

Notes on Wood-Swallows and Swallows of the Barlee Range, W.A.

The Barlee Range is situated about 110 miles inland (south-east) from Onslow. There are three species of Wood-Swallows found there—*Artamus melanops*, *A. personatus* and *A. minor*. *A. personatus* is a winter visitor, but the other two are residents. *Artamus melanops* is the commonest, and is to be seen hawking for insects all the year round. Its nesting habits depend chiefly on the rain. If it rains in February or March it nests then. If it rains in June or July it does so again. Therefore in this locality it may nest any time from February to November. This year (1933) it nested during March and April. The nest is usually placed in a low bush or fork, but never have I seen it in a hollow spout as noted by A. C. Cameron in *The Emu* (Vol. XXXII, p. 157). I agree with him as to the shape and colouring of the eggs being different according to seasons, but I also find that one year every nest may have four eggs, whilst other years (this year, for example), I have found no nest with more than three. I think the number depends on the season. The eggs this year are all the same shape—pointed at one end and similar to those of the Black and White Fantail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), whilst at other times they have been longer and more oval and with brighter spots. I have proved with some other species of birds that individual pairs of birds always lay the same type of eggs. I once noted three clutches of eggs of a pair of Black and White Fantails. They had a dark smudge on one side, and every clutch was identical. I do not think it applies to *Artamus melanops*, however.*

Artamus minor, the other local bird, is to be found haunting the cliffs and crags in hilly country—deep gorges especially. It nests in the crevices in cliffs, and I have also seen it take possession of a Fairy Martin's old nest. It never seems to leave the gorges.

Artamus personatus comes with the rain. Some years it is very common, and other years scarcely seen. This year large flocks appeared in March, but they did not stop to nest. They appeared again in May, but did not nest, and there are still a few about. Some years they nest here in large colonies—the nest being placed in any position—in a hollow limb or fork mostly—any height from 3 to 10 feet

*This confirms A. C. Cameron's remarks, *loc. cit.* - Ed.

from the ground. During November, December and January, these birds are rarely seen. The mask on the female is very indistinct.

Hylochelidon nigricans is common along the creeks where there are hollow gum trees. They seem to nest in company, as one often sees five or six hollows occupied in the same tree. The birds come out and circle around a few times—then back to the hollow. The hollows are lined with dead leaves. They have a habit of flying in and out hollows even if there are no nests within. *Hylochelidon ariel* is very rare here. I have seen three "clusters" of nests here in ten years. There was a colony of birds which built and started to rear young here last February. They built on an overhanging rock 3 or 4 feet above a pool. The creek came down high and washed them away. The birds had built years before up higher. Another group of nests I saw in 1925 in a cave about 200 or 300 yards from the Hardey River. I have seen *Cheramaea leucosterna* a few times, but the bird is very scarce. A few were nesting, I think, along the Hardey River in 1924, but I did not see their nesting site, although I saw about a dozen birds.—ANGUS ROBINSON, R.A.O.U., Ullawarra Station, Onslow, W.A., 14 6 33.

Notes on the Ground Parrot and Other Parrots.—Mr. W. S. Campbell, who is now 89 years of age, has a remarkable memory, and his recollections of the wild life inhabiting the environs of Sydney, upwards of sixty or seventy years ago, are full of interest. Recently Mr. Campbell wrote me about the Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*). In the same letter he commented upon the original illustration from a collection of early paintings in the Mitchell Library, a photographic copy of which appeared in *The Emu* (Vol. XXXII, 1933, pl. 33). His remarks, together with some notes on Parrots generally, are quoted below:—

From what I can remember of this parrot, the illustration seems to me to be too long in the body and the tail is rather long, but it is a great many years since I have seen a ground parrot. When a youngster, about seventy years or so ago, I used to see several in our paddock near the Parramatta River, seven miles from Sydney, or five in a direct line. I am under the impression that they used to feed on the tubes of several species of orchids which then grew plentifully everywhere. The *Dianthis* seemed to be the favourite. This at one time was made use of by the blacks, whose women dug them up with their "yam sticks" just as they dig up wild yams and grass roots in the Northern Territory. . . .

We used to have thousands of parrots at times when the Blackbutts (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) were in blossom, which occurred irregularly. I had a paddock of about three acres of these trees which I preserved. About sixty years ago the trees all blossomed at the one time and then the row! days and nights. We always had a few parrots knocking about. Budgerigahs, Rosellas, etc.

—K. A. HINDWOOD, R.A.O.U., Willoughby, N.S.W., 7 8 33.