he was more wary, I managed to "snap" him twice while he was in the bower.

On April 21 I visited this bower again. One bird came to the bower and was soon joined by two others—young birds I should think. They all had pink napes. They did not stop about the bower for long.

Western Bower-birds are noted for their love of the garden figs for which they make trips to the homestead gardens. They will mimic almost anything, but the "voices" of cats, dogs and various bird calls are the usual notes imitated.

I have not found a nest at any time, but I saw two fully-fledged young sitting side by side on March 12, 1934.

The measurements of four bowers investigated by me are as follows:—

	1.	2.	3.	4.
	in.	in.	in.	in.
Length of bower	15	14	14	14
Width of bower	6	7	7	5
Height of arch inside . .	6-9	9-12	9	8-10
Depth of depression in arch	1½	none	½	1
Height of arch off platform	2	1	½	1-2
Distance of platform from bower	18	12-18	24	18

Notes on the Chestnut-tailed Thornbill

By E. H. SEDGWICK, Nangeenan, Western Australia

The Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*) is one of the commonest birds to be found in my "hunting ground"—a three hundred acre eucalypt forest. Probably only Brown Weebills and Red-tipped Pardalotes are numerically stronger. Although the Thornbills keep mainly to the forest, a party will often invade the clearing which surrounds my house. They do not despise crumbs of bread, but are, apparently, mainly insectivorous. It is entertaining to watch them search a rail fence or dead tree for insects. Every crevice undergoes a careful scrutiny, and it is no uncommon thing to see these tiny birds clinging to upright posts or under horizontal rails or branches and peering into likely cracks. Usually the birds are to be seen among the forest undergrowth, or exploring fallen trees, but they will sometimes ascend to the treetops. I am almost convinced that the association which exists between Chestnut-tailed Thornbills and Yellow-tailed Thornbills is not entirely accidental, as I frequently see both feeding together (see A. H. Chisholm's note, *The Emu*, Vol. xxxv, p. 179). The bird's presence is frequently made known by its loud melodious warble. They also call "chip" or "check" while feeding, and make a slight vocal sound while flying.

Many times, quite unconcealed, I have watched these birds feeding unconcernedly at a distance of only three or four feet.