

Museum, Leiden (Holland) and the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University.

Any interested person is advised to contact the Secretary, P.O. Box 635, Port Moresby, or to contact the Papua-New Guinea Museum on arrival in the Territory.—H. L. BELL, President, April 1967.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SHERBROOKE SURVEY GROUP

The Sherbrooke Survey Group (V.O.R.G.) has been banding nestling lyrebirds in Sherbrooke Forest, Vic. since 1958. Weekly visits to the forest have resulted in over five hundred reports being filed and indexed. From this mass of data there have emerged a number of new facts, some promising leads, and some figures on population estimates, nesting success and, chick and adolescent survival. One paper is in the hands of the editor and others are in the course of preparation. It is considered desirable at this stage to submit a preliminary report.

Population

An estimate, based on counts in sample areas, sweeps through the forest with teams of up to thirty people in line, nesting density and success, and, survival rates for chicks and adolescents puts the population for the entire 1960 acres of the forest at between 100 and 130 birds.

Nesting

Nesting success is better than 80%, the annual crop being about 20-25 chicks.

Male at nest

It has been found that the male lyrebird is well aware of the location of the nest and visits it from time to time, both casually and in response to alarm calls before and after the hatching of the chick.

Hens fighting

Hens which nest close together have been observed to indulge in claw to claw combat and it is believed that one will crush the nest of the other.

Old male retaining territory

One old male (Spotty) clung to his territory for at least three years beyond his breeding powers.

Polygamy

It has been proven with three separate males in different seasons and territories, that each male has usually three, but sometimes four mates. His display mounds are in several groups, of from three to twelve mounds, each group being adjacent to or surrounding the female's territory. The male does his courting of each female in or around the group of mounds adjacent to that female's territory.

Directional singing

The males frequently sing towards a female, sometimes as much as 200 yards away and well out of sight. Often the male sings towards the nest, indeed it is possible to locate a nest by taking a compass bearing along the line the singing bird is facing, particularly when the "invitation" call is being given.

Movement

It is believed that, generally it is the females which disperse, although one fully mature male is believed to have taken up residence just outside the forest at Ferny Creek. One female has taken up a territory five miles outside the forest on Mt. Dandenong.

Male taking up territory

Whilst in the process of taking up territory a male will move backwards and forwards between his natal area and his chosen territory. These visits to his "home" will become less and less until his territory finally claims him.

Breeding age

One of our banded males bred at seven years of age whilst still two filamentaries short of his full male tail. Another did not breed until his ninth year, although he had a full male tail at seven and a half years.

Adolescent survival

During the first year chicks are guarded very zealously by the mother and survival is almost 100%. However there is steady wastage during the adolescent years. Of the ten birds banded in 1959 now only two, both males, remain in Sherbrooke. One female is in residence at Mt. Dandenong and one male is believed to be in residence at Ferny Creek.

Plumage sequence

The plumage sequence of the young male has been fully observed. In most cases filamentaries begin to appear in the third year and in the fourth, the lyrates begin to lengthen, last to show signs of development are the central wire feathers. There are many variations in development of the filamentaries and lyrates.

Time taken to complete the change varies between seven and one half years and nine years.—R. F. KENYON for the Sherbrooke Survey Group.

Nesting of Fairy Martin in Tasmania.—On May 1 last our local medical practitioner, Dr J. D. Bryan, told me of a "most unusual nest" he had found. He described it to me, and from the description I assumed it to be the nest of a Fairy Martin, *Hylochelidon ariel*, as I had seen their nests in Victoria. However as neither the bird nor its nest had been recorded in this state during this century, and before that only in the north of the state, I went out immediately to make personal observation. The nest was attached to the roof of a small cave in a rocky outcrop approximately 20'-30' up the side of a hill below which ran a small creek. The nest site was approximately 200 yards from the "Ballochmyle" homestead on the outskirts of Tunbridge, in the Midlands of Tasmania about half-way between Hobart and Launceston.

Photographs of the nest were taken by Dr Bryan and also by Mr L. E. Wall of Hobart who later visited the site. There was no doubt that it was a Fairy Martin's nest. It appeared to be a recent construction and was probably used last summer.

The only reference I can find to previous records is the reference by Mr F. M. Littler in his *Handbook of the Birds of Tasmania*:

"Observations.—According to Mr A. J. Campbell, 'Mr S. H. Wintle, geologist, was the first observer to direct attention (*Victorian Naturalist*, February, 1887) to the fact that the Fairy Martin should be placed on the Tasmanian list of avifauna, because he had found the birds breeding at Bridport the season of 1883 and other years'. No birds of this species were visible at that place when I visited it during the breeding season on two occasions. Dr W. Macgillivray is reported by the same authority to have seen individuals about Launceston in October, 1893. I have no personal knowledge of this species in Tasmania, nor have Messrs Arthur Butler, H. C. Thompson, H. Stuart Dove, or several other observers from whom I inquired."

I have read Mr Wintle's article in the *Victorian Naturalist* and his reference to the species was not so much to the actual presence of the bird in Tasmania, but to its proximity to the coast, contrary to a view apparently expressed by Gould regarding distribution.—ROGER T. VINCENT, Oatlands, Tasmania.