

89. WATTLE-BIRD (*Anthochaera carunculata*).—Found with young flying.

90. SPINY-CHEEKED HONEY-EATER (*A. ruficularis*).—Very numerous at Kow Plains.

91. PIPIT (*Anthus australis*).—Plentiful on the plains, nests containing eggs and young being noticed.

92. SPOTTED-SIDED FINCH (*Staganopleura guttata*).—Two specimens seen at Tailem Bend.

93. CROW (*Corvus coronoides*)*.—The conspicuous nests of these birds were very plentiful, and all contained well-grown young.

94. BLACK-WINGED CROW-SHRIKE (*Strepera melanoptera*).—Fairly well distributed from Tailem Bend to Kow Plains. Often flushed from the ground in the short mallee. Several nests containing young, and one containing three eggs, were found.

95. WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*).—Very numerous.

Our list of birds, although not so large as that of last year, numbering only 95 species, is certainly more classic, and embraces about 20 new ones. No. 87 of last year's list, *Eurostopus albigularis*, should read *E. argus*. Before concluding I must return thanks to Mr. J. Scarce for his guidance and the good work he did. Mr. Tully and his wife also have our heartfelt thanks for their kindness and generosity in housing us and making our stay enjoyable.

The Bell Miner (*Manorhina melanophrys*).

BY F. E. WILSON, MELBOURNE.

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 25th November, 1909.)

THE following notes concerning this interesting Honey-eater have been collected during the present year (1909), at Beaconsfield, which lies 29 miles east of Melbourne, amongst the hills which form a southerly spur of the Dandenong Ranges. This is now, I believe, the nearest locality to the metropolis where the Bell Miner may be seen. The district is bounded by the Cardinia Creek on the west and the Tumuc Creek on the east. On the Cardinia Creek there are two fairly large colonies of these birds, and about five miles east on the Tumuc Creek is a third colony. Altogether there are, I think, at present about 50 pairs of birds.

On the 1st May, in company with my friend, Mr. L. Chandler, I observed a pair of young birds being fed by the parents. One of the young, about a week from the nest, was taken for a specimen, and found to measure 4 inches in length. The upper surface is covered with slaty coloured feathers, very slightly

* Probably the Raven (*Corone australis*), unless a skin was examined.—EDS.

tinged with green; the under surface is of a pale yellowish colour. Primaries and secondaries are well advanced, and the tail quills are just showing. The legs, bill, and gape yellow; bare skin about the eye of a dirty greenish colour. On 12th June I obtained the other young one, in order to determine the growth, and found that it measured 4.625 inches in length.

Bell Miners are remarkably local, inhabiting as they do a small stretch of fairly low timber and scrub bordering the banks of some creek, usually not more than 250 yards long by about 150 yards wide. They never venture outside the boundaries, and resent intrusion by other birds, although I recently found a nest of the Mountain-Thrush (*Oreocichla lunulata*), containing two young, which was placed in the centre of one of their colonies. The following is an extract from my note-book:—"As I was sitting watching the Bell Miners an immature Pennant Parrakeet (*Platycercus elegans*) perched on a sapling close by. It was instantly attacked by one of the fraternity and quickly put to flight, this time alighting just across the creek. His first assailant seemed satisfied and desisted from the attack, but a neighbour opposite took up the cause and "Elegans" shifted further down the creek again. But even here he was within the sacred precincts, and a third time trouble awaited him; he was eventually forced to leave the locality altogether." I have also seen Bell Miners squabbling with Crescent Honey-eaters (*Meliornis pyrrhoptera*), Harmonious Shrike-Thrushes (*Collyriocichla harmonica*), the Black-and-White Fantail (*Rhipidura tricolor*), and the White-throated Tree-creeper (*Climacteris scandens*). Bell Miners are seldom seen on the ground except when drinking, and seem to spend most of their time on the low trees and saplings. Some of the birds especially appear to be of a very inquisitive nature.

When flying the Honey-eaters usually have their tail feathers widely spread, and rarely proceed more than 50 yards at a stretch. An exception to this was noticed in a case where a Tit (*A. pusilla* or *A. lineata*) had ventured too close to a nest of the Bell Miner which I had found. The Miner swooped on the Tit, which made off above the tree-tops, closely followed by the enemy. The chase was kept up for three or four minutes, and was by far the most sustained flight I have known a Bell Miner to make. The gum-trees (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*) in the district under notice are infested with a scale-like insect (*Spondylapsis eucalypti*). This, although by no means the only food of the Bell Miner, forms a large part of its diet. The birds also search very carefully all loose bark and *débris* hanging to the trees in the vicinity, from which they get a supply of beetles, &c. From the crop of one I took a small yellow beetle resembling the common ladybird.

The Bell Miner's principal note is a beautiful bell-like tinkle,

which, when uttered in rapid succession, has a most pleasing effect. This note has a marked resemblance to the distant jingling of cow-bells. A fairly good representation may be obtained by striking together two bars of wrought iron, one of which is suspended. Another note frequently used is almost an exact copy of the alarm call of the Noisy Miner (*Myzantha garrula*). Still another note resembles the squeaking of a door with rusty hinges. Sometimes although in the midst of the birds you will not hear a single tinkle, every bird using the note which resembles that of the Noisy Miner. One fine afternoon in June, at about 1 o'clock, I was at Beaconsfield and not a note could be heard, although up to this time the Bell Miners had been making an incessant din. The birds were all perched in the small saplings, seemingly asleep. When disturbed they uttered a note or two perhaps, flew a couple of yards away, then again were silent. The breeding season seems to extend almost through the whole year, as I have seen young birds just out of the nest in May, and others about four weeks old in October, also nests containing eggs and others being built through October and November. November, however, is perhaps the principal breeding month. The nest is usually placed from 3 feet to 12 feet from the ground. The tea-tree scrub (*Callistemon*) is generally the most favoured site, although I have occasionally seen nests in bracken fern (*Pteris aquilina*), peppermint gum saplings (*Eucalyptus amygdalina*), and a species of native aster.

Notes on the Satin Bower-Bird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*).

BY C. F. COLE, MELBOURNE.

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 27th January, 1910.)

FOR years many naturalists were puzzled regarding the blue-black plumage of the male Satin Bower-Bird, many being of opinion that it was due to the feeding of selected nestlings. The adult male has been called the king of the flock, owing, no doubt, to the fact that one of these dark-plumed birds is nearly always accompanied by a flock of the "green" birds. But dissection and the close observations of naturalists have now elucidated the problem.

The nest is usually placed in a fork and among the finer twigs of a dogwood, pittosporum, blanket, or wild musk tree, but sometimes in a eucalypt. I have seen a nest as low as 4 feet and as high as 15 feet from the ground. As far as my experience goes, Satin Bower-Birds nearly always choose the slopes to a creek fairly thickly covered with undergrowth, or a tree growing in the bed of a creek containing permanent water,