

25 mm.; tarsus 36; middle toe and claw 43; wing 180 mm. The colours of the soft parts, which have little significance as the bird had been dead a few days, were: bill, legs, toes and claws, black; webs blackish with lighter centres.

The nearest breeding place of the Little Shearwater to eastern Australia is Lord Howe Island. The species also breeds on Norfolk Island and in New Zealand waters. A number of breeding colonies are situate in south-western Australia from the Recherche Archipelago to the Houtman Abrolhos.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Sydney, N.S.W., 16/12/49.

**Extension of Range of the Helmeted Honeyeater.** This beautiful honeyeater (*Meliphaga cassidix*) has always been looked upon as an exclusively Victorian bird, and was only known from a comparatively few localities in the eastern portion of the State.

Recently when I was on an entomological collecting trip to Merimbula on the south coast of New South Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Boehm kindly drove me out to a property of theirs some  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of the township, which they thought would be a good collecting spot for me. When we arrived, we pulled up beside a little creek, and on alighting and looking around I remarked to them that it was a typical Helmeted Honeyeater locality, and if it had been in Gippsland I should expect to have a chance of finding the birds there.

I had not been collecting more than a few minutes when I was astonished to hear one of the birds call. Shortly afterwards I saw a young bird in a wattle tree, and shortly had an adult alight within a few feet of me, other birds being seen later. I estimated that there were about three pairs in the vicinity. The date when this observation was made was February 24 of this year (1950). Seeing them brought back happy memories of the many years I spent studying the species on the Cardinia Creek at Beaconsfield, when I was actively interested in ornithology and gathering details of their home life.

This new locality is very interesting for it increases their known range of distribution very considerably, and shows that the species is not confined to the State of Victoria as previously thought.—F. ERASMUS WILSON, Malvern, Vic., 2/3/50.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

It is interesting to record that in August 1942, D. L. Serventy and J. A. Tubb collected two specimens of *Meliphaga melanops* at Timbillica, about fifty miles south of Merimbula.

## Reviews

**Identifying Hawks.**—In the field—that is in the air—hawks are hard to identify, a task made more difficult by plumage phases of sex, locality and age. The Bird Observers Club of Melbourne has published a *Field Guide to the Hawks of Australia* which will be

of great assistance to field-observers. The text and figures are by H. T. Condon, an experienced ornithologist. The price is 2/6 and copies may be obtained from the Club.

In most instances the under-surface is shown, and characteristic shapes and markings are presented diagrammatically. Concise accounts of about ten lines on each species are masterly examples of 'much in little.' A glossary of terms used and some general notes complete a 16-page well-produced booklet.—C.E.B.

**Gould League Activities.**—*Bird Study for Bird Lovers* and *The Bird Lover*, the annual brochures of the League in Western Australia and Victoria respectively, have come to our notice. It is pleasing to see the realization of the foremost of our birdmen of the importance of presenting ornithology to the young folk in an attractive form, which both magazines exemplify. Whilst 'written down' to some extent, many of the short articles contain a deal of substance. Many of the illustrations have been made possible by the loan of blocks by the Union and the editor of *Wild Life*. It would have been better for the 'promoters' of the Western Australian booklet to have adopted such a procedure in preference to 'improving' their cover photograph by artist's work.—C.E.B.

**Birds of Malaya.**—*An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Malaya*, C. A. Gibson-Hill, *Bulletin of the Raffles Museum*, Singapore, no. 20, September, 1949, pp. 1-299, and maps (3). The author presents a concise work of reference to the birds of the Federation of Malaya, the adjacent islands, and the Colony of Singapore; in effect, the Malay Peninsula south of the Siamese frontier. It differs from most previous Lists of the birds of that part of the world which generally include the Peninsula of Siam to the Isthmus of Kra. The change from a zoo-geographical to a political boundary has been made in consideration of the nature of the data available. The number of species listed is 575, with numerous subspecies. An appendix notes those species recorded from the Peninsula of Siam but at present not recorded from Malaya. Condensed notes on the status of each species and subspecies are given, i.e. whether residents, migrants, or visitors. There are a number of instances of more than one form occurring within the area, perhaps a resident breeding race and a migrant race, or two migrant forms, as is the case with the bird we know as the Fork-tailed Swift (*Micropus pacificus*), but which is listed by Gibson-Hill under the name Immigrant Swift (*Agus pacificus*). The Little Tern is represented by three forms—*saundersi*, an occasional visitor; *pusilla*, a winter visitor and passage migrant; and *sinensis*, resident and breeding. The Australian Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) is included on the basis of sight records of a single bird from Singapore Island. A surprising 'absentee' is the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Erolia acuminata*): both these species are quite common in Australia as migrants from eastern Siberia. Presumably their normal migration route is east of Malaya. The principal contributions to the ornithology of the area are listed, which, with a detailed index, complete what should be a useful publication.—K.A.H.

**'Fairy' Wrens.**—Probably there is no person—bird minded or otherwise—who would not be thrilled, or at least moved to exclamation, by the sight of a wren (*Malurus*). These sprightly little birds are the subject matter of the latest book by Neville W. Cayley (*Fairy Wrens of Australia*, Angus & Robertson Ltd., 15/-).

The 13 species of wrens admitted by the author, with the various races, are distributed throughout the continent in such a manner that not more than three species are to be found in any one district, and often it is only one. To see all the wrens in their native habitat, one would need to make a journey round Australia.

Mr. Cayley calls the fairy wrens 'The Blue Birds of Happiness.' Maybe they are. They do create an 'happy air' flitting through the bush, and when sunlight is reflected from them they appear as living

jewels. But only the males are so bedecked; the females are dressed mostly in quiet browns, with the exception of one species, and this one has an appreciable amount of blue on it.

Included in this work are the emu-wrens. The inclusion is justified by the author—"because few birds are more elfin like in appearance . . ."

The book is well illustrated by photographs and a number of coloured plates. These plates, eight of which are devoted to birds and one to eggs, are a tribute to the artist, who is the author, and would by themselves be worth the price of the book.

A notable feature is the series of distribution maps. These are given in colour, and show at a glance the distribution of the various species.—R.F.

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## News and Notes

### BINDING OF *The Emu*

Members are advised that it is now possible to have their back volumes of *The Emu* bound, in standard binding, at approximately 10/2 per volume. Binding cases will also be available at 4/2 per case. Members desirous of having their volumes bound must send them to the Hon. General Secretary not later than June 10, 1950.

### DEFECTIVE COPIES OF *The Emu*

A number of defective copies of the October 1949 *Emu* were distributed by the printer, pages 130 and 131 and portion of page 129 being missing. As reprinting of these pages is contemplated, members with defective copies are asked to notify the Hon. General Secretary at once.

### INCREASED SUBSCRIPTION

On account of increases in the cost of producing *The Emu* the Council has increased the annual subscription to 25/- as from July 1, 1950. This increase is certainly not unreasonable in view of costs generally. The Council expresses the hope that all members will realize the justification and continue their membership.

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## Obituary

### MAJOR-GENERAL W. A. COXEN

A link with the days of John Gould in Australia was severed by the death of Major-General Walter Adams Coxen, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., which occurred in Melbourne on December 15, 1949. Major-General Coxen, who was born in Egham, Surrey (England) on June 22, 1870, was a son of Henry W. Coxen, who came to Australia with his uncle and aunt, John and Elizabeth Gould, in 1838—he was the elder son