

Bird Notes from Cleveland, Tasmania.

BY (MISS) J. A. FLETCHER, CLEVELAND (TASMANIA).

THIS open forest country, with its surrounding plains and small, stony, sheoak-crowned hills, is a happy place for the bird student. Many of the depressions between the hills are occupied by lagoons, and to these are attracted various water-fowl, both visiting and stationary. The presence of large tracts covered with banksia trees gives the place a great charm to the little feathered honey-lovers, and the gruff note of the Yellow Wattle-Bird (*Acanthochaera inauris*), mingled with the discordant screech of the Musk-Lorikeet (*Glossopsittacus concinnus*), is at present (May) frequently to be heard.

On the 16th May I noticed, for the first time since my residence here—sixteen months—a flock of the beautiful Blue-winged Grass-Parrakeet (*Neophema venusta*). The birds were amidst some thistles in a gum-tree forest, and rose up at my approach. How beautiful they appeared as the sun's rays shone upon their colours! They did not fly far, but alighted on the low boughs of a dead wattle, and looked inquisitively at the intruder.

That same day I had the pleasure of seeing some of the Yellow-bellied Parrakeets (*Platycercus flaviventris*) in most perfect plumage; others again were more yellow, and had hardly any of the darker colouring. Flocks of Rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*) rose regretfully from their honeyed feast on the banksia trees.

Last autumn (1907) I was indeed delighted to observe the Ground-Parrakeet (*Pezoporus formosus*) on the grassy rises near the lagoon. I believe these birds are becoming very rare, and this year I have not seen any. Those I watched last year were under the almost leafless briars, and were eating the hips that had fallen. On my nearer approach they did not rise, but retreated to the cover of another clump of briars, and, when I persisted in following them, retired to the seclusion of the outer circle of reeds bordering the lagoon. This autumnal season has been a better one for grass seeds, &c., so doubtless this accounts for their absence this year.

In many of the paddocks the black wattle grows, and as every tree harbours the larva of the wattle goat moth, the Black Cockatoos (*Calyptrorhynchus funereus*) are often here. How diligently they search for the poor grubs concealed in the trunks. A flock of nine settled on a neighbour's woodstack, the logs being piled lengthways, and tore the bark of the logs off in their hunt for the delicacy.

The Spur-winged Plovers (*Lobivanellus lobatus*) are plentiful, and are very fond of the destructive grass grub, as are also those much-abused birds, the Crows (*Corvus coronoides*).

* Probably the Raven (*Corone australis*) is intended.—EDS.

Circling over the swamps and the adjacent bracken-covered slopes are always to be seen pairs of the Swamp Harrier (*Circus gouldi*). The children about call these birds "Free-wheelers," which is indeed a descriptive name. These Harriers nest in this district. Five eggs were found in a nest last November, and the season before nine eggs were reported as occurring in a nest. I fancy in this case that the eggs of a previous clutch must have proved infertile, and the birds had rebuilt over them.

For two seasons a pair of Small-billed Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Graculus parvirostris*) built in a wattle quite close to the Conara railway station. Unfortunately the tree has lately been cut down, so when the birds return this coming season they will have to go elsewhere.

I have seen the Bronze-wing (*Phaps chalcoptera*) about in the wattle groves. The children say they are very fond of the wattle seeds.

The Brush Bronze-wing (*Phaps elegans*) I noticed two or three times so far this season.

The gum-trees, white and peppermint, are flowering this year; the banksias are already in blossom, and when the wattles bloom shortly there should indeed be a grand banquet for some of the birds, and many interesting observations will doubtless be made.

The Montague Island Gullery.

BY A. F. BASSET HULL, SYDNEY.

ON the 16th September, 1907, my son and I left Sydney about 4 p.m. by the s.s. *Bega* (now lying in twenty fathoms of water off Tilba Tilba) on our way to Montague Island, situated 150 miles south of Port Jackson, and about 5 miles off the coast. The sea was moderately calm, and in the clear moonlight the rugged shore and coastal range were visible for such time as we remained on deck. At daylight the island was dimly seen, and as we gradually approached the great grey lighthouse came in view, with the first rays of the sun glinting on its lantern and flashing back myriad beams from the mirror-reflectors.

As the *Bega* slowed down about half a mile from the island, we eagerly scanned the black rocks, and noted with satisfaction that there were clouds of white-winged birds hovering over sea and land, while great white clusters on the slopes denoted the presence of groups of breeding birds.

The Admiralty chart gives the native name of this island as "Barunguba," which I am informed by Mr. Henry Dawson, of Sydney, means "Off the Coast." The island is 110 chains in length, and 40 chains in width at its widest part. The area, as measured by a planimeter on the chart, is approximately 310 acres. It is formed of two islets, connected by a narrow neck, through