

**Bird-notes from Eungella.**—After re-visiting the Atherton Tableland-Cairns-Innisfail area in October-November 1964, I flew south to Mackay and then went by car some 50 miles west to the Eungella Range, rising above 2000 feet in the process. In the large, well-endowed, well-controlled national park of that highland I saw two avian species not met with farther north, namely the Regent Bowerbird—which here appears to reach its northern limit—and *Meliphaga frenata*, a species hitherto known as the Bridled Honeyeater but which can more usefully be termed the Mountain Honeyeater.

As was indicated by J. S. Robertson in his informative "Mackay Report" of 1962 (*Emu*, vol. 61, p. 272), this honeyeater has a very distinctive voice. The notes are strong and assured, and in fact I supposed at first that they were those of a spirited ground-dweller, the Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren; but, in this case, the singers were in the tops of lofty trees, there feeding among flowering mistletoes.

In general, my bird-list for the area agreed with that of Jack Robertson, with an element of luck added by the sight of two occupied nests of the Buff-breasted (Noisy) Pitta, *Pitta versicolor*. One of these was located between the buttress-roots of a jungle tree which two foresters had felled. The beautiful bird had flushed from her three eggs during the sawing operation but had returned later, and she was at peace on the nest, now covered with sawdust, when I saw her. The second nest (a miniature edition of that of a Lyrebird) was placed at two feet upon a decayed stump. Empty and damp when first found, it appeared to have been deserted, but a casual inspection a few days later revealed two of the thrush-like eggs. They were, however, stone cold, and I wondered if the Pitta has the Lyrebirds' habit of leaving the eggs for a time before brooding begins.

Nests on a much more extensive scale were seen on November 3 (Melbourne Cup Day!) when, after an arduous mountain climb with three foresters, I examined a breeding-site of the Grey Swiftlet, *Collocalia francica*, at the head of the rugged Finch-Hatton Creek. Like Messrs. Robertson and Hamilton in 1959, I became somewhat knee-sore, and got myself into a smelly condition, through crawling over the rocky and dung-strewn floor of the large yet low cave of the Swiftlets. But, if the experience was much more trying than my visit, with E. J. Banfield, to a nesting cave on Dunk Island 43 years previously (*Emu*, vol. 35, p. 317), it was none the less interesting.

In the brief time available—brief because of odour and lack of ventilation—I saw on two sections of the ceiling about 200 of the queer little nests. Each was made of fibre and saliva, and most appeared to contain either a single egg or a newly hatched nestling. This tally, it may be noted, contrasted sharply with the number recorded in 1959 (only about 25), but in that visit only matches were used, whereas I had a torch. Numbers aside, what impressed me most was the wonderful agility of the moth-like birds—their aerial evolutions above the great gorge and their remarkable ability to dash from bright sunlight into the dark low cave without striking a wall or ceiling.

It may be added that I gave a general account of the nature of this haunt of Swiftlets in *People* (Sydney) on March 24, 1965, and John Orrell presented in the same journal, on May 14, an illustrated discussion of a recent visit to another *Collocalia* cave on Bedarra Island.—A. H. CHISHOLM, Sydney.