

always welcome to his circle. It will be a long time before we in Western Australia will recover from the feeling of personal loss at his passing.

Major Whittell left a widow, a daughter (Joan—Mrs. Julius Brockman, of Nannup, who has inherited her father's interest in historical research), two sons (Peter and John) and three grand-children. He is buried in Bridgetown cemetery, amid scenes he had grown to love so well and whose birdlife he studied so assiduously.

## Stray Feathers

**Dimensions of a 'Crested Penguin' at the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, Tasmania.**—Total length of the bird (as skin no. 1953.2.3) from tip of beak to tip of tail 570 mm.; tail 75 mm. (longest central of sixteen feathers); tarsus 35 mm.; middle toe with claw 75 mm.; bill—length of upper surface of mandible 45 mm., length of mouth 50 mm., thickness from top to bottom (closed) 25 mm., width (at widest part) 15 mm.; flipper length 170 mm., greatest width 45 mm. The upper edge of the flipper is edged with white on the hind side. Crest—total length from beak to tip 90 mm., projecting beyond head 40 mm. The crest is pale yellow.

The bird was discovered by Mrs. Winifred Harrison of Falmouth and brought to the Museum by her aunt, Miss Edgell. Following is Mrs. Harrison's description of the bird as she remembers seeing it alive—

I found it one morning when I went to the beach to look for shells. It was standing on a rock which was partly covered by the waves, and I could see it had been injured, and, when getting closer to it, saw its feet had been cut about in several places. I decided it was something 'out of the ordinary' because of the two yellow crests on either side of the head. I got Miss Edgell to come with me the next afternoon, and it was there in almost the same place. She was very interested in it also. We kept an eye on it, and each day it seemed to be getting weaker and had come out of the water and up on the beach out of the reach of the waves. One morning I found it dead. I wish so much that I had taken more notice as to the exact details now; anyway I decided to send it in to the Museum, and received a letter from them at once, thanking me and saying how pleased they were with it. They asked if the seas had been very rough. Well, they had been at the time, and before that. I should think the poor thing had had a terrific battering. You ask what colour the bill was—I should think it was a sort of orange shade (Miss Edgell thought it red) and slightly hooked and very thick and strong looking. I think the eyes were black, and the feet I think were a sort of flesh colour and looked as if they had been in the water a very long time, and as I said, they were cut and scored. I did not hear it make any call—I am sure the poor thing was starving; we threw it some meat, but it would not touch it (no doubt fish would be its natural food)...

I noted that a paper in *The Emu*, vol. 53, pt. 3, by T. G. Cashion, describes the occurrence of a Royal Penguin on the southern Tasmanian coast. According to Sharland's *Tasmanian Birds*, *Eudyptes crestatus* has only one record

for Tasmania—the skin of a specimen in the Macleay Museum, Sydney. On the other hand, the Thick-billed Penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) has been recorded several times. In order that it may be identified correctly and, whatever the species, it may be recorded in *The Emu*, I forward to you the following measurements and information about this specimen. The Assistant-in-Charge of the Queen Victoria Museum, Mr. Frank Ellis, has given me authority to do this on behalf of the Museum.—J. R. SKEMP, Myrtle Bank, Tas., 25/11/53.

**A Yellow Form of the Diamond Firetail.**—A few weeks ago I was riding home one evening when I saw what appeared to be a canary feeding on a hillside with a flock of forty or fifty Diamond Firetails (Spotted-sided Finches) and Red-browed Finches. On my riding towards the flock, some flew ahead of me and continued feeding, others, including the 'canary', flew up into a small dead tree. But I still could not make out what the strange bird was, as it would not allow a close approach. However, I waited until it flew to the ground again, and then crawled on hands and knees to a log about ten yards behind which it was feeding. It was a Diamond Firetail, uniform bright yellow except for red beak, eyes and rump, and a faint band across the chest greyish-yellow instead of black as in the normal birds. Seen at such close quarters it was certainly a beautiful bird. I was interested to note that it was accepted by the normal birds of its species, because some years ago there was a yellow individual of the Eastern Rosella here, which was always solitary and was never seen to associate with the normal-coloured birds of its species.—E. L. HYEM, Barrington, N.S.W., 22/2/53.

**Cape Barren Geese in Victoria.**—Reports have been received by the Fisheries and Game Department of the occurrence of Cape Barren Geese in Victoria as follows—

November 1950—Mr. T. Mirabella, a professional fisherman, reported that six Cape Barren Geese come in regularly at Queenscliff each year.

September 1952—Five birds seen on Lake Conewarre, near Geelong. These were the first seen there for 15 years.

February 1953—A flock of 25 birds was seen on a swamp at Sparrow Vale, five miles out along the Barwon Road.

February 28, 1953—A solitary Cape Barren Goose was seen flying over the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Sewage Farm at Werribee.

April 9, 1953—A flock of 74 birds was seen on 'Melangil' property near Camperdown.

These reports are interesting, and may be taken as an indication that the Cape Barren Goose is showing a slight

increase in numbers in Victoria. The birds come regularly each year to an area in the vicinity of 'Melangil' property, approximately 16 miles from Camperdown, but the number seen this year in that area is higher than for many years.—J. McNALLY, Fisheries and Game Department, Melbourne, Vic., 11/6/53.

**Sparrows as Opportunists.**—On arrival by car in Canberra on January 13 from Bega I made an observation which may be worth recording. I had pulled up in the Civic Centre, and on returning to the car, a station wagon with a grille of vertical bars about one and a half inches apart, placed some nine inches in front of the radiator, I observed that three House Sparrows were inside the cavity of the grille, apparently feeding on the insects impacted in the radiator. The space must have been quite hot, and the corpses fairly cooked. None of the birds was in adult male plumage; one was almost certainly a young one, and the other two probably hens. They gave the impression that this was a habit, by their characteristic air of passerine unconcern.

Nicholson, in his volume in the New Naturalist series, *Birds and Man*, alludes to the nuisance committed by Blue Tits in England, on householders who left bottles of milk on the doorstep, by perforating the cardboard tops and helping themselves to milk, and the way Canberra Sparrows seized the opportunity to have a meal of hot 'hoppers' seemed to be an instance of similar adaptation to circumstances.—MICHAEL M. WILSON, Trinity College, Carlton, Vic., 20/1/54.

**Red-eared Firetails.**—Between November 14 and 27, 1953, a pair of Red-eared Firetails (*Zonæginthus ocellatus*) was under observation from a pylon-type hide placed by their nest. The latter had been built 20 feet from the ground and was fixed in the bushy termination of a branch of a paper-bark. The nest was flask-shaped, measuring about eight inches in length, seven inches in diameter at its broadest part, and tapering to four inches near the entrance hole, which was about two inches across. There was a sparse lining of feathers and plant down and the whole structure was neatly constructed of thin grass stems. The nest was placed so that its long axis was at about 40 degrees to the horizontal, and to enter the birds alighted on a convenient branch before flying up to the opening. The habitat was a typical paper-bark flat in the Darling Range where the birds are quite common though not easily seen as they feed on the ground among thick vegetation, revealing themselves chiefly by their melancholy call notes or by their flying up into the trees when alarmed. Several

unoccupied nests of this species were found in the area. An undetermined number of pale pink unspotted eggs were in the nest when it was first discovered on November 1, 1953.

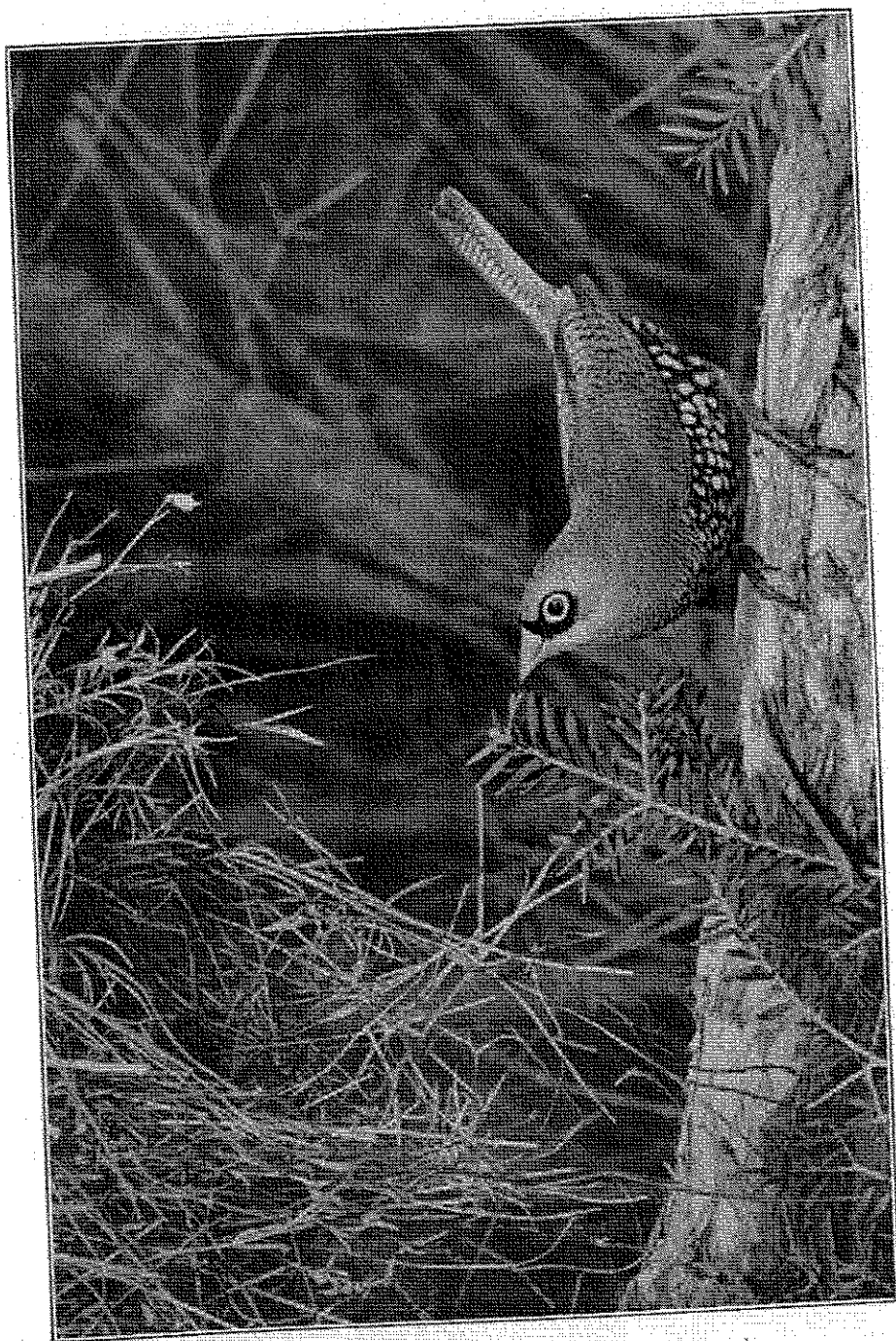
It proved impossible to separate the sexes of the Fire-tails by any physical feature, but it was presumed that the one which brooded the young was the hen. Despite warm weather she remained inside for most of the time until the young were about eight days old, and during that period the greater part of the food was collected by the cock. The average time elapsing between his visits was in the region of 40 minutes, longer intervals being noted with increasing age of the chicks. The hen was seldom absent for more than five minutes at a time. Presumably the male fed his mate by regurgitation in the normal finch fashion, but direct observation was impossible because of the enclosed nature of the nest. The male's visits were usually only short ones, a stay for as long as four minutes being exceptional at this stage of the breeding cycle.

On November 21 the male twice entered the nest carrying a small feather in his beak; the hen was brooding chicks estimated to be about eight days old at the time. Apparently feather-carrying was not a regular habit as the nest held only six feathers when subsequently examined after the young had flown. Faeces were not seen to be carried off by the adults so presumably the sacs were swallowed, though the speed of the birds' departure did not facilitate observation of the contents of their beaks.

Despite their attractive colour pattern, these proved rather dull birds to watch, and no display of any kind was noted. Their vocal repertoire, too, seemed limited. A plaintive, soft, but at times far-carrying 'wee-eee' served both as a call note and to signify alarm. This call was generally uttered *sotto voce* with closed bill, when either bird returned to the nest. When the hen was brooding the cock's arrival near the nest would be greeted by a deep continuous purring 'querrr' from the hen, and the cock had a rather more treble version of the same note. When both were inside their combined voices sounded 'like the swinging of a rusty sign in the wind'—as I described these happenings in my diary.—JOHN WARHAM, Leederville, W.A., 3/1/54.

**Eastern Knot in Tasmania.**—On November 1, 1953, I visited Ralph's Bay at South Arm. From the middle of the beach that runs along the Neck, I walked westwards, and while I was so engaged six wading birds passed me, flying in the opposite direction. I did not identify them, but decided to defer identification until I had carried out a full count of other waders along the beach and adjacent shores.

Before I had completed the count, however, I found three other birds which I believe were of the same species as



Red-eared Firetail at nest.

Photo. by John Warham.

those seen earlier. They were in company with Golden Plovers and Turnstones, and I was able to approach them easily and take detailed notes, from which I subsequently identified them as Eastern Knots (*Calidris canutus*). I did not find the other six later in the afternoon.

On November 14 I returned to the same area in company with Mr. Ian Rowley, and, as the tide was nearly full, we followed the same routine as on my previous visit. Near the middle of the Neck beach we found a lone Knot resting on a log embedded in the sand, and, at the time, in about two inches of water. We were able to approach within thirty feet and to note carefully all details of plumage. On this occasion we found all the other migrants extremely shy, in direct contrast to my previous visit, although the wind and tide were similar, and we could not find any of the other eight birds.

This is the first time in five years of observations at Ralph's Bay that I have seen this species, now recorded for the first time in Tasmania. All other migratory waders are maintaining average numbers, as noted in *The Emu*, vol. 53, pp. 80 to 86, except for the lone Grey-tailed Tattler which was last observed at Ralph's Bay Neck on May 26, 1953. It was then attaining breeding plumage, and is assumed to have migrated and not returned.—LEONARD E. WALL, Hobart, Tas., 21/1/54.

**On Gynandromorphism in Birds.**—There are different forms of hermaphroditism in birds, but none is as instructive and striking as the so-called gynandromorphism. The bird's body seems to be divided into two halves, one male, the other female. Nearly always the right side appears as male—with a masculine gonad (testis) and vas deferens in some cases in which an anatomical section has been made—and the left half as female, surely or presumably with an ovary and oviduct (Muellerian duct). Only in very rare cases, apparently, the right side seems to be female (compare Jean Cabanis, *Journ. f. Ornith.*, 22, 1874, on *Colaptes mexicanus*) and the left half male. As generally known, the female bird usually has a well-developed ovary only on the left side. In the right sometimes tiny cell structures may be found as remnants of more or less uncertain or male appearance. The hormonal effect of the normal left ovary, and its cortex particularly, is probably inhibiting those remnants, to develop in the male direction. Therefore, if the left ovary is without function by disease or is removed in experiments, a so-called 'compensatory gland' of more or less male structure and function may be found on the right side some time later. Much important research has been done on these facts and problems. They show

that in female birds the left body half alone is favoured for female gonadal development; the reason is that most of described gynanders appear male on right and female on the left side. Occasionally there are adult female birds with two ovaries and in some birds of prey, particularly hawks (*Accipiter*) it seems to be nearly the rule.

It is a curious fact that most of the gynandromorph birds described in scientific journals are Bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*). It is sufficient to mention here the papers and notices of J. Cabanis (1874); A. v. Pélzeln (1871) resp. V. v. Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen (1875/76); A. Tichomiroff (1887, 1923); Th. Lorenz (1894); A. Reichenow (1905); O. Heinroth resp. H. Poll (1909), I. F. a. S. I. Ognoff (1924); R. Neunzig (1924); Lord W. Rothschild resp. D. Seth-Smith (1928). A further case, known to me, has not yet been published. Only a few cases are described in other bird species—e.g. in *Colaptes*, as mentioned above; in *Dacnis* (R. Neunzig, 1924); *Poëphila* (E. Stresemann 1927, D. Seth-Smith 1928); perhaps also in *Falco* (C. Picchi 1911); *Gallus domesticus*. Some authors (A. Chappellier, F. Groebels, J. Benoit) tried to compile a list of all gynandromorph birds. But the result was apparently as incomplete as our knowledge as to whether, for example, in which museums, private collection, these gynanders—the skins and perhaps also the conserved bodies—are to be found. Therefore a new and careful survey seems to be necessary. Each exact item of information or reference will be acknowledged most gratefully by the author (Osnabrück, Moltkestrasse 19, Western Germany).—H. KUMERLOEVE, Germany, 7/1/54.

**Dates of Arrival of Three Bird Species.**—The following data on the arrival dates at Urangan, Qld., of three species of birds might be of interest. The dates are the dates upon which the first calls were heard.

Date	Koel	Dollar-bird	Cicada Bird
1936	Sep. 29	Sep. 21	Oct. 16
1937	Sep. 21	Sep. 18	
1938	Oct. 19	Sep. 7	Sep. 16
1940	Sep. 11	Sep. 23	Sep. 4
1943	Sep. 7	Sep. 22	Sep. 18
1945	Oct. 3	Sep. 24	
1946	Oct. 26	Sep. 21	Nov. 2
1947	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Oct. 18
1948	Sep. 25	Sep. 29	Oct. 14
1949	Sep. 16	Sep. 20	Oct. 4
1950	Sep. 20	Sep. 19	Sep. 2
1951	Sep. 22	Sep. 24	Oct. 27
1952	Sep. 9	Sep. 17	Oct. 9
1953	Sep. 29	Sep. 12	Sep. 30

Note the regularity of Dollar-bird compared with the other two species.—VALDIE CHRISTENSEN, Urangan, Qld., 4/1/54.

**Counts of the Silver Gull in Eastern Cook Strait, New Zealand.**—I have studied, for some time, the movements of the Silver Gulls in eastern Cook Strait, by taking counts of the birds in suitable places near Wellington City. The places, dates, and the counts (in parentheses) made at each are listed below according to day and month, not years. The counts indicate that the gulls do not migrate here in the accepted sense, though dispersal movements are indicated.

*Ohariu Bay.*—7/1/50 (30), 13/1/51 (60), 4/2/50 (70), 16/3/52 (47), 3/4/53 (62), 9/5/53 (30), 20/5/52 (15), 22/5/51 (40), 26/6/52 (30), 11/8/52 (84), 22/8/51 (60), 26/8/46 (50), 10/10/51 (30), 18/11/50 (40), 20/11/49 (12), 17/11/53 (10), 23/12/46 (25).

*Tongue Point.*—25/11/50 (8), 26/12/50 (30).

*Ohiro Bay.*—20/1/51 (200), 17/3/51 (223), 11/11/50 (50), 16/12/50 (65).

*Island Bay.*—17/3/51 (90), 19/5/49 (50), 12/6/49 (200).

*Lyall Bay.*—28/2/48 (60), 14/2/53 (120), 28/2/53 (100), 28/3/53 (140), 11/4/53 (90), 22/6/49 (150), 13/6/53 (200), 25/7/53 (40), 9/8/52 (12), 16/8/52 (12), 22/8/53 (30), 3/10/53 (15), 25/12/50 (85), 30/12/48 (50).

*Lambton Harbour, Port Nicholson.*—19/2/51 (50), 21/2/51 (25), 21/4/53 (0), 21/5/53 (20), 7/5/53 (under 5), 23/5/53 (10), 25/5/53 (under 5), 8/6/53 (10), 12/6/53 (10), 1/7/53 (0), 13/7/53 (15), 30/7/53 (8), 4/8/53 (50), 17/8/53 (70), 21/8/53 (70-80), 29/8/51 (60), 30/8/48 (150), 5/9/53 (50), 15/9/52 (70), 26/19/50 (50), 1953 (all October) (10-12), 8/11/50 (40), 12/11/51 (2), 20/11/53 (25), 6/12/51 (25), 14/12/50 (50).

*Petone.*—3/1/49 (100), 27/1/49 (100), 10/2/51 (1,284), 25/3/50 (1,059), 25/3/51 (876), 7/5/50 (1,387), 6/5/51 (1,136), 20/5/51 (820), 3/6/50 (462), 15/7/51 (683), 19/8/50 (158), 23/9/50 (30), 21/10/50 (43), 1/10/52 (80).

H. L. SECKER, Wellington, N.Z., 27/11/53.

**Co-operation Among Birds.**—Some interesting notes regarding co-operation between the Peregrine Falcon and the Pied Butcher-bird are given by Mr. J. MacQueen, writing from southern Queensland, in the *Emu* for December 1953 (vol. 53, p. 330). After stating that when a bird pursued by a falcon hides in a thick bush it is frequently hunted out by one or more butcher-birds, the writer remarks that



he has not seen this behaviour recorded and that he has not known the butcher-birds to assist any other species of hawk.

Actually, occurrences of this kind have already been described in the *Emu*, by another Queenslander, with another species of falcon as a central figure. The late C. A. Barnard, writing on the birds of Coomooboolaroo (*Emu*, vol. 24, p. 258, 1925), described the Little Falcon (*Falco longipennis*) as very fast and daring and a great quail-catcher, and then he mentioned a particular incident in which a lorikeet, when pursued by one of these raiders, dashed into some thick bushes. "Usually," Mr. Barnard added, "there are some butcher-birds about, and in such cases they hunt the hiding bird out, when the falcon, being on the watch, has it in a flash. I have frequently seen the butcher-birds helping the falcons in this way."

It seems appropriate to add that Mr. Harry Greensill Barnard (a brother of the writer quoted above), has recently advised me of another remarkable example of co-operation among birds. Harry Barnard, who is now aged 85—he was born on April 11, 1869—and is living in Rockhampton, had in his day much experience of Australia's tropical birds, and among his recollections are two striking instances of nesting association on the part of unrelated species. One, which has been mentioned several times in the *Emu*, concerns the Black Butcher-bird and the Manucode—apparently this bird-of-paradise has a confirmed habit of placing its nest as near as possible to that of the Butcher-bird. In the second instance, Mr. Barnard found, on Cape York, that the Helmeted Friar-bird and the Yellow Figbird invariably nested in the same tree and the Spangled Drongo in a tree near by. Not once did he find the Friar-bird nesting alone, though occasionally he found both the Figbird and the Drongo doing so.

Mr. Barnard's impression is that the Manucode seeks the company of the Butcher-bird for the purpose of protection, and that the Figbird and Drongo associate with the Friar-bird (a very aggressive species) for the same reason. If that be so, the action seems to imply a certain 'shrewdness' on the part of the guest-birds—even more so, perhaps, than is manifest in the co-operation between butcher-birds and falcons.—A. H. CHISHOLM, Sydney, N.S.W., 20/1/54.

**Terek Sandpiper at Barwon Heads, South Victoria.**—On February 3, 1954, at 6.30 a.m., about one mile up the Barwon River from the bridge near the mouth, I observed one of these rare waders (*Xenus cinereus*) for an hour. I saw what was apparently this same bird again late that afternoon, and at 6.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. on the next two days. On the last three occasions I watched it for half an hour each time. At no time did I see it more than a yard

from the water's edge, and at no time did it stand or run in water deeper than just covering the ground.

Quite the most noticeable features of this bird are the very bright yellow legs, and the clumsy-looking strongly upturned bill which appears to grow from far lower down its face than it should.

Comparing the description of the species as given by Condon and McGill in the publication *Field Guide to the Waders* with what I saw in the field, I would suggest that the white parts about the face and eye are not noticeable and that the legs do not appear short. This latter difference is possibly accounted for by their startling colour which may make them appear longer than if they were of a neutral shade. In size the bird seems about midway between the Red-capped Dotterel and the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, with which it associated occasionally, but its upright carriage, both when standing and running, may make it look larger than it actually is. The last time I saw it (11 a.m.) was the only occasion on which it was not actively feeding. It was resting with a flock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, but was far more alert and nervous than they were. They were relaxed and more or less stationary, but the Terek Sandpiper was bobbing at about 30-second intervals, and frequently took a few steps one way or another. When I came out of my concealed position in the mangroves it took flight when I was fully a hundred yards away, whereas the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers did not fly till I was about thirty yards distant. In flight it gave a call that had about the same timing and was reminiscent of that of the Greenshank but of far less volume and of duller tone.

The temperament of this bird 'at rest' was totally different from when it was feeding. When feeding it was difficult to make it fly with a slow approach to within twenty-five yards. When approximately that distance was reached it would run with amazing speed from twenty to thirty yards further away and continue feeding until I got too close, when it would repeat the performance. To make it fly I had to run at it when fairly close or throw things at it. It would then fly about a hundred yards ahead or round behind me and immediately start feeding again.

The bird dug almost savagely in the sand, and often pulled with all its power before its food was dislodged. It held its prey momentarily in the tip of its bill before swallowing, after an upward toss of the head. It quite obviously finds its food far deeper in the sand than the Red-capped Dotterels and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers do. It runs considerably faster than the former, and in flight keeps pace with the latter, though whenever I succeeded in making it fly with the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers it only stayed with them for a short burst and soon broke formation and returned to the shore to eat.—CLAUDE N. AUSTIN, Coleraine, Vic., 14/2/54.

**A Further Note on Blue-billed Ducks.**—On February 6, 1954, I spent some hours watching family parties of the Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*) on Tower Hill Lake, south-western Victoria. This drowned crater has held a large, shallow body of water since the phenomenal rainfall of March and April 1946, and now the verge of the crater, and the margins of the islands, support a luxurious growth of reeds and water plants, ideally suited to this shy bird's needs. A large number had been present in open water from July onwards, congregating in separate flocks of about one hundred birds each and totalling, at their greatest number, nearly 500 birds, which takes no account of those diving as the flocks were counted. On the occasion mentioned, a drake and duck were observed from a few yards, with 10x50 Zeiss binoculars, cruising along the margin of the reeds. Presently another drake swam towards them, uttered a warning 'quack' like a Grey Duck—there were no other species of duck within 200 yards—and attacked the female. She took to wing like a Coot, flapping and running along the water for about thirty yards, while he dived and came up just behind her as she stopped—a very remarkable performance. A duck with five partly-grown young then swam out of the reeds and joined the second drake, while the first drake continued diving and feeding, quite unperturbed. A short distance away a drake was floating at the edge of the reeds when a duck, with six very young birds, came quickly out of the reeds, head down and beak wide open, and chased him away. Still further on, a drake and duck, accompanied by four half-grown young, were cruising in close company along the edge of the reeds. Still further on, and in open water, were five half-grown young, quite unaccompanied, which made their way out into the larger area of the lake. Of these, two showed fan-spread spines, and three closed tails. Of the adult drakes, all carried their spiny tail-feathers spread, whilst the ducks' were invariably closed. None of the ducks displayed the light green bill which I had noticed earlier in the year, the bill being invariably slate colour, whilst the drakes' were all resplendent in beautiful enamel blue. The young were clothed in dark sooty down without any suggestion of striping. A male and female Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*), which were on a pond nearby, were a useful comparison for size of the ducks, which had confused me by the absence of their green bills.

The extent of reed under observation does not amount to more than 300 yards, so that it is reasonable to assume that this rare species has bred to a large extent on the whole of the lake, many drakes being observed throughout. As Tower Hill is a National Park, but is not a sanctuary, being largely shot over in and out of season, it behoves us to try to bring about the complete protection of the area.—  
DONALD SHANKS, Woolsthorpe, Vic., 8/2/54.