

was led to look into the subject with much interest, and it is a matter of wonder to me that collectors have not sifted this matter long since. Should my opinion be right or wrong, I trust it will have the effect of a more thorough ventilation of the subject being gone into. I here append the account of its discovery as I took it down from Mr. Cockerell's lips:—It was flying over the marsh, probably in search of wounded ducks, the feathers of which were lying about in great quantities, in some places as thick as if a pillow had been shaken over the ground, and I saw it give chase to the common blue heron. Its flight was very swift and skimming, and it made sharp and sudden descents upon any objects suitable for prey. It was exceedingly shy and it was only by concealing myself behind a bush and lying perfectly still that I was enabled to shoot it at a distance (afterwards estimated by stepping) of sixty or seventy yards, as it passed in its rapid career.

"The following is a description of *Circus fuliginosus*—Crown of the head dark sooty brown; cheeks lighter; basal portions of crown and neck feathers white; nape white, each feather with a broad mark of black down the centre; back sooty brown, the tips of the feathers lighter; quills shining sooty black, slightly tipped with buffish brown, the basal portions of the inner webs reddish buff; tail and wings without bars; chin buffish brown; breast and under-surface brown, with darker margins to each feather; under tail coverts buff passing into brown; thighs brownish red delicately streaked with brown; under surface of tail light grey; eyes light brown; length 24 inches; expanse 44 inches; wing from shoulder to tip, 16 inches."

In the four volumes of Diggles' coloured drawings of birds in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, drawing no. 27 in volume 1 is entitled "*Circus fuliginosus* (Diggles) Sooty Harrier." It is signed "S.D. Oct. 21, 75" and on the page opposite is written "*Circus fuliginosus* not in handbook".

Nesting Notes on the Red-backed Parrot

By P. A. BOURKE, Cucumgillica, N.S.W.

During the breeding season of 1950, I succeeded in overcoming the difficulties encountered in my earlier attempts to determine accurately the incubation and nestling periods of the Red-backed Parrot (*Psephotus hæmatonotus*)—see *The Emu*, vol. 49, p. 79. In that account reference was made to the fact that several pairs nested in hollow limbs fixed to fence posts at the local school. For the 1950 season I made a nest-box of rough boards and fitted a detachable roof. One of the limbs was replaced by this box, which the Parrots

readily accepted. Complete dates were obtained for the laying of eggs, hatching and fledging of the young, but, owing to my absence during the period from October 23 to November 5, I was not able to secure detailed notes on the development of the nestlings. My wife watched the nest and noted the dates on which the fourth and fifth nestlings hatched. As eggs were laid they were given a distinguishing mark of black Indian ink, and the nestlings were marked on the bill with the same medium.

It is not considered that records obtained at one nest are sufficient to enable a definitive determination of either incubation or nestling periods. These notes are submitted chiefly because they are definite records as opposed to the approximations (more or less) that I have given earlier.

Dates of Egg Laying

Date	Remarks
Sept. 23	First egg laid.
26	Egg broken—several pairs fighting over box.
29	One egg found at 7 a.m. No. 1.
Oct. 1	Two eggs at 7 a.m. No. 2.
2	Incubation commenced.
3	Three eggs at 7 a.m. No. 3.
5	Four eggs at 7 a.m. No. 4.
7	Five eggs at 7 a.m. No. 5.

N.B.—The box was examined twice daily—at 7 a.m. and again at approximately 5 p.m.

Dates of Hatching

Date	Egg No.	Remarks
Oct. 19	2	Young just hatched—still wet—9 a.m.
20	1	Second just hatched—still wet at 5 p.m. Nestlings have pink skin, long grey down, eyes closed.
22	3	Third hatched long enough to have dried at 12 noon.
24	4	Fourth nestling at 10 a.m.
25	5	Fifth nestling at 5 p.m.

N.B.—From October 17 on, the nest was examined several times during each day, at intervals of about three hours.

Dates of Leaving Nest

Date	Remarks
Nov. 19	One nestling departed during the day—nest examined at 6 p.m.
20	Second nestling departed before 8 a.m.
22	Third nestling departed during afternoon.
23	Fourth nestling departed during afternoon.
26	Fifth nestling departed between 6 a.m. and 6.30 a.m.

N.B.—All nestlings left the nest in the order in which they were hatched.