

seeking the warmer and more congenial shores of Australia; and it is singular, indeed, that not one of these birds possesses any claim to song. In Western Australia there is not, strictly speaking, any winter season. Snow, even in the highest mountain peaks of the extreme south, is a rarity. The seasons are only two—the hot and the rainy. The latter is never what might be called really cold, except, perhaps, on the occurrence of an occasional blow from the Antarctic. Immediately after the first rains at the back end of the hot season numerous flowers and shrubs at once come into bloom, and they are followed by a succession of others during the rainy season. There is not, in fact, any stagnation of vegetable growth in any month of the year. Even many of the birds nest and bring up their young in the early part of the rainy season. With climatic conditions such as these, what is there to prompt spontaneity of song to any degree. Certainly bird-song is heard in greater volume in the months corresponding to the springtime of South-Eastern Australia, but that fact is principally due to migrants who have arrived from the northern parts of the State to breed, and who aid to swell materially the volume by their love-song.

A parallel is afforded in the vegetable life of the State. Our indigenous trees are not deciduous, and even deciduous trees introduced from colder climates evince a disposition to maintain the old leaves until the reappearance of the new. The budding into leaf and the blossoming of trees and the outburst of the song of birds are simultaneous in cold climates.

The foregoing remarks are not intended to imply that the Western Australian birds are songless. On the contrary, they do possess song in a marked degree, but that is not conspicuous at one particular time more than another, for the reasons stated. For instance, the species under notice carols in the same manner as the Eastern birds, but not so markedly or spontaneously at certain periods. This partially suppressed characteristic is not alone peculiar to the species mentioned, but it is observable in many others, notably the Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*) and the Dusky Miner (*Manorhina obscura*).

[The plate (No. X.) of *Gymnorhina dorsalis*, male, female, and immature female, should have appeared in connection with Mr. Milligan's paper in the previous part, page 99, but was unavoidably held over.—EDS.]

Some Rectifications in Tasmanian Ornís.

BY (COLONEL) W. V. LEGGE, F.Z.S., &c.

ACANTHIZA EWINGI (Gould).

IN my address at the annual Congress I recently had occasion to allude to the fact that Ewing's Tree-Tit still stood as a valid Tasmanian species, although it had been omitted from the list of the genus in the B.M. Catalogue. It was pointed out that

this omission was probably owing to Dr. Sharpe having only those examples in the national collection to judge from, which were evidently belonging to the open-country form, *A. diemenensis*, which is more easily procurable than the first species, *A. ewingi*. Personally, I had shot the bird several times, but had not preserved the skins; and I omitted the species by oversight in my list. It is satisfactory that when attention was drawn to this *Acanthiza* at the Congress, conclusive evidence as to its existence should so soon have been forthcoming. There is a specimen in the Museum among the birds in a small collection recently acquired from a private source, and which came from the New Norfolk district; another was procured in the gullies on Mt. Wellington by Mr. A. G. Campbell, and a comparison of these examples with *A. diemenensis* furnishes the following details:—

A. ewingi.—The principal characteristics of this species at once distinguished from *A. diemenensis*—the rufescent forehead, the greater length of tarsus, and the dark “winglet” (at point of wing). To these may well be added, as a marked feature, the greater length of tail. Minor differences are—darker upper surface in *ewingi*, darker throat, the dusky bases of the feather showing more conspicuously than in the common species, the fulvous edgings of the primaries, and the darker abdomen.

Gould shows the dark winglet in his figure, and notes it in a description, also the length of tarsus, which feature has been evolved, no doubt, from the bird's mode of life in frequenting undergrowth.

The measurements of two specimens—one of *ewingi* and one of *diemenensis*—from the same district (New Norfolk) are:—*A. ewingi*: wing, 1.95; tail, 1.7; tarsus, 0.95. *A. diemenensis*: wing, 1.93; tail, 1.59; tarsus, 0.75.

This species has recently been procured by Mr. A. G. Campbell on King Island and mentioned by him in his article (*cf.* vol. ii., p. 207). An examination of the specimen from that island and one from Mt. Wellington reveals the same characteristics as noted here, and the extra length in tail and tarsus of the same. The King Island specimen is slightly paler on the forehead than the examples from the mainland, and the light tip and dark subterminal bar on the tail slightly more pronounced; but this may be an individual characteristic.

ACANTHIZA MAGNIROSTRIS (Campbell).

This is a well-marked insular form. Besides having the bill stouter and longer than in *A. diemenensis*, the colouration of the under surface is darker than in that species. The wing is likewise $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch longer, and the tarsus stouter.

MICROPUS PACIFICUS (Latham).

This Swift was omitted from my revised “Systematic List” of Tasmanian Birds, prepared for the A.A.A. Science Congress two years ago. I observed several examples in a large

flock of *Chaetura gigantea* which were "dashing" about the homestead in February, 1896, and, as my list was prepared in a great hurry for the Congress, the addition was overlooked.

It is satisfactory to find that Mr. Littler has also observed this species in the Launceston district. It doubtless visits Tasmania frequently in company with the "Spine-tail" in continuation of its wanderings down the east coast of Asia to the Australian Continent, but has been overlooked in former years by observers in this island. *Micropus pacificus* is also an occasional visitant to New Zealand.

(?) CLIMACTERIS SCANDENS (Temminck).

On more than one occasion I have seen a "Creeper" in the Tasmanian forests, generally in those little "companies" of birds that are never met with in sunny spots in the heavy timber-land above. *Sericornis*, *Acanthornis*, and *Acanthiza (ewingi)* are the genera that usually collect together. In March, 1902, I met with one example in the myrtle forests at the back of Quamby Bluff, on the track to the Great Lake, and had an opportunity of observing it through my binoculars.

Recently, having occasion to refer to the genus with B.M. Catalogue, I find that specimens of *C. scandens* and *C. pyrrhonota** are both in the B.M. collection, collected by that indefatigable field naturalist, Ronald Gunn, Esq., and in all probability procured in the northern forests of the island. The bird I last met with, on the occasion named, corresponded in character with *C. scandens*, but not having procured the specimen, I note it here with a query, notwithstanding, in the face of the evidence afforded by the example in the national collection, both species can with propriety be added to the Tasmanian lists.

The Nutmeg (Torres Strait) Pigeon.

THE following report by Mr. Frank L. Jardine, Somerset, has been forwarded to the Under-Secretary, Brisbane, and kindly sent on by him to the Aust. O.U. It will be noted that Mr. Jardine deals with a district north of that as to which complaints of reckless destruction arose, and, presuming he speaks of the same variety of Pigeon, evidently knows little of what prevails lower down the coast than his own station, while the months of incubation—"middle of August to March"—do not agree with the observations of more southern writers. The slighting allusions to those who started the agitation may be allowed to pass unnoticed:—

Carpophaga luctuosa† is the earliest of our many migratory birds, being

* *C. pyrrhonota* is now generally accepted to be the young of *C. leucophaea* (i.e., *scandens*), Gould having inadvertently transposed the names *leucophaea* and *scandens* under his figures. It is quite probable that the White-throated Tree-creeper is found in Tasmania, seeing it is a common species near the coast line on the mainland immediately opposite.—EDS.

† *Myristicivora spilorrhoea*. — EDS.