

that all were fed on insects when very young, and on berries only as they became larger and stronger. The *Loranthus* seeds evidently passed through the systems of the young birds very quickly, and were unharmed.

As the birds had become so trustful, we thought that it would be a pity to leave without taking some pictures which would illustrate how accustomed even shy birds will in time become to the presence of anything unusual. With very little trouble we induced the female to perch on our hands and feed the young. Similar photographs of the male could have been obtained had it not been that the day was far spent and the light useless for further camera work. After putting the young birds back in the nest and covering up our tracks in the vicinity as much as possible, we left the birds to enjoy the peace they deserved.

Some two months later we again visited the spot, and took the remains of the nest for closer examination. We also examined some *Loranthus* seeds which had passed through the young birds and had lodged on the branch of a sapling. All had firmly adhered to the branch, and had sent out small shoots. From our observations it would appear that, without doubt, the Mistletoe-Bird must be a very important factor in the spreading of *Loranthus*. We have watched other birds among the branches of the parasite when in fruit, but have not seen any of them eat the berries. On 1st November, 1915, just a year after our previous observation, we noticed that the *Loranthus* on the same hillside had not finished flowering. Some berries were forming, but none was nearly so far advanced as those noticed the same time last year. We observed two different pairs of Mistletoe-Birds feeding on the ripe berries of the native cherry tree: White-eyes and Yellow-faced Honey-eaters (*Ptilotis chrysops*) were doing the same. The berries were pulped for some time in the bill, and swallowed with the seed attached. The Mistletoe-Bird, however, appears to favour the *Loranthus* berries when they are available, as, during our observations last year, they did not eat the berries of the native cherry, although the tree, within a few feet of the nest, was in full fruit.

Notes upon the Yellow-mantled Parrot (*Platycercus splendidus*, Gould).

By H. L. WHITE, R.A.O.U., BELLTREES (N.S.W.)

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 10th November, 1915.)

SINCE the time when Gould described this bird, in 1845, from a specimen secured by Gilbert in the Darling Downs district of Queensland, no further knowledge appears to have been gained of its range or its habits. I am therefore venturing on what is practically new work. Authorities evidently took it for granted that *Platycercus splendidus* was a rare bird, of very restricted range; my observations tend to prove the contrary.

Although the two forms, *Platycercus splendidus* and *Platycercus eximius*, are very closely allied, no one can imagine Gould mistaking them. How does it come about, therefore, that the first-named is now found at "Yarrundi," close to Scone, New South Wales, where Gould had his headquarters for some time, and which is so frequently mentioned in his books? In notes upon *Platycercus eximius* he remarks * :—"It is found in great numbers in the district of the Upper Hunter." Such is not the case now, *Platycercus splendidus* being the local bird about "Yarrundi" and parts of the Upper Hunter north of that place. Gould apparently did most of his Upper Hunter collecting at "Yarrundi," three miles to the west, and "Segenhoe," five miles to the east of Scone, thence north to the Liverpool Range, this locality being now inhabited exclusively, as far as I can judge, by *Platycercus splendidus*. My collection contains skins obtained close to "Yarrundi" house, also from within the municipal boundary of the town of Scone.

As a boy, 35 years ago, I wandered over a very considerable portion of the Upper Hunter frontages, my people owning several large estates in the locality, and extending upwards of 30 miles both north and south of the town of Scone. I shot many "Rosellas," but cannot remember noting any which had the rich yellow colour of *Platycercus splendidus*. This is no proof, of course, but, taken in conjunction with Gould's statements, I am inclined to think that *Platycercus splendidus* is gradually moving south and displacing the Rosella, *Platycercus eximius*.

Before going further, it may be as well to explain to those who have not travelled over the Brisbane-Sydney railway that the Darling Downs district of Queensland adjoins the north-eastern corner of New South Wales. After leaving the border and coming south (in a direct line) about 60 miles, the town of Glen Innes is passed; another 60 miles brings us to Armidale, thence 60 miles to Tamworth, and a further stretch of 70 miles to Scone, which place I consider to be just about the southern limit of *Platycercus splendidus*.† How far west of the line the form extends I am unable to say, but not for any distance, I fancy. Fifteen miles south of Scone we have Muswellbrook, where *Platycercus eximius* is still the local form. Proceeding west from Scone, 30 miles in a direct line, Merriwa is reached; my skins show that *Platycercus eximius* is found there, while still further west, from Cobbora, Mr. T. P. Austin, R.A.O.U., has supplied me with many beautiful specimens of the same form, together with one skin of *Platycercus splendidus*. Mr. A. J. North quotes Cobbora as being a favourite haunt of *Platycercus eximius*, therefore we may safely place that bird as the local form.‡

Returning to Scone and going east, we find *Platycercus splendidus*

* "Handbook," vol. ii., p. 56.

† From each of the above-mentioned towns I have specimens of *Platycercus splendidus*, and none of *P. eximius*.—H. L. W.

‡ "Nests and Eggs," vol. iii., p. 136.

plentiful at "Belltrees," 20 miles away, while it is noted also from the Manning, Bellinger, and Clarence Rivers, all east coast waters. With the exception of an abnormally coloured specimen procured at Foster,* Mr. North does not mention *Platycercus eximius* from the north coast of New South Wales. If my observations be correct (the specimens speak for themselves), the whole of that part of New South Wales lying east of the Brisbane-Sydney railway line, as far south as Scone, is the habitat of *Platycercus splendidus*, while probably the bird does not extend very far west of the line.

Taking it for granted that Gould was correct in placing *Platycercus eximius* as our local bird at Scone, I did not pay much attention to the matter until the late severe winter, during which I fed the native birds in my garden. Gradually enticing the Parrots closer to the windows of my office, I at last induced the birds to feed from the verandah, where I first observed the dark yellow of the back feathers. A few specimens secured about a mile away convinced me that I was amongst *Platycercus splendidus* and not *Platycercus eximius*. I then approached friends in various localities north, west, and south of "Belltrees," with the interesting results stated above.

There is no doubt that the two forms are very closely allied, and many of the less brightly coloured birds are almost identical in shade; but a comparison of fully adult specimens shows differences which probably justify a sub-specific separation. The habits of the two forms are exactly similar, and the eggs are not separable.

I do not claim my deductions to be absolutely correct, but the above remarks may lead to further investigation, and the final clearing up of the mystery which has surrounded this interesting and "long-lost" bird.

[The re-discovery by Mr. H. L. White of the most beautiful Yellow-mantled Parrot is interesting, and demonstrates the value of close bird-observation in one's own district, as well as striving for knowledge in regions beyond.—EDS.]

Remarks on the Proposed Second Edition of the "Official Check-list of the Birds of Australia."

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E.

IN the October *Emu* there appears an account of the proposition to prepare a second edition, and comments are made with regard to my work on the birds of Australia. I propose to make remarks here illustrative of my conclusions, so that an "intelligent vote" can be taken in connection with them.

Firstly, I wish to thank the writer for the kindly appreciation

* "Nests and Eggs," vol. iii., p. 128.