

Arenaria interpres—Turnstone

A small flock of six Turnstones was seen during January, 1941, near Point John. This species seems rather infrequent.

Squatarola squatarola—Grey Plover

After twice doubtfully recording the Grey Plover from Penguin Island, Mr. Sedgwick finally identified the species at that locality on January 4, 1941.

Meliphaga virescens—Singing Honeyeater

This bird is fairly common on Penguin Island. One pair, evidently fed regularly by visitors, was unusually friendly. We met them on practically all visits to the island at the same spot.

On Seal Island two pairs were seen, and again they showed similar confiding habits.

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This completes the notes so far made on these islands. The records have been given as completely as possible, as owing to the islands' accessibility they should provide a fruitful field of study for future workers. These notes should then be of some assistance in a comparison of conditions.

Plover Egg Clutches

By M. S. R. SHARLAND, Richmond, N.S.W.

In response to an enquiry I made last year about egg clutches of the Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ*) in Tasmania, I received a letter from Mr. A. W. Swindells, New Town, Tasmania, telling me he had found "a remarkable clutch of seven eggs," and, moreover, that he had seen two birds sitting together on the nest. His interesting notes were received too late for incorporation in my article on the subject published in *The Emu*, vol. XLII, p. 164, and I think they should be recorded now.

Mr. Swindells says he was riding across some flats at Symmons Plains, Tasmania, when he came across this unusual nest, containing seven eggs. "A few days later, passing again, I trained my glasses on the nest from a covered point. I was astonished to find that two birds were sitting on the nest, whilst some few yards away another bird (the male) was standing guard. No other birds of the species were in the vicinity, so I formed the conclusion that in this instance the male had two mates, and what I took to be a record clutch of seven eggs was really the result of two birds having laid in the one nest."

Discussing Plover clutches, Mr. Swindells says it would be interesting to know if the clutch of six eggs which I

had reported as having been found near Hobart belonged to one bird, or if it was a combination clutch. Here I might state that I was assured by an observer, living close by, that the eggs belonged to one pair only, and when I went to examine the nest I had confirmation of this by seeing but a single pair, which manifested concern when I was photographing the eggs.

"In the Symmons Plains district," Mr. Swindells adds, "a nest containing six eggs of the Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*) was observed, but whether this was a record single clutch or not I am unable to say. Certainly there was no difference detected in colouring, size or markings. The eggs appeared to be slightly smaller than usual, which point of interest I have noticed frequently among other birds where abnormal clutches are laid. Again, I recall that at North Bruny a keen and careful observer reported the presence of a nest of the Spur-winged Plover containing six eggs, and later a further clutch of five eggs was reported. I have on several occasions found nests of the Spur-winged Plover containing five eggs, so that it would seem that large clutches are not an unusual occurrence with this bird. Possibly the size of the clutch is determined by seasonal variations. A good season with a plentiful supply of food would perhaps influence the bird to raise a larger brood."

Mr. Swindells' notes are of considerable interest to me, for I have, for some years now, been gathering records of this kind, as well as 'observations' on the habits of this species and of *Zonifer tricolor* also, with the object of working out their life-histories. This should not be difficult in the case of the Spur-winged Plover because, in Tasmania at least, it is exceedingly common and tame, and can be watched readily the year through, though it will not be so easy with *Z. tricolor* and must be done soon if it is to be adequate, because that species is diminishing steadily and cannot now be found in districts where it was common a few years ago. Mr. Swindells, who has observed birds in Tasmania for many years, confirms this. "As a boy I knew of districts where the Banded Plover was fully as plentiful as the Spur-winged Plover is now, but, alas, these now scarcely find a home for even one pair." The simultaneous rise and decline of two closely related species as these, within a comparatively brief period, should prompt thought and study, for we cannot yet explain fully, or give an explanation that is assured of general acceptance, why *Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ* has increased so substantially as to become one of Tasmania's commonest birds, whilst *Zonifer tricolor* has done the opposite. In other States which I have visited both species appear numerically to be equal.