

a more favoured "seat" for young birds than on the back of the adult. Very young birds conveyed about in this manner are returned to the nest—that is whilst any eggs are left, or, after that, during the period that the nest is in use—when all is quiet. When all eggs are hatched the nests are usually almost immediately abandoned and soon become sodden and water-logged, though nearby "rests" may be kept in order. If the young are tardy in leaving the nests or platforms the parents will call them by a soft clucking sound.

Under normal conditions the Black-throated Grebe is double-brooded. Edwin Ashby, in his interesting paper in *The Emu* (vol. XXXII, p. 250) records three broods in the case of birds that he had under observation. Breeding extended over a period of four months.

Individual birds, instead of slipping quickly off the nest and disappearing quietly as is customary, will reappear about ten feet away, raise themselves almost upright in the water and beat the wings vigorously, at the same time calling shrilly with a succession of chattering notes. This note is often given on other occasions but not so vehemently. Birds that nest in cover will go well out into the open water, where they become prominent, in order to indulge in this performance. The mate will often "display" much farther away, keeping up the loud chattering call, evidently to distract attention from the locality of the nest. A single sharp note, or a succession of them, something like the call of a Black-fronted Dotterel, but louder, is a common call of the species.

Flight, albeit a somewhat laboured motion along the surface of the water, is far more customary than often thought to be the case. Other Grebes approaching the nest site are frequently driven away by the birds flying at them, alighting nearby and buffeting them with head and wings. After the interlopers are driven away recourse to flight in returning to the nest is rarely indulged in.

An Albino Moorhen.—Some months ago an albino Moorhen (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) was sent to the Australian Museum, Sydney, from the Clarence River, N.S.W. The specimen is an adult male with the plumage almost entirely white. A wash of grey appears in the feathers on the sides of the head, neck, and the breast, with a few darker feathers in the tail. The frontal-plate, bill, legs and toes are coloured as in a normal bird, as were the eyes, although the claws are whitish and translucent without any pigment. Albinism has been recorded on a number of occasions in the Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio melanotus*), and, in the case of the birds at one time living on Lord Howe Island, seems to have become a dominant factor, although it is apparently a rare occurrence in Moorhens. A previous record of a Moorhen showing albinistic tendencies appears in the *Journal and*

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Western Australia (vol. II, 1915-6 (1917), p. x). See also *Emu*, vol. XIX, pt. 2, Oct. 1919, pp. 136-7, for further notes and a photograph of this specimen. The bird from the Clarence River was taken at Koolkhan by W. Cameron on February 10, 1940. Skin no. 0.57500, ♂, Australian Museum collection.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Sydney, N.S.W., 13/9/40.

Reviews

Psittacosis.—Under this heading K. F. Meyer (*Auk*, vol. 57, p. 330), deals with this virus disease which induces human illness and occurs as an avian infection amongst several groups of birds, not being confined to the Psittacidae. As a disease of man it may follow either fleeting or prolonged exposure in the proximity of diseased birds in captivity. The infection spectrum is broad and probably the virus is an effective population regulator. The avian infection is frequently latent. The Faroë investigation with *Fulmarus glacialis* already commented upon (*Emu*, vol. XXXIX, p. 66) indicated that the disease was entirely conditioned by the handling of young and not adults, confirming the recognized high susceptibility of immature Budgerygahs. Recent experiments deny that seasonal disposition to respiratory infection favoured the spread of psittacosis.

Of birds that may spontaneously be infected the following Australian forms are included:—*Trichoglossus moluccanus*, *T. chlorolepidotus*, *Kakatoë sanguinea*, *K. galerita*, *K. roseicapilla*, *Leptolophus hollandicus*, *Platycercus elegans*, *P. eximius*, *P. adscitus*, *Barnardius semitorquatus*, *Psephotus haematonotus*, *Aprosmictus scapularis*, *Melopsittacus undulatus*, and *Poëphila gouldiae*.—C.E.B.

Gould League Notes.—The publication of the Gould League of N.S.W., for 1940, shows an increasing interest in activities and scope. Birds frequent school-grounds where not discouraged, sanctuaries are growing, a public spirit is being fostered amongst children. Essays for competitions, accounts of camps, more substantial articles by members of our Union and others, poems, drawings and photos.—all combine to make an attractive 56 page booklet. Here is an active expression of progress in bird-protection and appreciation of matters ornithological: the less-spectacular aspect is a mental one, the instilling into youthful minds of a realization of the place of birds in the scheme of things. Some offset to the destruction, by louts with wretched pea-rifles, of the trusting birds of picnic and tourist areas, that still is far too common, is necessary. The Gould League has the scope and material and it is hoped that it can exercise and use it judiciously.—C.E.B.

Homing Experiments.—Early tests were with land birds, but the lack of information as to the birds' fore-knowledge of the terrain made the experiments unsatisfactory. D. Lack and R. M. Lockley (*British Birds*, vol. 31, p. 242), recently experimented with Manx Shearwaters (*Puffinus puffinus*). In *The Auk*, vol. 57, p. 61, Donald R. Griffin ("Homing Experiments with Leach's Petrels") records work carried out with nesting *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* in the Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick. The sexes incubate for three or four days, then change over, so that some birds, released, possibly, just at the change, did not provide effective checks. In some cases birds released nearer "home" were more tardy in returning than distant releases.

The general experiments ranged over releases from 25 miles to 470 miles away, the last being 360 miles from land. At 135 miles practically 100% returned quickly, the estimated speed of 80% of returns being 60 to 70 miles per day. Special groups, released at 710 miles, returned at mean homing speeds of 101.8, 88.7 and 71