

in the field, the difference between young males and females, unless one is in a familiar territory and knows the particular birds.

SUMMARY

The behaviour of the Rufous Whistler generally resembles that of other passerine birds which have been subjected to an intensive study by ornithologists for many years. This conflicts with the idea, still stubbornly held in some quarters, that Australian birds are, in some mysterious way, 'different' from related species in other parts of the world. Certain characteristics of a species, however, should not be ignored. In the case of the Rufous Whistler these may be briefly summarized as follows—

The male bird will, in certain circumstances, hold a territory for a number of years, possibly all his life, and the female will remain in the territory, though not necessarily in close association with him.

He will participate in all phases of the nesting cycle, with the exception of nest building, and at times seems to take a more than usual responsibility for the care of the young.

The female occasionally indulges in song, generally considered a male characteristic.

The species does not flock, but is found in family parties, and in association with other species, in the non-breeding season.

The species may be stationary in one part of its range and migratory in another. This point needs clarification.

In civilized areas, where remnants of the eucalypt forest exist, the Rufous Whistler can manage to live and rear a family.

And, also, as a final 'summary'—

A system of bird-banding is necessary if we are to complete a full life history of any species. Absence of markings on a bird can only make a life history study a rather laborious and long drawn out process and leave the observer with a series of unsolved problems on his mind.

Malformation in Straw-necked Ibis.—In 1932 (I regret not having a more accurate date) an Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) was seen perched on the dead limb of a tree thirty feet above a swamp south of Colac, Vic. Its bill was curved *up* instead of down with the same degree and shape of curve. It opened its bill and wiped it on the limb as I watched through field glasses. It is interesting to speculate how this bird ever came by sufficient food to keep it alive.

The swamp where it was seen is in a closely-timbered region where I have seen no other Straw-necked Ibis before or since.—A. GRAHAM BROWN, Colac, Vic., 24/2/49.