

white faintly washed with yellow; rest of under surface, including abdomen, sides of body, and under tail coverts, dark brown, relieved with yellowish-grey striations; irides dark brown; legs slate coloured; bill black. Measurements in inches:—Total length, 8.25; tail, 4; culmen, .75; tarsi, 1.

Observations.—The habitat of this bird is Rottnest Island, off Fremantle, Western Australia, where it is common. It is very like *Ptilotis sonora* in general appearance and colour markings but may be readily distinguished from that species by being more robust in all its proportions. The under surface of the new bird is uniformly dark brown, with striations, and lacks the whitish abdomen and under tail coverts of *P. sonora*. There are also many other minor differences in colouration. I have compared a number of the skins of the new species with skins of *P. sonora* from the mainland, Bernier Island, North-West Australia, South Australia, and Victoria. The type is in the Western Australian Museum, Perth, the director of which institution, Mr. Bernard H. Woodward, F.G.S., was kind enough to place the skins at my disposal. In the vernacular I suggest the name Rottnest Honey-eater for the new bird.

Stray Feathers.

Frogmouths and Butcher-Birds.—While reading my brother Harry's notes from Cape York, in *The Emu*, I was struck by the partiality which the Manucodes evince for the Black Butcher-Bird, apparently in almost every case building their nests close to those of the Butcher-Birds. In this connection it may be worth mentioning that some years ago, at "Coomoo," my brothers noticed a like partiality of the Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*) for the common Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*). Numbers of the Frogmouths' nests were found one season, and, if not placed directly in the tree where the Butcher-Bird had its nest, were built in close proximity. Recognizing, I suppose, the Butcher-Bird's pugnacious habits, the Frogmouths took the opportunity of building near, so that the Butcher-Birds should defend their neighbours' homes as well as their own.—ERNEST D. BARNARD. Kurrajong, Gladstone (Q.), 29/7/11.

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Scolding Honey-eaters.—I notice some smaller birds have a very keen eye and a good memory for their enemies, the Hawk tribe. Some time ago I shot a Sparrow-Hawk which was making itself a nuisance in the poultry-yard, and, not making good work of the skin, threw it out on to a rubbish heap where the winter's pruning had been deposited. It fell down among the branches for some distance, almost out of sight; but it was not long before it was discovered by some Fuscous Honey-eaters (*Ptilotis fusca*), which assembled round the Hawk-skin, making a

great fuss over their discovery. That was, at the least, two months ago, and I think that almost every day, and sometimes three or four times a day, those half-dozen cheeky little Honey-eaters go right down in the heap of twigs and sit close beside and scold the unresponsive heap of feathers. Their hatred seems to be confined to themselves, for no other birds seem to take any interest in their actions.—ERNEST D. BARNARD. Kurrajong, Gladstone (Q.), 29/7/11.

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Two Nests of *Alcyone pusilla*.—Dr. Wm. M'Gillivray, Broken Hill, sends the following field-notes received from his collector (Mr. J. M'Lennan) at Cape York :—

"17/2/11.—Went out to big swamp behind Charo mangroves. Flushed a Little Kingfisher (*Alcyone pusilla*) from its nest in a mass of earth adhering to the roots of a fallen tea-tree in the middle of the swamp. The nest contained five eggs, slightly incubated. Tunnel 6 inches long and a little over an inch in diameter. Egg-chamber circular, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Dimensions of eggs in mm. :—17 x 15, 17 x 14, 17 x 14, 17 x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$, 17 x 14.

"30/2/11.—Went down to mangroves, Mud Bay, near Somerset. Saw a couple of *Alcyone pusilla* in mangroves along the creek. Walking through the mangroves, close to the edge of the swamp I flushed one of these birds from its nest in an old white mangrove stump; it contained five fresh eggs. Nest, a hole drilled in rotten mould; tunnel 6 inches long, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. Egg-chamber 5 inches across, 4 inches deep. The bird returned whilst I was taking the eggs, and sat a few feet away. The nest was 5 feet from the ground. Dimensions of eggs in mm. :—18 x 15, 18 x 15, 18 x 15, 18 x 15, 18 x 15.

"Both clutches are close-grained, smooth, slightly lustrous, though a good deal nest-stained. The eggs are rounded in shape."

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Jottings from the Mersey, Tasmania.—Large numbers of the handsome New Holland (White-bearded) Honey-eaters (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*) have been in this district all the winter. They frequent chiefly the Cape wattles and tree lucernes, both introduced plants, which flower profusely during the cold months, and furnish sustenance to the *Meliphagidæ*. I would recommend those who have fair-sized gardens to plant these trees round the fences, when they will be provided with entertainment by birds during the "dead" season. The lively movements of the "White-beards" as they dash from tree to tree, or hang back downwards under a spike of blossom while engaged in extracting nectar, and their sharp notes, sounding like "Whiss! whiss!" are everyday sights and sounds here. A few "Crescents" (*Meliornis australasiana*) also make their appearance, but not in such numbers as their congeners. They seem to remain in pairs, and do not flock like *M. novæ-hollandiæ* on the approach of the cold season. During the cold snap at the end of April I witnessed

the last companies of Swifts (*Chaetura caudacuta*) migrating from this coast, the fall of temperature and the rough winds causing Wood-Swallows (*Artamus sordidus*) to disappear at the same time. The Wood-Swallows had, as usual, been congregating for some weeks previously in paddocks near the sea, the company being largely composed of young birds. In the middle of May two pairs of Striated Field-Wrens (*Calamanthus fuliginosus*) were consorting in a friendly way by the roadside, the males of both pairs engaging in song. Early in July these Field-Wrens were singing everywhere, and at the same period numbers of Flame-breasted Robins (*Petræca phænicea*) were about the paddocks in company with numerous "greys" of the same species, several pairs of Scarlet-breasted (*Petræca leggii*), and some of the engaging little White-fronted Chats (*Ephthianura albifrons*). During the second week of July, while out one sunny morning, I noticed a female *Malurus* fly up from the tangle by the roadside to a telegraph-wire, where she perched and sang a hurried little strain, in the same way as previously noted in my paper on the Blue Wren.* The same morning, almost at the same spot, a Brown-tail (*Acanthiza diemenensis*) was uttering its sweet spring notes. On 30th July a Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) was observed flying about in the sunshine over our little town. Large numbers of the elegant Silver Gulls (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) have been feeding in paddocks partly submerged by the rainfall, and during the first week of August parties of Yellow-billed Terns (*Sterna bergii*) were engaged in fishing off the coast.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., Devonport.

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The Coorong Islands.—The following appeared in the *South Australian Register* for 18th August, 1911:—"The Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. C. Vaughan), with a view to prevent the destruction of birds and birds' eggs on the islands of the Coorong—the principal nesting-place in this State for various species—has arranged to place the islands under the care of the Ornithological Association of South Australia, as lessees. This will give the Association the right to prevent persons from trespassing on them, just in the same manner as they would be prevented from entering upon private property. The law does not allow sportsmen and others to traverse private ground with guns, traps, or other means of catching or destroying birds, and the object of the Commissioner in asking the Ornithological Association to take charge of the islands is to place the reserves in the same category as other private property. The Association will take the necessary steps to notify that trespassers will not be permitted on the islands, and the police will also receive strict instructions to see that the notices are obeyed."

Mr. J. W. Mellor, of "Holmfirth," Fulham, states that the idea of securing the bird islands in the manner reported originated

* *Emu*, vol. ix., p. 151.

with him. He got the Commissioner to agree to the leasing of the islands by the Association. Captain S. A. White, of the Reedbeds, S.A., has been making strenuous efforts for the last twelve months to secure legislation for the protection of the Pelicans and to prevent the so-called aborigines from robbing the nests of Black Swans and Pelicans. The name of the R.A.O.U. has been used in urging such legislation.

When in South Australia last July I spent a week on the Coorong, and visited Pelican and Jack's Point Islands. On both islands there were hundreds of old Pelicans' nests, and on Jack's Point Island the birds were commencing to lay. Forty-two nests contained eggs (full clutch of two in most instances). On Pelican Island two fresh eggs (broken open and the contents eaten by Crows) were found. Lying about the island were the headless bodies of a number of Pelicans, evidently victims of the massacre of 1910. During my wanderings among the islands and along the lake shore I observed not more than 300 or 400 Pelicans. Before the slaughter which aroused such indignation among bird-lovers of the Commonwealth there must have been thousands of these birds on the Coorong. The island rookeries will now, thanks to the efforts of the South Australian Ornithological Association, be less liable to receive visits from bird-killers and egg-robbers; but the Coorong is a wild, lonely lake, and it will be difficult to enforce the laws of sanctuary.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne.

From Magazines, &c.

Another Great Kingfisher.—At the monthly meeting of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, held 31/5/11. Mr. A. J. North exhibited an example of a small race of the Great Brown Kingfisher (*Dacelo gigas*) from the Jardine River, Cape York Peninsula, which he proposed to distinguish as a new sub-species, naming it *Dacelo maclennani* (M'Lennan Kingfisher), after Mr. J. M'Lennan, collector for Dr. Wm. Macgillivray.* The bird is said to bear a similar relation to *D. gigas* as the Fawn-breasted Kingfisher (*D. cervina*) does to *D. leachii*.

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Blue "Budgerigar."—In the *Avicultural Magazine* (May and June, 1911), Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., deals interestingly with the keeping and breeding of Parrakeets in captivity. Taken as a tribe, Mr. Seth-Smith states, these birds, as a whole, "are hardy, easy to keep, and very showy." He cites an instance of an extremely rare and beautiful variety of blue Warbling Grass-Parrakeet, or "Budgerigar" (*Melopsittacus undulatus*). Mons. Pauwels, a Belgian aviculturist, exhibited a pair in London last year. In this variety the yellow pigment was absent, the bird being of a most beautiful blue, with a pure white face and black bars over the back.

* See *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, vol. xxii., part 7 (July, 1911), p. 609.