

"With the greatest pleasure I read in *The Register* an article headed 'Arbor and Bird Day.' I have been waiting for this move a long while, and at last it has come. It is only through the children that we can hope to educate the coming generations to recognize the great part our native birds play in the welfare of the State, quite apart from preventing much cruelty in destroying our feathered friends. It is a fitting thing that Arbor Day and Bird Day should be held at the same time, because one depends on the other. It has been a great wonder to me that this fact has not been noticed before. Much has been done and said (quite rightly, too) by our Forest Department and National Park Board, but how strange that bird protection has not come into the question, when we know that science, and also many thousands of practical demonstrations, have shown us that the flora is dependent on the birds for its existence as much as the birds are dependent on it. They are the eradicators of hundreds of different kinds of pests and blights which attack our timber trees and our flora in general, and their fertilization, also, is almost dependent on the native birds in many cases. The Education Department is to be heartily congratulated on this important undertaking. It has a wonderfully energetic officer in Mr. Edquist, who has only lately taken to this study, but is rapidly furnishing himself with a practical knowledge of our native birds. All the many ornithologists in South Australia will do all they can to help the movement. I am proud to think of being one of the original members of the first Ornithological Association of Australasia—the S.A.O.A.—which has done an immense amount of work, not only in the advancement of ornithological science, but also for the protection of birds. The South Australian Education Department is the first to form school clubs, and may this increase each year; but the Victorian Department has had two annual 'Bird Days,' and has started the Gould League for the protection of native birds. The membership up to date is 25,000."

Stray Feathers.

GROUND-LARK'S NEST ON HIGHWAY.—Whilst strolling down the Chadstone-road here last week I flushed a Ground-Lark (*Anthus*). On looking down I found the nest in a clump of onion weed, with three eggs in it, right in the roadway—in fact, only two yards from the centre, and over which spot numbers of horses and cattle pass every day.—J. F. BRADLY. Murrumbena, 22/9/10.

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FOSTER-PARENT OF FAN-TAILED CUCKOO.—I have received from Mr. C. E. Ortin, a new member of the R.A.O.U. in Western Australia, a letter with the following postscript:—"While my men were engaged in scrub-cutting a few days ago in the densest thicket, they flushed a bird from a nest which turned out to be a Redthroat's (*Pyrholaemus brunnea*), containing two eggs, also egg of Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*). I believe this is a new foster-parent for this Cuckoo."—J. A. ROSS. Melbourne, 30/9/10.

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PLUMAGE OF THE FEMALE PINK-BREASTED ROBIN (*Petræca rhodinogaster*).—Mr. O. L. Adams obtained one of the above species, when on one of his surveying trips to the

Patersonia district, which had a very distinct pink breast. He then consulted Hall's "Key," also North's "Nests and Eggs," but neither author had mentioned this fact. Mr. Adams was then anxious to procure another female to confirm the first one. When up at the Tunnel, in October, 1910, I obtained one which also had the very distinct pink breast, while several others were noticed at close quarters.—P. C. THOMPSON. Launceston.

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NATIVE CAT AND HERONS.—A short while back a ploughman taking his horses to the river for their mid-day drink saw two Herons (*Notophox novæ-hollandiæ*) feeding on a grassy flat, probaby on worms, as it was just after a heavy rain. A tiger-cat (*Dasyurus maculatus*) came out of some blackberries by the river and ran swiftly toward the Herons. When these raised their heads the cat flattened himself on the ground, in the language of my informant, who halted his horses to watch the impending tragedy. When the birds resumed feeding the cat again ran forward, to halt motionless as they raised their heads. In this way he had succeeded in getting within a few yards of the birds, when one of the horses shook itself; the Herons heard the chains rattle, looked around, saw the cat, and flew off. The cat ran back to the blackberries without delay.—O. L. ADAMS. Launceston, 17/9/10.

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NEST AND EGGS OF THE ROCK FIELD-WREN.—Description of two clutches of eggs of *Calamanthus montanellus* (Milligan), M. 535, taken by Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock in the Stirling Ranges, Western Australia:—

No. 1 (taken 12/9/1910).—Clutch four. Eggs fresh. Shape, swollen oval; texture of shell fine, smooth and glossy; ground colour chocolate-red (not unlike that of *Chthonicola sagittata*), with a few spots of a darker shade scattered over the surface and merging into an indistinct cap at the larger end of the egg. Very slight variation in the colouring of the four eggs.

Measurements in inches:—(a) .83 x .58, (b) .80 x .58, (c) .81 x .6, (d) .82 x .59.

Nest.—Dome shaped, composed of loosely woven dried grass, with a lining of small feathers; entrance at the side on a level with the ground. The structure is like the nest of *Pyrrholæmus brunnea*, and placed in a hole scratched in the ground. Situation—a rocky ridge.

No. 2 (taken 4/9/10).—Clutch three. Eggs fresh. Shape, swollen oval; texture of shell fine, smooth and glossy; ground colour light chocolate-brown (similar to *C. fuliginosus*), a few spots or splashes of a darker shade scattered over the surface, and forming rather a distinct cap at the larger end.

Measurements:—(a) .84 x .64, (b) .84 x .63, (c) .83 x .64.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees.

WHITE - SHOULDERED CATERPILLAR - EATER (LALAGE TRICOLOR).—A few years ago this handsome and useful bird was comparatively rare about this district. During the last few nesting seasons, however, I have noted a steady increase in their numbers; and now they are becoming plentiful. At the present time three pairs are nesting in our orchard—one nest being placed high in a cherry-plum and the other two low in pear trees. In the first-mentioned tree a pair of birds built last year, and safely reared a brood of young; so, presumably, these are the same birds again returned. I am always glad to see them about the place, not only on account of their insect-eating proclivities, but also for their bright, cheerful ways and musical chattering song. The other day I spent a pleasant half-hour watching one of these birds—a male—weaving the fibres of its tiny nest around the slender branchlets in one of the fruit-trees. A pretty picture he made, sitting lightly in a fork of two limbs, his head moving briskly from side to side, as he wove each fibre into position. Both sexes assist in the building of the nest and incubation of the eggs, but I find the male bird, if anything, the more industrious of the two. Certainly, he is a very energetic helpmeet.

Last month I found three of these nests in a local park—a favourite place for marauding boys—simply by watching the birds for a few minutes. In this place the nests are invariably situated high up in pine trees. The birds display but little fear of human beings, and will sit or fly close by while the nest is being examined. In this connection a little incident that came under the notice of a large number of picnickers at a spot in the Pyrenees Mountains, last week, called forth many expressions of admiration. Right in the centre of the picnicking ground a pair of Lalages had built their nest low in a wattle-tree. Never having been disturbed, the sitting bird had become so tame and trustful that she would allow visitors to approach quite closely, and even stroke her back, as she sat sheltering her single young one.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vic.), 22/11/10.

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FIELD NOTES FROM BROOME HILL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.*—9th April, 1910.—*Neositta pileata* (Black-capped Tree-runner).—Unusual numbers of this bird were seen on above date. While driving along a high road a distance of 6 miles, small parties of three to six birds were seen all the way.
7th May.—*Cuculus inornatus* (Pallid Cuckoo) first heard.
21st June.—*Ninox ocellata*.—A specimen of this Owl that I

* These notes were accompanied by an interesting set of photographs taken by Mrs. Carter, but it is regretted want of space did not permit of their reproduction.—EDS.

dissected contained the two legs and feet and many feathers of a Parrot, apparently *Barnardius zonarius*.

30th June.—When Mrs. Carter was driving along the road, a pair of *Uroaëtus audax* (Wedge-tailed Eagles) that were perched in a jam-tree (*Acacia*) on the edge of the road followed the buggy for some distance, flying and hovering at a height of only a few feet above it, much to the alarm of the horse. Mrs. Carter said she could have struck them with the whip, but was doubtful of the consequences if one fell in the carriage or upon the horse. I tried to find these Eagles subsequently, but without success, so I poisoned the carcass of a lamb in one of my paddocks where I had seen Eagles; but, although one of them undoubtedly visited the body, the only result was the unfortunate death of six Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) and a fine Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea orientalis*) that I found lying by the lamb.

× 8th July.—*Podicipes novæ-hollandiæ* (Black-throated Grebes) made their appearance upon two of my stock tanks—an earlier date than usual.

✓ *Podargus strigoides*.—While walking through one of my paddocks, my attention was attracted by what seemed to be a strip of dry bark in the small upper branches of a York gum tree. As fallen bark is not usually seen in the smooth upper limbs, I used my field glass, and found that the object was a fine Tawny Frogmouth, its body compressed and elongated to an extraordinary length. I am well acquainted with the upright pose of this bird, resembling the dead limb, but the horizontal position was new to me. I may mention that the Owlet Nightjar (*Egotheles*) has the habit of compressing the feathers when it knows it is observed in the open (where it is rarely seen), thus making it appear very small.

8th July.—*Cacomantis flabelliformis* (Fan-tailed Cuckoo) first heard and seen.

21st May.—A fine specimen of *Diomedea exulans* was received by me, having been captured on a steamer not far from Cape Leeuwin. It measured 3 feet 6 inches in length, 9 feet 6 inches expanse of wing, and weighed 15 lbs.

17th July.—*Zonifer tricolor* and *Petræca campbelli* (Black-breasted Plover and Western Scarlet-breasted Robin) were first observed, and a nest of the White-fronted Bush-Chat (*Ephthianura albifrons*) containing three eggs was observed.

× 23rd July.—*Pachycephala rufiventris* (Rufous-breasted Thick-head) made its appearance, uttering its pleasant song.

✓ 29th July.—*Petræca goodenovii* (Red-capped Robin) appeared in considerable numbers on its winter migration.

✓ 3rd August.—*Zosterops gouldi* (Green-backed White-eye) still about in flocks.

× 9th August.—A nest of the Long-billed Honey-eater (*Meliornis longirostris*) was seen containing two eggs.

- 12th August.—A few Black-and-White Swallows (*Cheramæca leucosternum*) were observed, flying, as usual, at a considerable height.
- 18th August.—A nest containing three incubated eggs of the Gilbert Thickhead (*Pachycephala gilberti*) was found in the dead prickly leaves of a stinkwood tree. The nest was 5 feet from the ground, and was made of twigs and fibrous bark. The lining consisted of fine fibre and grass, with a little sheep's wool. The male bird was sitting.
- 20th August.—A party of Banded Wrens (*Malurus splendens*) was noted, one male bird being in full plumage. On 28th September I saw another family 50 miles from here, in which was no male bird in full plumage, one only having partly assumed its breeding feathers.
- 26th August.—The family of eleven Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) which had been about the house, feeding on scraps from the kitchen, since my return in April, was reduced to four birds of last year, which were in the immature brownish plumage, the others having paired and gone away to nest. At date of writing (29th October) these four birds are still about the house and in full moult. According to my experience, this Magpie does not breed until two years of age.
- 1st September.—A nest of *Calamanthus montanellus* (Rock Field-Wren) was found on a sand plain, built as usual in a slight hollow in the ground. It contained two Wrens' eggs and one of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*). I think this is the first record of this Cuckoo laying in a Rock Field-Wren's nest. White-shouldered Caterpillar-eaters (*Lalage tricolor*) made their first appearance, and the White-tailed Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus baudini*) were making ready their nesting-holes.
- 4th September.—Observed a nest of the Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*) containing two incubated eggs, about 10 feet from the ground in a sheoak tree (*Casuarina*). The male bird was sitting. The Western Thickhead (*Pachycephala occidentalis*) was noted singing, in immature plumage.
- 5th September.—Young Black-breasted Plovers (*Zonifer tricolor*) were observed about ten days old.
- 14th September.—The Black-throated Grebes had eggs in their nest on one of my stock tanks, as I could see them from the edge of the water. On the 19th I waded to the nest to see how the eggs were progressing, but found only one egg and the nest forsaken, and a second nest had been built about 20 yards away, which contained three eggs. Another egg, at least, must have been subsequently laid, as four young birds hatched out on 13th October.
- 15th September.—Two eggs of the White-tailed Cockatoo (*C. baudini*) were brought to me, having been just taken from the

nest. The young bushman who brought them assured me that an interval of a week or more elapses between the laying of the first and second egg, and that as soon as the first egg hatches the birds leave off sitting, and the second egg is usually left in the nest, infertile.

17th September.—The Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) had eggs, and the Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*) made its first appearance this season.

19th September.—Pallid Cuckoos began to have a break in their voices.

21st September.—For the first time here, I observed an undoubted pair of Spotted Scrub-Wrens (*Sericornis maculata*). I observed them through my binoculars for some time. A pair of Black-and-White Fantails (*Rhipidura tricolor*) had built a nest and were sitting on three eggs on the top of a flood-gate across the creek. After some trouble in locating the exact tree, I found a nest of the Ground Graucalus (*Pteropodocys phasianella*) built about 30 feet from the ground on the forked limb of a York gum (eucalypt). Upon examining it, found it contained two young about a week old, one of them being much larger than the other. The nest was very flat, and almost impossible to be seen from the ground below. It was placed in the fork without any attachment, and was made of fine grass, roots, weeds, and a little moss, lichen, and sheep's wool intermixed. It was sundown when I first identified the tree in which the nest was built, after long watching the parent birds flying with food for the young. I stood below the tree trying to locate the nest with my binoculars for some time before I became aware that in the field of view was one of the parent birds perched on a straight dead branch immediately above the nest. The branch and bird were both in a perpendicular position, and the bird kept motionless, stretched out to its utmost length, with the beak pointed upwards, and could very easily have been overlooked. I have not read of this protective pose of the Ground Graucalus.

23rd September.—Found a Bronze-wing's (*Phaps chalcoptera*) nest, 5 feet from the ground, in a stinkwood bush. One egg was in the nest, and the other on the ground, both having been pierced in several places by some sharp instrument, and as a fine lace lizard (iguana) was near the foot of the bush I took it to be the egg-destroyer. About 100 yards distant was another nest of the Bronze-wing, built about 25 feet from the ground in the fork of a sheoak tree.

On 12th October a Bronze-wing Pigeon flew from the hollow spout of a large white gum tree, and on exploring the hollow I found there were two incubated eggs. The male bird was sitting. This laying in holes was a new experience to me, and I do not find it mentioned in ornithological works.

- 25th September.—Noted fledged young of *Calamanthus montanellus* and *Climacteris rufa* (Rufous Tree-creeper). Mr. Hassell presented me with a skin of the Black-cheeked Falcon (*Falco melanogenys*), which he had shot in order to identify a species of Hawk that he said was in habit of killing the Mallee-Fowl (*Lipoa*).
- ✓ Saw nest of Western Fantail (*Rhipidura preissi*), containing three eggs, built about 8 feet from the ground on a pendent bough of the river casuarina (sheoak).
- ✓ *Notophox novæ-hollandiæ* (White-fronted Herons) have fledged young birds.
- ✓ *Porphyrocephalus spurius* (Red-capped Parrakeet) and *Barnardius zonarius* have young in nests.
- ✓ 2nd October.—Climbed to a nest of *Cracticus leucopterus* (*destructor*?) (White-winged Butcher-Bird), which was built in the small twigs of a dead jam-tree, about 15 feet from the ground. It contained four eggs.
- ✓ Found a nest of *Ptilotis cratitia* (Wattle-cheeked Honey-eater) that contained two fresh eggs. It was about 3½ feet from the ground, in a low bush. Most of this species had young birds at this date.
- ✓ 4th October.—Observed well-grown young of the Black Duck that could fly a short distance, and on 22nd October saw a brood of twelve young, newly hatched, on one of my tanks.
- ✓ 5th October.—Many young Magpies in the nests.
- ✗ 8th October.—Fresh eggs of the Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) sent to me from the south coast.
- ✓ Found nest of *Oreoica cristata* (Bell-Bird) built in the hollow of a charred sheoak stump, about 4 feet from the ground. The male bird was sitting on three eggs, and the usual complement of hairy caterpillars, alive.
- ✓ 9th October.—Noted nest of *Podargus strigoides* containing two eggs.
- ✓ 11th October.—Observed young of *Glycyphila melanops* (Tawny-crowned Honey-eater) in the nest. Here we have one of the disadvantages to students of the extreme "law of priority." Why should the very appropriate, well-known name of *fulvifrons*, which has stood for 70 years, be altered to that of *melanops*?
- ✓ 12th October.—Young Leaden Crow-Shrikes (*Strepera plumbea*) fledged from the nest.
- ✓ 21st October.—While at work with one of my men a jam-tree (*Acacia acuminata*) was felled. I noticed before the tree fell that there was an old nest of the *Pomatorhinus superciliosus* (White-browed Babbler) about 25 feet from the ground in the small, upper twigs, and that a *Collyriocincla rufiventris* (Buff-bellied Shrike-Thrush) was moving about it in an agitated manner, but never thought it could have its eggs there. How-

ever, on examination I found that the Thrush had built its nest, composed of coarse pieces of bark and fibre, inside the old nest of the Babbler, and that its three fresh eggs had been broken by the fall. This incidentally confirms Mr. A. J. Campbell's supposition in "Nests and Eggs," page 92. Although this species of Shrike-Thrush is very common in this district, I have so far only seen one other nest, and that was about 10 feet from the ground, built in the fork of a jam-tree, and contained two fresh eggs on 21st October, 1907. It is a curious coincidence that the two nests should have been found on the same day of the same month.

X 22nd October.—Observed small young in down of *Zonifer tricolor*.—TOM CARTER. Wensleydale, 31/10/10.

Y P.S.—7th November.—Black-and-White Fantail.—Apparently the same pair of birds has now a second clutch of three eggs in the nest built on the flood-gate.—T. C.

From Magazines, &c.

BIRD'S NEST IN SHEEP'S WOOL.—Mortlake, Tuesday.—While a sheep was being sheared on Mr. A. Burger's farm, Telanga, near Penshurst, a Starling's nest was found in the wool. The nest had one egg in it.—*Age*, 23/11/10.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.—Following some observations made in *The Emu*, vol. x., p. 58, respecting an article by Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant (*Ibis*, October, 1909), Mr. Tom Carter, who possesses considerable local knowledge, both ornithological and geographical, has further criticised the latter at some length in *The Ibis* for October, 1910. Referring to a supposed egg of *Climacteris wellsi* (Grant) in Mr. A. J. Campbell's collection, a description is given in a footnote hereunder,* also descriptions of the eggs of *Certhionyx occidentalis* (Grant).

Reviews.

["The Birds of Dumfries-shire," by Hugh S. Gladstone, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Witherby and Co., London. Price, 25s. net.]

THIS handsome volume is an addition to the county avifaunas with which British ornithologists are so well provided. Its author, who was well equipped for his pleasant work, has been able to make his "contribution to the fauna of the Solway area" of permanent value by the co-operation of careful observers in

* Egg indistinguishable from that of *C. rufa*, but slightly smaller—dimensions, .92 x .74 inches. Eggs of *Certhionyx occidentalis* may be described as oval in form, slightly glossy, light buffy-white in colour, finely spotted with dark brown or umber, with dull underlying markings of grey. Not unlike eggs of *Artamus sordidus*. Dimensions in inches :—(1) .92 x .66, (2) .9 x .66, (3) .9 x .65.—A. J. C.