

and tracks to various army camps. The bird was brownish, more reddish about the wings and back than the one I have seen in Australia, and it occurred in small flocks, coming about tents and mess huts, pouring out a merry little song in the mornings and at dusk, but remaining silent in the heat of the day. This and the Fantail-Warbler (*Cisticola*) were often the only birds to be heard amid the extensive grassy hills and open valleys which are so characteristic of the Moresby country.

The genus ranges well beyond Australia and New Guinea, extending to Java, Borneo, Siam, India and Africa. Actually, *Mirafra javanica* is the type species of the genus, named by the American naturalist, Horsfield, in 1821, from specimens collected in Java. The same species was later found to occur in New South Wales, but not before Gould, in 1847, believing it to be different, had named it *Mirafra horsfieldi*, in honour of Horsfield. The birds from Java and Australia, having been accepted as conspecific, the species then assumed the one name, *javanica*; but always has the Australian bird since been known in the vernacular as the Horsfield Bush-Lark.

It is as well to point out here that I have referred to only one species of the genus as occurring in Australia. The *Official Checklist* gives a second species, namely *Mirafra woodwardi*, the Cinnamon Bush-Lark. It seems, however, to be generally accepted that *woodwardi* is but a rufous form of *javanica* and not a distinct species. Birds having a lot of red in their plumage are restricted largely to a reddish soil. Mathews lists this reddish form as a subspecies, and this is supported by others.

Tale of the Terns.—Under this title a paragraph appears in *Wings*, the journal of the Royal Australian Air Force (vol. 2, no. 13), which provides another example of the 'ravages of war.'

It deals with 'Wideawake' Terns (*Sterna fuscata*) on Ascension, 1,400 miles from the 'Brazilian Bulge.' It has been invaluable to the United States Air Force, "for without it the Lockheed Lightnings could not have flown the southern Atlantic route. U.S.A.A.F. engineers invaded Ascension just 2 years ago and spent 3 months constructing a base. They called it Wideawake Field. The fact is that thousands of terns, locally called Wideawakes, packed the runways with their nests. They refused to move. The Americans imported cats, but the felines ran for their lives before the big birds." Then it was suggested "that the troops get to work destroying eggs until the terns gave in. So the troops ate eggs, trampled eggs and threw eggs. The terns gave in. The island is actually British."—M. S. R. SHARLAND, Richmond, N.S.W., 31/3/44.