

## Stray Feathers.

**RADIATED GOSHAWK AND WOOD DUCK.**—On the 18th of March I got a cheap duck. I had been putting horses into a paddock. In the adjoining paddock there were 20 or 30 Wood Ducks feeding. Suddenly they flew into the water. Looking to see the cause of their alarm, I saw one Duck quacking and making for the lagoon, with a Hawk running at her side and holding on to her neck. She got nearly to the water and then fell over. I waited till the Hawk started plucking her and then went over. The Hawk flew away, and I took charge. As far as I could make out it appeared to be a Radiated Goshawk. He must have been a new hand at the game, for he picked a thin Duck.—ERNEST D. BARNARD, Coomoooolaroo (Q.)

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**IN THE MELBOURNE ZOO.**—A eucalyptus tree which is laden with blossom has, during the past month, been visited by numbers of White-plumed Honey-eaters, Brush Wattle-Birds, Sanguineous Honey-eaters, and a few Red Wattle-Birds. The Wattle-Birds try to drive the smaller Honey-eaters away, and when they fly at them they snap their beaks loudly, but the little birds soon return.—D. LE SOUËF. 15/7/02.

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**A GRIMLY HUMOROUS SIDE OF THE DROUGHT.**—In answer to the circular recently issued by the Union to members re "observing stations" for birds, the following is one of the replies:—"At present I am too much occupied among my dying stock to attend to anything else, but as they will all be dead ere long (unless we have sufficient rain very shortly), I shall then have more leisure to attend to the movements, &c., of our feathered friends."

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**EMU PARK (CENTRAL QUEENSLAND) NOTES.**—The first Gannet of the season was seen diving off the coast here on 1st May. Talking Magpies (the big fellow with white spots on wings)—*Strepera graculina* (?)—appeared about same time. They fly about the bald hills during the day, and seek shelter in coast scrub at night. Butcher-Birds have been making havoc among Canaries at Rockhampton. One had a fly round here, and killed two Canaries hanging outside near an open house door. He then went for a Canary at the police station, and the constable shut the door of the room he boldly entered and made him prisoner, awaiting trial. Want of grasshoppers and small lizards in drought make the birds fearlessly ravenous. Nankeen Kestrels here in April have disappeared, starved out. Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) not so numerous as usual. On 1st June a party of two guns, on Hummocky Island, about 10 miles off the coast, had 32 Quails. Wild Turkeys, starved off western

plains, are being shot on the coast clearings. Domestic hen eggs are 2s. per dozen—want of insect food. Small flock of Grey Plovers haunting bald hills here in April disappeared in May. Mr. Meston, Inspector of Aborigines, discovered Osprey's nest on Pinnacle Islet, off mouth of Coorooman Creek. Black-fellow attendant tried to reach it, but failed. Very glad.—W. M'I.

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GRASS-BIRDS IN VICTORIA DURING WINTER.—During this winter, on three separate occasions, I have had the opportunity of noting the Grass-Bird (*Megalurus gramineus*) near Melbourne. As some doubt seems to exist that this species does remain in this vicinity during the winter months, these facts will be of interest. At a swamp near Cheltenham, on 26th April, 1902, and again on 5th July following, several specimens were shot after patient waiting. At first the birds were nowhere to be seen, but after a while they ventured to the outskirts of the bull-rushes to feed. They seldom whistled. On the other side of Melbourne, on the Werribee Plains, the species was again noted on 9th June, being identified by its whistle in a "lignum" swamp.—A. G. CAMPBELL.

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NOTES ON THE ALBATROSS.—The tameness of the Albatross has not, I think, been noticed by some writers on the habits of this stately ocean bird.

I have frequently seen them close over the vessel's deck, keeping up with it, without the least symptom of fear. On different occasions I have seen them caught by hook and bait (when we have slowed down the engines or stopped altogether), and after being landed on deck and unable to rise on the wing, they have soon started to plume themselves, and seemed quite at home in their new surroundings, so that the Albatross is a fearless as well as a stately bird.

Mr. H. L. Tapley, of Dunedin, informs me that while travelling as a passenger in the s.s. *Hauroto*, Captain Anderson, in 1896, a large Albatross got its wings entangled in the patent log line and was unable to extricate itself. It was hauled on board and captured. Quite recently Mr. Tapley informs me that while on a passage from Dunedin to Sydney, in the s.s. *Quiraing*, May, 1902, an Albatross struck the fore rigging and fell on to the poop deck. It is remarkable that Mr. Tapley should have been an eye-witness of both of these occurrences (the only similar ones I have heard of), and also that the Albatross, though approaching the ship without fear, should have made such a mistake, as with their quick piercing eyes they always have the appearance of being thoroughly "wide awake."—(CAPT.) W. W. ALLEN, s.s. *Westralia*. July, 1902.

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QUEENSLAND CAMP NOTES.—18th April.—Saw first Robin

this year in garden at Retro station, being small Red-capped variety.

27th April.—Saw Robins, same variety, nearly every day during the week.

29th April.—Camped at well, near top of run (Retro), not far from the Peak Range, there being no surface water for miles. Next morning, early, the troughing, about 30 yards long, was lined with birds on both edges, the predominating sorts being Spotted Bower-Birds and Red-winged Lories; there were also great numbers of Peaceful and small Ground Doves, and a few Honey-eaters. I should think quite a hundred Lories could be seen at one time, and they made such a brilliant bit of colouring as one is seldom privileged to see. The Bower-Birds appear to be living almost solely on white cedar berries, which they swallow whole; they were simply ravenous for bread or scraps, and were a great nuisance. The Lories I noted feeding on seeds of the "fat hen" (a chenopodium, known in Great Britain as "goosefoot"), a tall weed, which has been of great value to the starving stock. Two Bronze-wings were also noted, with their feathers fluffed out and heads under wing, asleep, for some time after the other birds were busy. This camping near the water is not the usual custom of these Pigeons, as they generally come to water near sundown and fly back at once after drinking. The second morning they were on the same perches, but on the third (2nd May) they were not, or cleared earlier.

8th to 18th May.—Shifted camp to another well. Bower-Birds and Lories in profusion. Noted small flock of eight Betcherrygahs, which visited the well several days running and then disappeared; these birds are seldom seen on the downs, but keep to the tall gums on the watercourses. The Bower-Birds were so numerous and bold from hunger that the cook's life was a burden to him until he had destroyed a great number. He caught 15 and 20 a day, mostly cock birds, with iridescent plume on nape of neck, in two small gin traps. Several were kept in captivity for some days and devoured as much bread as they could get; they mimicked cats and Kite Hawks (Square-tail) splendidly, but fought incessantly and furiously. Magpies and Butcher-Birds also got caught, and on two occasions the large olive-green Honey-eater (or *Entomyza*) with bare blue patch on cheeks. Flocks of Grey Jumpers (Twelve Apostles) and "happy families" (Chatterers) also visited the camp, and I heard and saw White-eyes (*Zosterops*) on the tea-tree scrub, and also a Yellow Robin. Also noted several Red-capped Robins, male and female. Shot a Scrub Turkey at well, and several Wild Turkeys (Bustards), the latter being very numerous in good seasons, but rather scarce this year.

3rd June.—At Langton, with Mr. Menzies, went after a white-headed Dottrel he had seen. Lucky enough to get it,

and one of the sort that has been frequenting the same ridge for 18 months past. Skinned both birds for identification, and also a small yellow-breasted bird, which is a stranger to both of us. The white-headed Dottrel has not been noted here before, although Mr. Menzies has shot numbers of the others at different times, and seen them constantly.\*

The ridge these birds like is of red soil, covered with boulders and pebbles of white limestone, and affords splendid protective colouring—in fact, it is almost impossible to see them till they fly. It is very probable that they nested here last year, as on 23rd October Mr. Menzies flushed a sitting bird on the road between Longreach and Ilfracombe, about 10 yards from the track. After diligent search he secured three eggs, partly incubated, and tells me the ground at the spot was strewn with boulders and pebbles of brown stone. Another Dottrel frequents the margins of all the larger waterholes, and apparently does not migrate, as Mr. Menzies has taken their eggs, and I have seen them at all seasons, and could easily procure a specimen if wished for.

The Little Whimbrel visited the downs last year, but I have no note of the date; large flocks of them were seen, but they seem to shift about more than the Dottrel. The country is mostly black volcanic downs, and has been devoid of grass for nearly two years, except in isolated patches. Got two small Plover, and saw one Spur-wing, which frequents a well and is a solitary bird. While helping Mr. Menzies to feed sheep on hay and chopped-up wattle tree, got Crow (or Raven), beautiful purple-black, with pearly white iris and dense black pupil. Iris tinged with light blue on inner edge, and a little muddy brown on outside edge.

23rd June.—At Retro siding six Butcher-Birds and four Magpies were very tame, and were very dexterous in catching any scraps thrown to them. One handsome Black-throated Butcher would take a bit held up between the fingers.

In addition to the great mortality amongst the birds in this district—first from the heat wave, and then from failure of food supplies—I am afraid that cyanide of potassium, laid for opossums, is proving fatal to hundreds. Should an invading army of locusts or caterpillars make their appearance when the drought breaks, there will be a most deplorable dearth of volunteers to do them battle.—F. B. C. FORD. Survey Camp, *via* Springsure (Q.), 30th June, 1902.

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THE SEASON 1901-2 was the driest experienced here for some years, and hence a good deal of bird life was either conspicuous by its absence or a decided shortage in its numerical

\* The Dottrels, including a remarkable white-headed one, appear to be the Oriental (*Ochthodromus versutus*), while the yellow-breasted bird is the Orange-breasted Chat (*Ephthianura aurifrons*).—EDS.



Young, in down, of Red-capped Dottrel (*Egialitis ruficapilla*).

FROM A PHOTO. BY ROBERT HALL.



Black and White Fantail (*Rhipidura tricolor*) and Nest.

FROM A PHOTO. BY E. T. HAMERSLEY, YORK, W.A.

strength was apparent. Few of the lagoons and swamps had received their normal quantity of water, and this deficiency was further reduced by a great shortage in the spring rainfall. Consequent upon this the Rail family were rarely seen, and few observed nesting, whilst Snipe were only noticed upon one or two isolated occasions. Our northern visitants, such as Curlew, Sandpiper, Godwit, Golden Plover, &c., came in goodly numbers, but took their departure earlier than usual. By the end of March nearly all of these birds had left, none being observed late in April or in May, as has been the case in some seasons. Never before did I notice Spine-tailed Swifts before Christmas, but this season several were noticed during November, and, unlike the shore birds previously noticed, they remained very much later than usual. This was probably due to the very fine weather experienced and the consequent abundance of their natural food. As a result of the advance of civilization many of our feathered friends are fast disappearing, and this is especially noticeable with all members of the Hawk tribe, even the once common Brown Hawk and Harrier being seldom seen, whilst the once fairly plentiful Wedge-tailed Eagle is almost a rare thing. When seen it reminds me of the past, and calls to memory the time, 35 years ago, when I have seen a dozen at a time flying at varying heights, and one occasion I remember counting 16 in mid-air at one time. In marked and pleasing contrast to this is the increase in numbers of some of our very best insectivorous birds, such as Babblers, Magpie Larks, and some few others, which are increasing rapidly, partly from the fact that cultivation does not decrease their food supplies, and also a tendency upon the part of intelligent individuals to leave them alone and recognize them as friends; and last, but perhaps not least, the warnings given by State school teachers to their pupils that birds' nests must not be destroyed. I have very carefully observed some species of birds that were regarded by some persons as being migratory and by others as residential, with a view to a settlement of this important matter. It is, I believe, very difficult of elucidation, as, though isolated pairs and single specimens of some species apparently remain all through, still the main body seems to disappear. I refer more particularly to such birds as the Ground-Lark (*Anthus*), Welcome Swallow, Cuckoo-Shrike, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, &c., all of which I have observed up to the present. Others, I believe, are noticed less at this season than in spring and summer owing to their silence. At one time very much of this locality was thickly timbered by banksias, and at that time all local members of the *Meliphagidæ*, or Honey-eaters, were much more numerous than at present, as the honeysuckles, so called, are nearly all destroyed by the settlers opening up the timbered areas. The loss of this timber has had a very marked effect upon the bees as well as upon birds, on account of its very valuable honey-

producing flower. The extremely dry summer drove some birds south of their usual haunts, and several flocks of Straw-necked Ibis were seen, and only a few days ago a beautiful specimen of the Sanguineous Honey-eater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) was obtained by me here (Somerville)—a new bird for this district. In conclusion, I cannot refrain from drawing attention to the fact that the drainage of those immense swamps, the Carrum Carrum and the Kooweerup, has deprived countless thousands of Ducks, Swans, Spoonbills, &c., of their natural food, and, as a consequence, where one used to see many thousands of these birds now none are to be seen. As a result also they are deprived of perhaps the finest nesting areas in this State. If I may be permitted I should like to add a word of praise *re* the protection of the Kangaroo, as, though it had practically disappeared, since protection has been accorded several mobs of 10 to 15 may be seen near here.—GEO. E. SHEPHERD. Somerville, 30/6/02.

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NOTES FROM POINT CLOATES (N.-W.A.)—5th January, 1902. —Painted Finches (*Emblema picta*) are becoming much more numerous in this locality. On this date and for some weeks afterwards they were constantly seen.

5th February.—I was about 60 miles inland from here, where there is much "claypan" country. As there had been a heavy thunderstorm previously, the flats were covered with water, and birds numerous. Red-necked Avocets, White-headed Stilts, Coots, and various Ducks were very abundant, and there were also numbers of Black Swan and Marsh Terns (*H. hybrida*). A Black-fronted Dotterel (*Æ. melanops*) that fell to my gun was just on the point of laying, and by the side of a pool was a Magpie Lark's (*Grallina*) nest with four eggs. A little distance out on the grassy flat was a nest of *Mirafraga woodwardi* (Rufous Bush-Lark) containing five fresh eggs. The nest was found through seeing the female bird persistently creeping close round the camp fire at dusk. Concluding the bird had a nest, my native boy and self kept quiet, and were rewarded by seeing her settle on the eggs. The nest was deep, being below the surface of the ground, in a hollow, and snugly concealed in a tuft of green grass. The eggs correspond with Mr. Hall's description (*Vict. Nat.*, September, 1901). On the way home we found a nest of Tawny Frogmouth, with two eggs, built 15 feet from the ground, in a mallee tree overhanging the road. I have previously taken eggs of this bird in the months of July and October (31st).

23rd February.—Shot a female White-tailed Robin (*Eopsaltria pulverulenta*) in a dense patch of mangroves near the North-West Cape, and an hour or two after, within a few yards, what appears to be an immature Grey-breasted Robin (*E. georgiana*),

but the latter was too much mutilated by having been shot at close quarters to be certain of the species.

15th March.—Oriental Dottrel (*O. veredus*) were packing on the salt marshes in vast flocks, preparatory to their flight to the land of their nativity in the north. Contrary to their usual habit, they were extremely wary, and it was only after much driving round in the buggy that I secured a good raking shot, bringing down several specimens. These proved to be, as I had suspected, in almost full breeding plumage, which is very striking, and much more handsome than their dull summer (or, rather, winter) plumage. The birds were coated with fat, several of them bursting on falling on the hard ground. A last small mob of these birds was seen on 28th March.

3rd April.—Great numbers of the elegant Roseate Tern were about Fraser Island, also of the Noddy (*A. stolidus*).

26th April.—When sailing near this island we noticed some numbers of Crested Terns (*S. bergii*) hovering about one of the sand hummocks. On landing we found 14 eggs, some of them most handsomely marked. They were laid within a radius of three yards on one of the highest points of the island, each egg being laid singly in a depression of the fine sand, no material having been carried to form a nest. A family of Orange-fronted Chats (*E. aurifrons*) appeared about this date, and have kept closely to one patch of ground near the beach ever since.

8th May.—An immature Straw-necked Ibis (*G. spinicollis*) settled on the roof of the kitchen, where it was attracted by seeing the tame Ibis, which has now been here with full liberty for nearly two years (see *Zoologist*, July, 1901). The new comer was only recently fledged. It allowed us to approach closely, and readily ate scraps of meat thrown to it. We managed to catch it at night and clipped one wing, and it has not since left the vicinity of the house, and seems quite contented. The following day a flock of about 50 wild Ibises settled near the house, seeing the old bird feeding. It fed with them most of the day, and accompanied them in their flights, but when the wild birds flew away in the evening it did not offer to go with them.

20th May.—Seeing a small flock of Waders on the beach, I fired one barrel, and picked up one Golden Plover, three Large Sand Dottrel (*O. geoffroyi*), one Turnstone, and two Little Stints. Silver Gulls, which are numerous here most of the year, feeding on scraps about the kitchen and natives' camps, disappeared early in January, doubtless to breed in the south, as their eggs have never been taken here. Up to the date of writing (27th May) only odd birds have returned.

In vol. i., part 2, of *The Emu*, the tenth line from bottom of page 56 should read October, 1900. "Last year" is misleading, as the article was written in October, 1901, but did not appear in print until January, 1902.—THOMAS CARTER.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NOTES.—*A Lusua Naturæ*.—On Monday, the 2nd June, I shot, on the Canning River, near South Perth, a Western Scarlet-breasted Robin (*Petræca campbelli*), wholly white barring the red breast, and except a faint tinge on the abnormal white feathers covering the crown of the head. The eyes in colour were almost black. In his "Nests and Eggs," p. 136, Mr. Campbell mentions a similar case of this Robin. Strange to say last spring-time I shot, at about the same spot, a Long-billed Honey-eater (*Meliornis longirostris*) which exhibited evidences of partial albinism.

I also saw on the same day, and in the same locality, a pair of Sacred Kingfishers (*Halcyon sanctus*), or, if Mr. Campbell's provisional new species can be established, then *Halcyon westralasianus*. I saw a pair of similar birds in the same locality during last winter.

*Melissa Worshippers*.—The banksia scrubs in and around the Perth district (the trees of which are now bearing candelabra of handsome crimson and honey-coloured cones) are alive with companies of Tawny-crowned Honey-eaters, Brown Honey-eaters, Singing Honey-eaters, Long-billed Honey-eaters, Moustached Honey-eaters, and the Little Wattle-Birds.

*Wood-Swallows*.—The Wood-Swallows are still with us, and doubtless will, as hitherto, remain all the year round.

*Bee-eaters*.—The Bee-eaters, which arrived here last year in the first week of October, left us in March.

*A Late Brood*.—On Good Friday last (28/3/02) whilst at Applecross, on the Swan River, near Perth, I observed two young Swamp Hawks in the nest, being fed by their parents.

*Musk Ducks*.—A company of these birds, numbering some eight or nine, were moving about the shallows on the South Perth side, about 100 yards from the course of the ferry boat. My attention was drawn by a succession of "ponks," intermingled with similar monosyllabic notes, which appeared to be the same sound stripped of its resonance. The surmise proved to be correct, as I plainly perceived. The "ponk" followed the action of the bird (which appeared to be the male bird disporting himself before the females) when he thrust his head quickly under the water. Simultaneously with the thrusting of the head under the water the bird struck the water with the feet and swished the tail. The lighter and less resonant sound was uttered above water, and was accompanied with a prolongation of the neck and a lateral swish of the tail. It is quite probable that the striking of the water with the foot, mentioned in the former case, has given rise to the local idea that the sound was produced by such action and not in the normal way.—A. W. MILLIGAN. Perth, 11/6/02.

AN INTERESTING OUTING.—WHITE-FACED TERNLETS, NANKEEN HERONS, &c.—In November, 1900, I was invited by

Mr. Abjornson, Sub-Inspector of Fisheries for the Swan River, to accompany him in a cruise round the schnapper spawning grounds in Safety Bay, about 15 miles south of Fremantle—an offer which was gladly accepted, especially as he said some of the islands were frequented by many birds.

The 15th found us standing out to Garden Island in a 19-foot half-deck fishing boat. This island, about nine miles by one in extent, is mostly covered with dense scrub, quite impossible to penetrate in most places. The only living things appear to be wallabies, lizards, and carpet snakes; no birds were noted. The second place reached, Penguin Island, was about an acre in extent. A large Osprey's nest was seen on the top of a small hummock, which had, according to my host, been used for many years, and, indeed, looked like it, since it was over 4 feet high and about 6 wide at the base; it had the usual composition of sticks, lined with sea-weed, grass, and wool, and contained two fully fledged young birds, which were forthwith captured, and, on our return, deposited in the Perth Zoological Gardens. Several Little Penguins were seen; some were nesting under ledges of rock. A Nankeen Heron flew away, and was eagerly chased by a Kestrel, which evidently had a nest near. A pair of dark green Honey-eaters was busily engaged in feeding their young. Sailing hence we came to two small adjoining islands, which were covered with Cormorants' old nests (evidently the Pied, since several of these birds were seen fishing close by), built of coarse grass and sea-weed. They were placed in groups of 20 to 50 on the bare rock. Within a hundred yards was another island, over which some hundred or so Silver Gulls (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) hovered, but we could not find any eggs or young birds, only some old Cormorant nests, but probably the Gulls were nesting under some cliff or in a cave, with which these islands abound. We then made for the far side of the bay, where, separated by a narrow channel from the mainland, was a low sandbank, about an acre in extent, over which were flying in a state of great agitation some two hundred Little Terns (*Sterna nereis*), which kept up a continuous din with their short piping cry. On the seaward side of the bank was a number of their eggs, laid in very slight circular depressions in the sand about 4 inches in diameter. The clutch was two, but in a great number of cases only one seemed to hatch, for many nests were found with an addled egg and the remaining shell of the one which had produced a chicken. No young birds except the very smallest chicks were at first discernible, but upon walking round a bank of sea-weed, just above high water mark, many were found, but so perfectly did their feathers (cream, with longitudinal chestnut markings) harmonize with the sand and rubbish that it was difficult to detect them. The little birds, too, knew quite well where their protection lay, for, with head and neck out straight, they lay like stones.

The last "port" of call was Bird Island, or, as it is called by the local fishermen, "Ibis Rock." It consists of two rocky peaks, about 50 yards from the mainland. The landing place is small, and the approach rocky, so it is only safe in still weather. Upon our approach about 200 Nankeen Herons (*Nycticorax caledonicus*) flew up. Later on they were found on a reef. The first peak yielded only a few broken Heron eggs and a beautiful nest of these birds in a small cave, but upon reaching the second rock Herons in all stages of life were in numbers; under every plant were seen young birds or eggs, the latter laid upon the bare ground, with a ring of sticks about a foot in diameter round them, evidently to prevent them from rolling away, for upon sloping ground the sticks were placed upon the lower side only. The only shrub on the island—a tea-tree, about 3 feet high, had a well-made nest of twined sticks and grass in its centre. This nest was nearly flat, and 14 inches in circumference, and contained the unusual number of five eggs. The usual number was three, and in some cases two. The fresh eggs, with their pretty green, delicately grained, non-lustrous shells, were very beautiful; a very little incubation, however, turns them pale blue. They varied a good deal too in shape and size. As the wind was rising, and the skipper was anxious for the safety of his craft on this rocky shore, our visit to this interesting spot had to be cut short. So, with some eggs and young birds for museum and zoological purposes, we dropped into the boat and sailed for home.—SHERBOURNE LE SOUFF.

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WOOD-SWALLOWS IN THE MURRAY DISTRICT DURING WINTER.—I went to Berrigan over Sunday, and on my way back yesterday I saw five or six Wood-Swallows (*Artamus sordidus*) all in the one spot, about 10 miles from here and seven or eight from the river as the Crow flies. I have not seen any of these birds since April.—J. A. TRASK. Tocumwal, N.S.W., 29/7/02.

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JACKASSES AT SHOOTING MATCHES.—Recently whilst watching a Sparrow-shooting match at Oakleigh I observed a pair of Laughing Jackasses (*Dacelo gigas*) repeatedly fly down from a neighbouring tree and carry off the mortally wounded Sparrows within 25 yards of the shooters. In all they demolished nine Sparrows. I was informed that directly the Jackasses hear the shooting they fly over to the shooting ground and wait for their prey.—A. MATTINGLEY.

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A FOREIGN "STRAY."—When the ship *Desdemona*, which arrived in Melbourne recently, was about 1,000 miles off the Brazilian coast, or in about lat. 20 deg. south and long. 38 deg. west, a small and beautiful greenish species of Gallinule or

Moor-Hen flew on board, very much exhausted. The date was 10th June. The "stray" was caged and cared for, and began to feed at once. It is now the property of one of our members, Mr. S. Drayton, and is doing well at Brighton.—A. J. C.

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THE DOUBLE-BANDED DOTTREL (*Ochthodromus bicinctus*) appears to visit Victoria regularly on migration. Writing from Geelong in July Mr. C. F. Belcher writes:—"Hundreds of Double-banded Dottrels are on the flats between St. Albans and the Breakwater, mostly on the training track. Nearly all in immature plumage." During the same month strings of these Dottrels were exposed for sale in the Melbourne market.—A. J. C.

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WILD BIRD SHOWS.—The various Melbourne bird shows were generally a success this year. In Parrots alone some 30 species were exhibited, including the Alexandra Parrakeet (*Polytelis alexandrae*) from the interior, and the Smutty Parrakeet (*Platycercus browni*) from the Northern Territory. The Rosella section at the South Suburban Canary Show had 35 entries—a "lively" task for the judge. Queensland Grass-Finches appear to be gaining favour, but none not previously shown were exhibited. A decided novelty was a pair of Honey-eaters (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*) exhibited by our member, Mr. Edward D'Ombra.

It is a pity that these interesting exhibitions are divided, and only form so many "side-shows" to dog, poultry, &c., exhibitions. Could not a National Bird Show be held, after the manner of the famous bird shows at the Crystal Palace, England?—A. J. C.

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THE DIRE DROUGHT.—*Various Notes*.—Since the end of April the following species have been appearing here, no doubt being driven to seek for food on the coast on account of the severe drought now prevailing inland:—*Gymnorhina tibicen*.—Very plentiful everywhere, feeding about the ploughed fields in flocks of 10 to 20. *Cracticus robustus*.—Also fairly plentiful. Crows (both *Corvus* and *Corone*).—Very numerous; residents say they never noticed so many, and accuse them of *eating the corn!* *Grallina picata*.—Though resident in fair numbers all the year, this species is now very plentiful. Large flocks may be seen feeding anywhere, and I notice them about sundown flying across to the timber on the other side of the river in hundreds. Besides these species *Halcyon pyrrhopygia* is numerous, for I saw no less than seven along the fences in one afternoon, and have noted others since. This speaks for the severity of the drought, for the Red-backed Kingfisher is, I think, considered a strictly inland species; and Macknade

Plantation, where I observed them, is only two or three miles from the sea. I have never seen this species here before.—E. H. WEBB. Herbert River, N.Q., 19/6/02.

Since forwarding you my last notes *re* certain species of birds now to be seen in this district (Herbert River) on account of the drought inland, I have observed several more kinds. While out Duck-shooting on a lagoon close to the sea I came upon a small flock of about a dozen Red-kneed Dottrel (*Erythronyx cinctus*) which were feeding on the mud flats, and also saw upwards of half a dozen Pratincoles (*Stiltia isabella*) in a few hours. This was in the last week of June, 1902. Also, during the first two weeks of this month (July), I have observed several flocks of *Ephthianura tricolor* busily feeding round the margins of the waterholes and lagoons. It is surely unusual to see Pratincoles and Red-kneed Dottrel so close to the sea.—E. H. WEBB. 31/7/02.

Large numbers of birds are dying about here from sheer starvation—Magpies, Jackasses, and smaller birds.—H. GREEN-SILL BARNARD. Coomooboolaroo, Q., 17/7/02.

Bronze-winged Pigeons, driven out of their usual haunts, have been swarming of late in Mr. Cusack's paddock, not far from town. Pot-hunters innumerable have had their eyes upon them, but Mr. Cusack prohibits trespassing, and the birds are enjoying some measure of protection. Wild Turkeys are being driven to the coast country by drought, and their slaughter proceeds apace.—Rockhampton *Bulletin*, 10/6/02.

The drought, which has continued for two years in this district, is proving fatal to vast numbers of birds, and tempting others out of their usual habits—Magpies and Butcher-Birds especially, being ravenous, owing to the dearth of usual food, have not the decency to wait as long as the Crows, but attack a sheep's eyes as soon as it gets down.—F. B. CAMPBELL FORD. Survey Camp, *vid* Springsure, Q., 6/7/02.

*Warracknabeal*.—Several Emus have lately been seen about the district, where water is more plentiful than further north. Since the settlement of the Mallee country they had pushed further back, and it is supposed the drought has sent them down again.

*Sheep Hills*.—A large number of Emus, evidently starved out of the Mallee, are at present in this district.—Melbourne *Argus*.

Only yesterday afternoon, whilst walking in the University grounds, I caught a glimpse of a small bird with a bright red head exploring the flowers on a pittosporum bush, but it was disturbed before I could obtain a good look at it. Thinking that I was on the track of the Sanguineous Honey-eater I repaired this afternoon to the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, and was rewarded by finding a large pink-flowered ironbark tree on the lawn above the lake simply swarming with Honey-eaters, of which I counted five different kinds—the Wattled, the Spiny-

checked, the New Holland, the White-plumed, and last, the least in size but the greatest in importance, were some 10 or 12 of my little friends with blood-red heads. No doubt the drought was responsible for these tiny tropical beauties being driven in such numbers so far south.—ARNOLD E. RODDA. Carlton (Vic.), 14/7/02.

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SOME ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF TASMANIAN BIRDS.—The following are a few dates of arrival and departure, in Tasmania, of some of the migratory birds. Up to the year 1899 the notes relate to the district of West Kentish, eight miles from Wilmut; after that date events relate to Wilmut. As will be seen, many of the notes are somewhat brief and hastily entered, but as they are made near the southern limit of some of the birds mentioned the notes may not be without interest:—

1892 (arrivals).

11th August—Wood-Swallows.

2nd September—Fan-tailed Cuckoos.

4th September—Welcome Swallows.

30th September—Pallid Cuckoo.

Note re Welcome Swallows says they had been noted at Jerusalem, towards the south-east of the State, as arriving three weeks earlier than at West Kentish.

1893.

28th February—All migratory birds disappeared for a few weeks, but have now returned, for harvest, evidently.

March—Above have finally left.

26th July—Pallid Cuckoo.

11th August—Wood-Swallows.

16th August—Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

September—Bronze Cuckoo.

16th September—Welcome Swallow.

4th October—Cuckoo-Shrike (*G. parvirostris*). I have noted this bird because it completely leaves this district from April to October. Doubtless it goes to the coastal districts, where the cold is less severe. On 16th August a very heavy fall of snow occurred; Cuckoos disappeared after this for some days.

1894.

26th August—Swallows (Welcome) at Latrobe.

30th August—Swallows at Antil Ponds.

22nd August—Bronze Cuckoo.

1895.

17th September—Cuckoos, Wood-Swallows, and Welcome Swallows (nearly a month late).

October—Native Hen (*Tribonyx mortieri*) with chicks.

1896.

1st April—Migratory birds have gone.

May—Native Hen with chicks around her.

7th July—Welcome Swallows.

21st July—Pallid Cuckoo and Wood-Swallows arrived.

1897.

15th March—Migratory birds have left.

August—Cuckoos and Swallows arrived.

October—Cuckoo-Shrike.

1898.

No entry of any kind to be found among my notes.

1899.

Very wet and prolonged winter. Birds all later than usual. No dates recorded. This year Cuckoos and Swallows were very few in number.

1900.

Very severe, frosty winter. Swallows in *August*. Cuckoos early in *September*. Wood-Swallows and Cuckoo-Shrike, *October*.

1901.

*4th August*—Pallid Cuckoo.

*11th August*—Welcome Swallows.

*20th August*—Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

*About 15th September*—Bronze Cuckoo, and a few days later Wood-Swallows were about.

1902.

Birds remained till near the end of *April*.

—(MISS) J. A. FLETCHER. Wilmot, Tasmania.