

Throat, centre as in *b*, sides brownish, black being new feathers ; ear coverts white, flushed with yellow ; crown and upper surface as with *b* ; superciliary stripe and lores brownish-black ; margins of tail feathers less yellow than in *b* ; under surface of body more yellow than in *b*, and much less yellow than in adult. Total length, 7 inches ; wing, 3.06 inches ; tail, 3.25 inches ; culmen, 0.5 inch ; tarsus, 0.95 inch.

Specimen *d*.—Juvenile male, Box Hill, Victoria, March, 1900.

Throat and chest as in *b* ; ear coverts white, very faintly washed with yellow ; superciliary stripe and lores brownish-black ; crown and upper surface very much as in *b* and *c*. Total length, 7.15 inches ; wing, 3.35 inches ; tail, 3.5 inches ; culmen, 0.5 inch ; tarsus, 0.85 inch.

Specimen *e*.—Juvenile male, Melbourne, Victoria, 12/4/98.

Whole of throat, chest, and superciliary stripe nearly as black as in adult ; ear coverts pure white ; forehead dull yellowish-olive as in younger stages, while the crown and occiput are moulting in favour of the grey of the adult ; remainder of upper and under surfaces as in adult. Total length, 7.75 inches ; wing, 3.7 inches ; tail, 3.6 inches ; tarsus, 0.9 inch ; culmen, 0.55 inch.

Specimen *f*.—Juvenile female, Box Hill, Victoria, 10/4/01.

A moult of the olive-like feathers of forehead and crown in favour of the grey of the adult is very distinct. About half of the old feathers persist in irregular patches, while the greys are also irregularly scattered. No colour change is noticeable. Total length, 7.5 inches ; wing, 3.3 inches ; tail, 3.65 inches ; tarsus, 0.9 inch ; culmen, 0.5 inch.

Specimen *g*<sup>1</sup>.—Adult male, Box Hill, Victoria, 17/7/96.

Example giving largest measurements. Total length, 9 inches ; wing, 4.05 inches ; tail, 4.3 inches ; tarsus, 1 inch ; culmen, 0.5 inch.

Specimen *g*<sup>2</sup>.—Adult male, Heytesbury, Victoria, 5/8/96 (*per* Mr. George Graham).

Example giving smallest measurements. Total length, 7.5 inches ; wing, 3.2 inches ; tail, 3.45 inches ; tarsus, 0.85 inch ; culmen, 0.5 inch.

Specimen *h*.—Adult female, date uncertain, Oakleigh, Victoria.

Small-sized female. Total length, 6.9 inches ; wing, 3 inches ; tail, 3.3 inches ; tarsus, 0.9 inch ; culmen, 0.5 inch.

## A Trip to Oyster Cay, N. Queensland.

BY E. M. CORNWALL, CAIRNS.

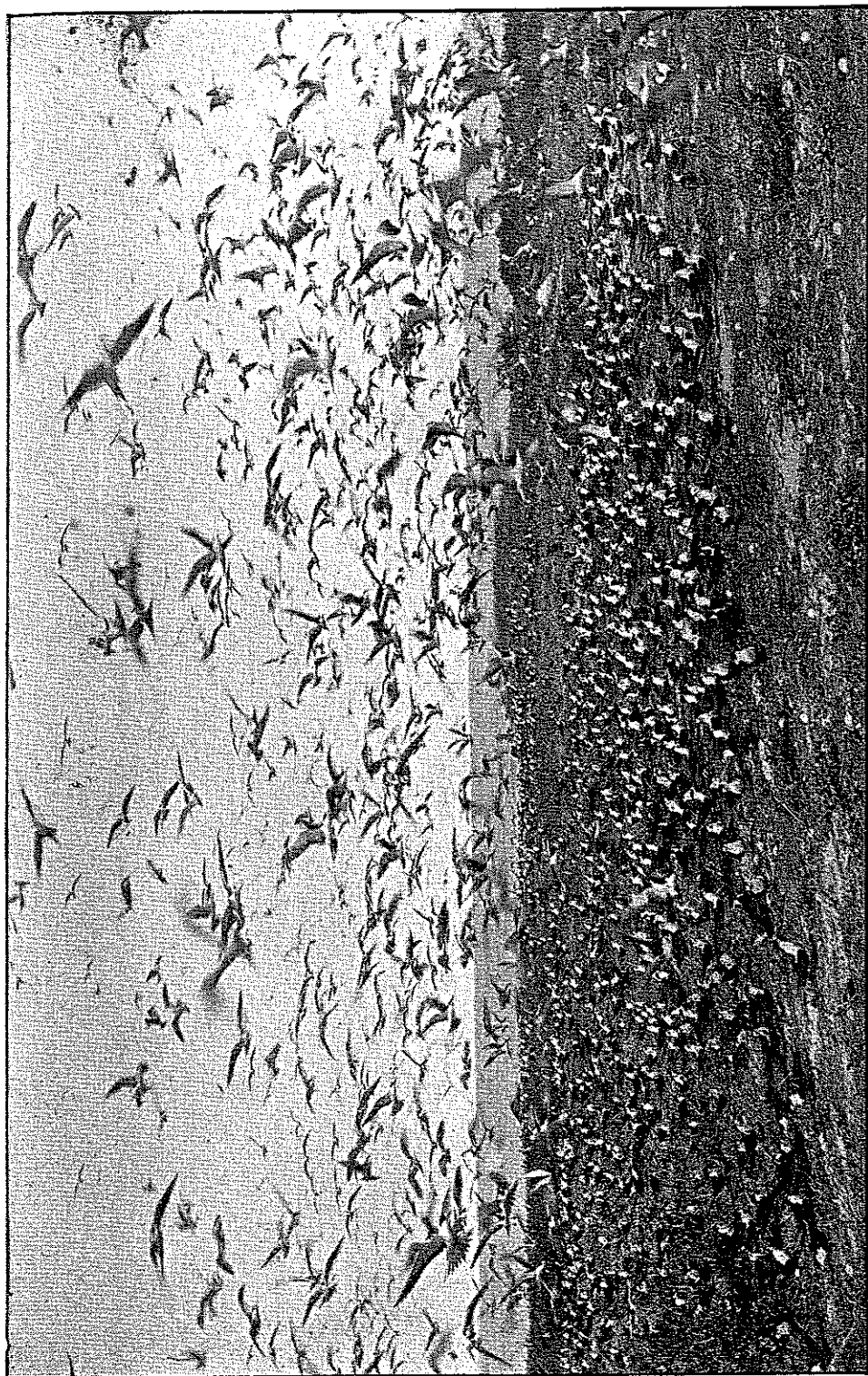
ON 15th November a party of six left Cairns in the oil launch *Industry* at 4.30 a.m. for Oyster Cay, Upolu Reef, and Green Island, to inspect the marvellous bird colonies and coral reefs of those places. As the almost full moon sank, a soft glow proclaimed the coming dawn, and when day broke Green Island

showed, a mere fringe, to the eastward, and the white sands of Upolu Bank glimmered right ahead.

Nearing the bank the sea-birds could be seen hovering over it in countless thousands, and one who has not had the opportunity of seeing these birds in their own domains could barely credit the sight that was revealed to those who landed on the Bank. I have seen a few bird rookeries in various places, but nothing to compare with what we saw here—even the famous Mutton-Bird rookeries suffered by contrast. The Bank, a mere sand ridge of about three acres in extent, some two or three feet above high water mark, and clothed with coarse grass and mesembryanthemum, was one seething mass of bird life. The birds were like a swarm of bees about a hive; the little island seemed just a quivering mass; and the wind coming from them brought evidence of their proximity to both hearing and smell. The majority of the birds were the very much misnamed Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuliginosa*), and the reflection of the bright green shallow water upon the snow-white under parts of these birds produced a pretty effect, giving them a beautiful sea-green tinge. The sight which greeted us when we landed on Upolu Bank is better described by the camera than the pen—birds were everywhere, eggs likewise, the latter so close together that it was almost impossible to walk without treading on them. The “rain” of guano was something to be remembered. The pretty birds would barely deign to move out of the way. In some cases they would allow themselves to be caught in preference to leaving their eggs. Amongst the Terns, but on higher patches of sand, were colonies of the Lesser Crested Terns (*S. media*), conspicuous with their light-coloured plumage, jet black crests, and red bills. There were also a few Noddies, and quite a number of Frigate-Birds, but though one of the latter perched upon the only bush upon the bank and seemed disposed to “sit” for me, he drew the line at the focussing cloth. He was a noble fellow, sat quiet, and seemed to take little interest whilst the camera was planted at a few paces distance, but when the cloth began to flap he evidently thought it would be well to be out of the road.

I have often wondered how, on a great rookery like this, the birds are able to identify their eggs, and after carefully watching for a considerable time have come to the conclusion that they are not at all particular whose egg they sit on. Although the rookeries of different varieties are well defined, the whole are so jumbled together that along the fringes where two varieties meet the eggs are much intermingled, and in very many cases Sooty Terns had taken possession of Lesser Crested Tern's eggs and *vice versa*.

Leaving Upolu a course was steered for Oyster Cay, which was reached about noon, and proved a bitter disappointment to the ornithologists and photographers of the party. A *bêche-de-mer* fisherman had established a station there, and most of the birds had deserted it, those left being so wild that photographs could



Rookery of Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuliginosa*), Upolu Bank, Great Barrier Reef.

FROM A PHOTO. BY E. M. CORNWALL.

not be procured. A few eggs of the Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) were found, to add to the collection from Upolu Bank, to which, disappointed, we returned and secured a few more pictures in the evening light. Numbers of the large and handsome Crested Terns (*Sterna bergi*) were now noted flying in couples towards the island, and a close search was made for eggs, but without success, it being too early. A fortnight later numbers of their eggs were laid on the bank.

Once more getting aboard, we steered for Green Island, where we camped for the night. Some few years ago this island was the breeding place for countless thousands of white Nutmeg Pigeons (*Myristicivora spilorrhoa*); but, alas, pot-hunters have proved too much for them, and during the evening we spent there, though right in the middle of the breeding season, only two pairs visited their old haunt.

A strong south-wester and very lumpy sea gave us a lively time on the run home, but the Cairns wharf was safely reached about 9.30 p.m., after one of the most enjoyable and interesting outings it has ever been my lot to take part in.

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## Notes on Migration, &c., of Birds, Cooktown District, North Queensland, 1902.

BY P. COCHRANE, COOKTOWN.

SHINING FLY-CATCHER (*Myiagra nitida*).—Did not nest until the middle of January. A few pairs have been here all the year.

BROAD-BILLED FLY-CATCHER (*Myiagra latirostris*).—Here 14th May; numerous 6th June.

WHITE-FRONTED FANTAIL.—Here 15th May; numerous 8th June; very few 1st September.

RED FANTAIL.—Here 15th May; numerous 8th June; very few 1st September.

BLACK AND WHITE FANTAIL (*Rhipidura tricolor*).—Here 3rd May; numerous in June; did not see any in October.

BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*).—Here 20th February; all gone by 1st September.

DRAGOON-BIRD (*Pitta strepitans*).—Numerous 14th May. Have seen none since September.

SCRUB-RAILS (? *R. tricolor*).—Numerous 16th May; a few pairs in December.

WHITE-TAILED KINGFISHER (*Tanysiptera sylvia*).—Nesting 4th February; none 4th May. Heard some calling 8th December.

TORRES STRAIT PIGEON (*Myristicivora spilorrhoa*).—In very large flocks 27th January; very few 8th March. Have not seen any for a few days (18th March). Here 1st September; very large flocks 24th September.

TOP-KNOT PIGEON (*Lopholæmus antarcticus*).—Here 18th August. They generally remain about six weeks, but are always more numerous on mountains.