

BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*).—This, one of the finest game birds we have in Australia, is the most common of all the Ducks in this locality; when no Black Duck is to be found here it is almost certain there is no other species of Duck within a great many miles. A fair number of them breed here every year; their favourite nesting-places are the hollow red gum trees growing by the river.

TEAL (*Nettion gibberifrons*), SHOVELLER (*Spatula rhynchotis*), PINK-EARED DUCK (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*), and HARDHEAD (*Nyroca australis*).—These four species of Ducks are only to be seen here in a wet season, when they arrive in very large flocks. I have no record of any of them breeding here, but no doubt some of them do when the season is favourable.

MUSK-DUCK (*Biziura lobata*).—Only a single bird of this species have I seen throughout this district. This bird was in a very small dam. After watching it diving for a few minutes, I saw it sneak out of the water and go under a tuft of grass, where I caught it. I took it home and put it on a large dam near my house, but it did not remain there more than a few weeks; it was last seen upon a lagoon about a quarter of a mile away.

EMU (*Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ*).—A bird which was very plentiful only a few years ago, but I have not seen one within fifteen miles of the river since the 1902 drought. That disastrous year killed the Emus in very great numbers throughout the State. During 1900 one pair of birds became so tame that they came right up to the house and took all the quinces off two trees. The following year I saw an old bird with seven young. This fine species was looked upon as a nuisance not so very long ago, and on a great many stations men were employed to destroy them. Now I think the squatters who were once so anxious to eradicate them would be glad to see a few Emus about their property. I am glad to hear from squatters further west that Emus are on the increase again.

## The Food of the Birds.

BY FRED. L. BERNEY, RICHMOND, N.Q.

As this is an important subject, I have recently been saving, from time to time, the stomachs of such birds as came into my hands; and, feeling that I was not personally in a position to do them justice, I forwarded a small collection to Mr. A. S. Le Souëf, Zoological Gardens, Sydney, who kindly undertook to examine them.

In many cases the contents were in too comminuted a state for more than a general decision, such as "beetles and small flies," but where the condition was such as to give hope of actual identification of the insect or what not that the bird had been feeding on, Mr. Le Souëf sought the assistance of the authorities of the Australian Museum, who were good enough to go carefully into the matter, with the result that I think the subjoined list is of sufficient importance and interest to publish in *The Emu*.

The stomach of the Night-Heron (No. 120) proved to be of

considerable value, as it contained a rare crab that previously had been reported only from Cape York and Thursday Island.

It will be noted that my list contains practically no seed-eaters, I having separated these and forwarded them to Mr. F. M. Bailey, the obliging Queensland Government Botanist, who is propagating the seeds obtained thereby and will record the result. Mr. Le Souëf, too, I may add, is growing such seeds as he found in the stomachs sent him.

It will be noted also that no mention of honey is made in connection with any of the *Meliphagidæ*, but this, I think, would hardly be discernible in a dried state.

If readers would only realise what a lot of really useful information is thoughtlessly lost when a bird is thrown away, they would at least save some of it by preserving the stomachs of such as they are able, and this is easily done by removing the outer fleshy covering and pinning on to a wall, out of reach of cats and mice, until dry. Careful identification of the bird is necessary, and a record should be kept of locality and date.

I feel sure that Mr. Le Souëf, or any of the authorities, would be glad to receive specimens from anyone who, like myself, has not got a microscope at hand or a museum at his back.

Subjoined are the names of birds, with contents of stomachs, and the birds were all obtained about the Flinders River, N.Q., on an area of a hundred miles to the west of Hughenden.

- 116. Rufous Song-Lark (*Cinchorhamphus rufescens*). — Caterpillars, beetles.
- 117 and 136. Black-faced Wood-Swallow (*Artamus melanops*). — Beetles of the families Cisterlidæ and Allecula.
- 118. Spotted Crake (*Porzana fluminea*). — Water beetles.
- 119. Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*). — Beetles of the family Tenebrionidæ; 75 per cent. beetles and 25 per cent. of ground spiders.
- 120. Night-Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*). — Crab (*Thelphusa transversa*).
- 121. White-shafted Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*). — Small flies and a few small beetles.
- 122. Black-headed Diamond-Bird (*Pardalotus melanocephalus*). — Moth eggs, flies, and caterpillars.
- 123. Black-headed Diamond-Bird (*P. melanocephalus*). — Flies, caterpillars.
- 126. Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*). — Numerous small beetles.
- 127. Babbler or Chatterer (*Pomatorhinus temporalis*). — Small beetles.
- 129. Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*). — Caterpillars, ants.
- 130. Little Friar-Bird (*Philemon citreogularis*, sub-sp. *sordidus*). — Spiders, many Coccidæ (scale-insects), a fly of the family Muscidæ, beetles.
- 131. Red-capped Robin (*Petroeca goodenovii*). — Small flies and beetles.
- 133. Brown Honey-eater (*Glycyphila ocularis*). — Flies and small beetles.
- 138. Flock-Pigeon (*Histriophaps histrionica*). — Vegetable matter, seeds.

144. Brown Shrike-Thrush (*Collyriocincla brunnea*). — Beetles and caterpillars.
148. Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*). — Few small beetles.
149. Ground-Lark (*Anthus australis*). — Small beetles.
151. Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*). — Spiders of the family Amaurobius, lepidopterous larvæ, beetle grubs, some heteromorous beetles, wasps, ants, grass seeds, marsh-mallow seeds, and leguminous seeds.
152. White-throated Fly-eater (*Gerygone albigularis*). — Small flies, wasps.
154. Pale Flycatcher (*Microeca pallida*). — Numerous white ants.
155. Lesser White-plumed Honey-eater (*Ptilotis leilavalensis*). — Small flies, beetles, &c.
156. Lesser White-plumed Honey-eater (*P. leilavalensis*). — Small flies, wasps, &c.
157. Red-throated Honey-eater (*Entomophila ruficularis*). — Caterpillars, beetles, flies.
158. Black-headed Diamond-Bird (*Pardalotus melanocephalus*). — Flies, wasps, &c.
159. Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*). — Many hairy caterpillars, probably species of *Teara*; some butterfly larvæ, probably *Danais menippe*.
160. Striated Tree-runner (*Sittella striata*). — Caterpillars and a few beetles.
161. Striated Tree-runner (*S. striata*). — Caterpillars.
165. Black-breasted Lark (*Cinclorhamphus cruralis*). — Grasshoppers, cockroaches.
167. Black-breasted Lark (*C. cruralis*). — Beetles, crickets, &c.
169. Black-breasted Lark (*C. cruralis*). — Beetles, flies, &c.
170. Black-breasted Lark (*C. cruralis*). — 75 per cent. beetles, 25 per cent. vegetable matter.
171. Brown Quail (*Synæcus australis*). — 1 beetle, vegetable matter, and thistle seeds.
176. Lesser Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus*). — Caterpillars, grubs.

## Magpies or Crow-Shrikes.

BY ISAAC BATEY, DROUIN (VICT.)

MY knowledge of these fine birds began with *Gymnorhina leuconota* at Redstone Hill, near Sunbury, in 1846, and in later years extended to Woodend, where *G. tibicen* was met with. The White and the Black-backs were found there living amicably together. About five years ago, having to go to Tandara, some 27 miles north from Bendigo, a young pet *G. tibicen* was seen quite different in marking to those met with further south. The black bands across the backs of the Woodend birds may be set down as narrow, whereas in the Tandara specimen the black ran up towards the base of the skull.

According to Mr. A. J. Campbell's work, "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," *G. leuconota* ranges over New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, but there is a big gap in that