

Anthus australis—Pipit

During the first week of December 1947 Mr. A. J. Gwynne and I discovered what seemed to be a most unusual concentration of nesting Pipits. Four nests, all of which were occupied, were in an area with a radius of five yards, a fifth was about 25 yards away, and the sixth four yards from the fifth. A seventh nest (actually the first found) was some forty yards from the sixth. All seven nests were in use at the same time. There seemed no apparent reason for this outbreak of sociability, for exactly similar aspect and cover could have been found anywhere in the 200-acre paddock in which six of the nests were built—the seventh was across the road.

Later, several miles away, I was shown two occupied nests exactly four feet apart. Observation showed that the nests had different owners. Again there was no apparent reason for building the nests so close together.

The Pipit seems to be an early nester in most districts of New South Wales, August and September being the normal months. However, it was not until November 16 that I found a nest last year (1947). Between that date and January 6, 1948, I saw a total of fifteen nests. Either it bred late this season or else it normally breeds late in this district.

Satin Bower-bird in Northern Territory.—In the *Monthly Notes* of the Bird Observers Club of Victoria in February 1946, I had a note published entitled 'Birds of Darwin 1942-43.' I there recorded the Satin Bower-bird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) as common in that area. During the latter months of 1947 I heard that some Sydney ornithologists were very sceptical of my record. They suggested that I had possibly become confused with the two phases of the Black Butcher-bird (*Cracticus quoyi*), a bird I first observed at Cooktown (north Queensland) as far back as 1921.

Recently there was published a note in the *Melbourne Sun* (of April 1, 1948) stating that two scientific members of the Australian-American Arnhem Land Expedition were spending their time in the west Darwin area trying to trap the 'rare' Satin Bower-bird. Mr. Herbert Deignan, ornithologist with the expedition, knew of the controversy before leaving the south.

The records extend the distribution of this species about 800 miles west at this point, but I feel that lack of competent observers probably accounts for the big 'break.' This bird has a broken distribution—although a much smaller one—in Victoria, as it stops at the Dandenong Ranges and occurs again in the Otway Ranges about 100 miles away.—HAROLD E. TARR, Middle Park, Vic., 12/4/48.