

White Goshawk is liable to be mistaken for a White Cockatoo, and it seems not improbable that this fact has given it an advantage by enabling it to approach small birds, which do not take it for a Hawk. It is noteworthy that the White Goshawk and White Cockatoo have almost identical geographical ranges, both being found in Tasmania, Eastern and Northern Australia, and New Guinea, and both being absent from Western Australia south of the Fitzroy River.

To return to the white variety of the Black Moor-Hen. The occurrence of such an individual in the Rail family may be regarded as of special interest in view of the former occurrence of a White Gallinule on Lord Howe Island. This bird was at one time supposed to be a species of the New Zealand genus *Notornis* (or *Mantellornis*), but Mathews showed in his "Birds of Australia" that it was really a white species of *Porphyrio*, and Iredale, who subsequently examined the only known specimen, at Vienna, confirmed this view.

Another White Gallinule, from New Zealand, is in the Liverpool Museum, and was made the type of a supposed species (*Porphyrio stanleyi*); but it is almost certain that this bird, which was subsequently also referred to *Notornis*, is only an albino specimen of *Porphyrio melanotus*. Probably the White Gallinule (*Porphyrio albus*) of Lord Howe Island furnishes us with an example of a white form which had entirely replaced the original-coloured species from which it sprang. If the Grey Goshawk should become extinct in Australia, the White Goshawk would provide a similar instance, and this may be what has actually happened in Tasmania.

The White-winged Wrens.

BY W. B. ALEXANDER, M.A., R.A.O.U., KEEPER OF BIOLOGY,
MUSEUM, PERTH (W.A.)

I HAVE been much interested in Mr. Campbell's various notes on *Malurus leucopterus* and its allies published in recent numbers of *The Emu* (xvii., p. 177; xviii., p. 260; xix., p. 1). Of the three forms figured in the coloured plate (Plate I., vol. xix.), this museum possesses three adult males of *Malurus leucopterus* from Dirk Hartog Island, three adult males (including the type) of *M. edouardi* from Barrow Island, and 21 adult males of *M. cyanotus* from a number of localities in Western Australia and one each from South Australia and the Riverina (N.S.W.) (For the insular forms, except the type, we are indebted to Messrs. H. L. White and T. Carter.)

The names given on the plate make it appear that the three forms are considered as distinct species. Mr. Campbell, in his

articles, however, states clearly that he only regards the differences between the two black-and-white island forms as entitling them to sub-specific rank. He refers to the Blue-and-White Wren as "the mainland representative" of the Black-and-White species, and apparently quotes with approval Mr. Whitlock's view that the two insular forms have evolved independently from the mainland form. Now, it appears to me that if we accept this view we must either regard the three forms as distinct species or as geographical races (sub-species) of a single species. Mr. Mathews considers the Black-and-White Wrens as entitled to generic distinction, constituting the genus *Nesomalurus*, with one species and two sub-species, whilst for the Blue-and-White Wren he also creates a genus, *Hallornis*, again containing one species and two sub-species (eastern and western). This implies that the two island races are more nearly allied to each other than they are to the mainland form; but if the two island forms have been derived independently from the mainland form, then they must each be more nearly related to that form than they are to one another.

Now, on examination of the 23 adult males of *Malurus cyanotus* referred to above, I find that they vary very considerably, some being quite bright blue and others dark; moreover, most of the darkest birds are from the most south-westerly part of the range of the species—viz., the Wongan Hills and Yandanooka. Mr. Milligan pointed this out in *The Emu*, vol. iii., p. 223. This seems to me to lend strong support to Mr. Whitlock's theory, as a bird from the Wongan Hills is almost exactly intermediate in colour between the lightest form of *M. cyanotus* and *M. leucopterus*. I have no specimens from the coastal district between Geraldton and Dirk Hartog Island, but it seems just possible that specimens approaching *M. leucopterus* even more closely may be found in this little-known region in the future, though Mr. Carter found the Blue-and-White Wren on the Edel-land Peninsula.

In view of these facts, I think that both Blue-and-White and Black-and-White forms should be regarded as geographical races of a single species, and should be named—

Malurus leucopterus leucopterus, Dirk Hartog Island.
 " " *cyanotus*, Australia.
 " " *edouardi*, Barrow Island.

If they are entitled to generic rank the genus name would be *Hallornis* instead of *Malurus*.

I do not know of any quite similar instance among birds, but the common kangaroo furnishes a close parallel, as we have *Macropus giganteus giganteus* on the mainland and *Macropus giganteus fuliginosus* in Tasmania and Kangaroo Island. I believe that careful comparison would indicate sub-specific differences between the two island races of kangaroo, in which case the parallel would be exact; but this is not the place to discuss the question.