merely an intriguing illusion. Before this suggested relationship can be given any serious weight it must be checked by observations of migrating shearwaters in the open sea away from land influences. The ideal way would be to do this personally before publication, and either confirm or reject it. An opportunity to do this seems extremely unlikely. The suggestion is thus put forward in the hope that sea-borne observers will do so. Attempts will be made to obtain more land-based data.

The results are somewhat meagre and they pose almost more questions than they answer; also the species lacks definition. Nevertheless, these observations of local events may be of interest in view of the almost complete absence of anything else from the vicinity.

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Australian Bird Species in Korea

By H. L. BELL, Oxford Park, Qld.

Whilst on service in Korea in 1955-6 the writer took what opportunity offered to study the birds. Korea is very mountainous, with few plains, mainly along the larger river basins. The vegetation is (or was, as Korea is unfortunately being ruthlessly deforested) of a typically Eurasian type, with larches, pines, oaks, beeches and most of the typical trees of Europe. As can be expected, typically European species of birds dominate the avian scene, although some Oriental types occur. The climate is extreme, ranging from about 90 degrees Fahr. to —40 degrees F., although in the writer's locality (Kyonggi-Do Province) the temperature never fell below —10 degrees F. In winter, insect life is almost non-existent, so in general, the only birds remaining resident in winter are the omnivorous types such as magpies and ravens, the seed-eating species and certain water-fowl.

My first interest was to search for waders, Korea being a place where it would be possible to see these birds in the breeding plumage. The west coast of Korea is most suitable for these birds as the enormous tide-fall creates mud-flats of literally hundreds of square miles in area. However, I was doomed to disappointment, as I was only able to make one trip to the mud-flats—in late September—and saw from afar three lone sandpipers of an undetermined species.

Other bird observing, however, proved more fruitful. One interesting sighting was of our familiar Spine-tailed Swift which breeds on certain Korean off-shore islands as well as in Japan. It is interesting to note that the one bird I saw was seen on August 16, 1955—surely a late starter on the flight to Australia! I doubt if a Swift could winter in Korea, as flying insect life virtually disappears with the first frost.

Another of our familiar migrants was a little more common. Hearing a familiar harsh grating call on a hot summer day I thought "That's a Dollar-bird!" Yes, it was our own Broad-billed Roller (*Eurystomus orientalis*). This species is, or was, common in Korea and Japan, often being taken young and reared as a cage bird. However, the destruction of primary forest growth, with its gnarled hollow limbs for nesting holes, has reduced the Roller's numbers. In Japan the birds are known as 'temple birds' due to their frequenting the centuries-old *Cryptomeria* groves surrounding many Japanese shrines. I saw this species in such a situation at the famous Toshogu shrine at Nikko. Apparently, in Japan, these birds have acquired the habit of frequenting industrial chimneys—even nesting in nest-boxes thoughtfully provided for them! In our location in Korea, due to the almost complete deforestation, it was rather a rare visitor.

Two very common species found breeding on the large shingle beaches which are a feature of all Korean rivers were the Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) and the Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*). The Little Ringed Plover, an inhabitant of Australia's Near North, behaved exactly in the same manner as do our Red-capped Dotterels (Kentish Plover) with their broken-wing activity near the nest. Each pair appeared to keep to areas of roughly 200 yards square and no portion of shingle was ever devoid of a pair of these birds. The Little Tern was found to have a small nesting colony on a shingle island in the Imjin River, but I was unable to get out to them. Both species are migratory in Korea, and both disappeared in September. Just before leaving Korea in late March I saw a pair of the plovers at Inchon Harbour.

Other species seen included the Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), which in Korea occupies the same status as does the House Sparrow in other countries. The recent article on this species by Sage (*Emu*, vol. 56) tallies exactly with what I observed of it in Korea. Besides nesting in dwellings in the manner of the House Sparrow it also was found nesting in the structure of the massive stick nest of the Magpie (*Pica pica*), while those pugnacious birds were in occupation! The White Egret (*Egretta alba*) was very common, and, being highly esteemed in Korean legend, is given unusually friendly treatment by the local inhabitants. The common scavengers of the cities and harbours, as in Japan, was the Black-eared Kite (*Milvus migrans*), better known

in Australia as the Fork-tailed Kite. The Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) was also seen, indeed, in winter the birds of prey are numerous in both species and numbers in Korea.

On the voyage home in March-April 1956 an interesting observation was a small flock of birds which could only have been phalaropes, resting on the water off the Admiralty Islands. No doubt these birds will one day turn up on Australian shores.

A rather amusing anecdote was provided by a Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), obviously headed north from its stay in southern Asia, which alighted on the ship at dusk, off Cheju-do (Quelpart Island). On the next day we encountered rough weather and the Wagtail remained with us. The rough weather turned into a typhoon, so the Wagtail stuck fast to its new home. When the weather cleared the bird finally took leave of us—at Yap in the Carolines—2,000 miles south. Quite a puzzling discovery, perhaps, for some local bird watcher!

Measurements of Victorian Prions

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Notes on the first Australian record of *Pachyptila crassirostris*, based on a specimen identified by Dr. D. L. Serventy, were published by N. F. Learmonth (*Emu*, vol. 57, pp. 57-9). Reference is there made to a '*crassirostris*-type' bird found near Cape Otway in August 1956, and donated by Mrs. Denney of Glen Aire to the National Museum of Victoria.

The following notes on that skin and on Victorian specimens of *P. turtur* may therefore be of general interest.

When I first saw the bird brought by Mrs. Denney I was of the opinion that its bill proportions, more so than its bill dimensions, differed somewhat from those of typical *turtur* and that the bird might prove to be *crassirostris*. Also, in view of the range of variation obviously existing in the National Museum series of *turtur*, it was felt that more data on the range of variation occurring, or possibly occurring, in *P. crassirostris*, were at least desirable before the bird could be confidently identified.

Following my examination of the Portland *crassirostris* specimen, kindly returned to Victoria by Dr. Serventy, and the publication (as previously referred to) of Serventy's notes and measurements of this bird, the questionable Cape Otway specimen and all skins of *turtur* (taken in Victoria) in the National Museum collections have been re-examined and measured, the system of measuring being the same as that used by Serventy. In order to obtain consistency in measuring technique and to make comparisons as objective as possible, the Portland *crassirostris* specimen has been