

increasing in the district. Here, as elsewhere, it shows a preference for gardens.

Acanthorhynchus superciliosus. Western Spinebill.—On October 14, 1933, I found a pair of Spinebills feeding a newly-hatched young in a nest in a *Banksia* about fifteen feet from the ground. On September 8 in the following year I also found a nest with only one egg. This record coincides with the late A. J. Campbell's remark that birds of this species lay only one egg when nesting early in the season. They certainly lay two eggs when nesting later.

Anthochaera chrysoptera. Little Wattle-bird.—This bird may be added to the list of species occurring in the district. It is by no means a common species here, although it is abundant in the Darling Range in the vicinity of Pinjarra. It is difficult to decide why it is not equally as common in this district. A small party was feeding on February 18, 1938, on red gum blossom close to my house.

Destruction of Birds by Hail.—During the last two weeks of December, 1937, several severe hailstorms have passed over the Maitland district, leaving their usual trail of damage to property, but the last one which passed over Rutherford, a suburb of Maitland, was of extraordinary severity. It was confined to a small area, and was responsible for the destruction of a large number of native birds.

The first report from the papers, that hundreds of Ducks were killed, was, I think, rather exaggerated. Nevertheless, on making enquiries from reliable informants, I was amazed at the destruction that had occurred. Between seventy and eighty Black Ducks were collected from an adjacent swamp, and quite a number were seen dead out in the water. Several Spur-winged Plover, seven Magpie-Larks, five Crows and two Magpies were amongst the casualties, also several Swamphens (*Porphyrio melanotus*) and what appeared to be a whole flock of Starlings. The Starlings were found first, and led to the discovery of the other birds near the swamp and on the water.

As this seems rather hard to believe, it will give a better idea of the intensity of the storm if one realizes that the hail was, in places, six feet deep. I have procured a photograph of the area in question which gives a better idea of the storm than a written description. Whilst I was unable to make a personal inspection of the area myself, the information I obtained was from friends who could be relied on to give an accurate account of the incident, and I have no reason to disbelieve their statements.

I have no doubt that similar happenings have been recorded from time to time, but I would be interested to know to what extent bird-life had been damaged by this cause. It is a loss which this district can ill afford, as it is not thickly populated with bird life, owing to the large area under cultivation, and the consequent absence of trees. When one considers that this was only in one small area, it gives rise for considerable speculation as to the aggregate damage to bird life over a wider area of country.—A. F. D'OMBRAIN, West Maitland, N.S.W., 1/1/38.