Hirundo neoxena, and because of its size, shape and flight I suspected that it was a Fairy Martin. I was able to confirm that this was so when at 14:30 it perched on a fence with approximately forty Tree Martins, and I could observe it from a distance of about 10 m. The day was fine and sunny.

I can find no records of observations of the Fairy Martin in southern Tasmania. The only records of sightings in the State apparently were made last century in northern Tasmania.

Roger T. Vincent, 8 Vantona Road, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7005.
28 October 1971.

Mangrove Heron at Mallacoota: new Victorian record

The Mangrove Heron Butorides striatus is a bird of coastal tropical and sub-tropical Australia, usually associated with swamps. It is rare on the far southern coast of New South Wales and, as far as I can ascertain, there are no records at all for Victoria.

Between 11 July and 31 October 1971 I frequently saw a Mangrove Heron at Mallacoota, on the same open mudflat. However, in December 1971, Messrs H. Beste, C. Cocev and I found at least two Mangrove Herons in a different part of the Mallacoota Lake about eight kilometres from where the first bird had been seen. We also found two old nests, flat flimsy platforms of sticks in melaleuca between five and six metres above the water. One bird was usually perched near one of these nests. These nests could have been of the Mangrove Heron, but further observation will be needed before breeding can be proved.

The bird on the mudflat was fairly approachable and was observed with 12x50 binoculars at ranges down to 30 m. It always gave a furtive impression, standing with neck hunched and body held almost horizontal. When approached it preferred to walk away with a shambling gait, only flying if I continued to approach.

Description made in the field: A small dingy brown heron about the size of a Silver Gull Larus novaehollandiae, Forehead, crown, nape and back of neck dull-black; black moustachial stripe; back, wings, rump and tail dark-brown, the primaries and secondaries edged lighter brown; lores, face, earcoverts and throat pale-brown, becoming darker on breast and belly, but not as dark as upper parts; iris yellow; bill dark-brown; legs orange.

In conclusion I should add that I also saw the Mangrove Heron at Merimbula, NSW, on 28 April 1965 and have seen it there once since, so that the bird may not be as infrequent in the south-eastern corner of Australia as has previously been supposed.

Dr. D. G. W. Hollands, Nicholson St., Orbost, Vic. 3888.
4 March 1972.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMENT ON ALLEGED SIGHT-RECORD OF UNIFORM SWIFTLET FROM NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

Sir,—Bravery recently reported sight-records of dark-rumped swiftlets from Atherton, northern Queensland (1971, Emu 71: 182). Using Slater (1970, A Field Guide to Australian Birds) as a guide, he claimed that the birds were without doubt the Uniform Swiftlet Collocalia vanikorensis. Though there is an alleged specimen of this species from Cape York (Mathews 1916, Bull. Br. Orn. Club 36: 77), we would like to draw attention to the possibility that dark-rumped uniformly coloured swiftlets in northern Queensland could be vagrants of any one of three species groups resident in the nearest areas of New Guinea, namely the Mountain Swiftlet C. hirundinacea, Whitehead's Swiftlet C. whiteheadi, and the Uniform Swiftlet C. vanikorensis. All of these species are distinguished readily from C. spodiopygia by their lack of a distinct pale rump. In our experience in New Guinea we have found it virtually impossible to separate C. vanikorensis from C. hirundinacea in the field, although the latter generally occurs at higher altitudes. The very similar third species group, comprising forms at present referred to C. whiteheadi, can be recognized only by its slightly larger size; the component forms are c. 25 mm longer than either C. vanikorensis or C. hirundinacea. C. vanikorensis and C. hirundinacea can, in fact, be rather easily identified in the hand by the presence or absence of tarsal feathering, the amount of white in the bases of dorsal feathers and obscure but apparently consistent differences in the colour-tone of dorsal and ventral plumage. These characters, nevertheless, are hardly recognizable in the field.

R. Schoode and J. L. McKeane, Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, PO Box 84, Lyneham, ACT 2602.
11 October 1971.