

and rigid and only moves the lower part of its neck. This appears to be adopted the better to enable it to escape observation by keeping the bird continually rigid like the lower part of a reed-stem. This movement makes it look grotesque, and rather like a mechanical toy in action. »

The Little Bittern, as its name implies, is the smallest of its tribe and is a veritable pigmy when compared with the size of the common large Brown Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*). Owing to its size, the inaccessibility of its habitat, and the bird's stealthy habits, very few Australian ornithologists have seen this bird alive, and to most of us it has been a *rara avis*. For many years its nest remained undiscovered, and there have been few records of its discovery since. The nest is situated on a platform in the reeds and swamp vegetation and the clutch laid is usually four dull white eggs, quite distinct from the beautifully-tinted eggs of the larger species.

Taking all factors into consideration, the Little Bittern is a handsome bird. The feathers of the lower neck hang down in a tidy and attractive pectoral train, which when the bird is in repose adds considerably to its appearance. In life its legs are of a light greenish hue, whilst the pupil is an intense black with a light yellow iris.

I have not yet been able to discover whether the Little Bittern makes the deep booming note that is made by the large Brown Bittern. The only sound that I have detected is a note produced when the bird is angry; this note resembles "quark" and is uttered with a throaty timbre. The booming note of the Bittern when issued at night is supposed to have given the impression to the Australian aboriginals that a fearsome monster, the bunyip, existed in swamps.

Calls of the Frogmouth.—The Podargus has been very musical lately in the trees about my cottage, doubtless owing to the warm evenings of late September and the vicinity of the nesting-season. The male calls with a series of notes sounding to me something like "Did-did-doo! Did-did-doo!" repeated a couple of dozen or twenty times. The first two very rapid and slurred, the "doo!" strongly accented, and sometimes there is a sort of echo or response after the latter note, perhaps uttered by the female. If it is so, she gets in very promptly and in excellent time, reminding one of the female Whip-Bird coming in with the "double-chuckle" the instant her lord has finished his explosive phrase. The above call of the male Podargus is different from the "Oom!" sound, uttered while quietly sitting on an old paling-fence or low gum-bough at dusk. The former seems to carry more excitement, and was so strongly uttered during a couple of nights while rain was brewing that the whole atmosphere appeared to vibrate.—H. STUART DOVE, West Devonport, Tasmania (October 2, 1927).