

## Further Notes on the Red-Eyed Bulbul

By Dr. JOHN MACPHERSON, R.A.O.U., Macquarie Street,  
Sydney.

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From January to September of this year (1923), I resided in Double Bay (Sydney), close to my former residence, and had excellent opportunities of observing this bird (*Otocorys jocosus*) at close quarters. Unfortunately, I left before the nesting season. The bird has greatly increased in numbers, and extended its distribution. On April 1st, I counted eighteen at one time in the garden. Many were obviously much younger in age than the others. They were seen, not only in Double Bay, but also towards Rushcutters' Bay, and the farther end of Darling Point. From the middle of June to August 1st I saw none, but occasionally heard them in the distance. They were mostly seen about noon and the early afternoon; not so often in the late afternoon or early morning.

The red about the vent was conspicuous, but the red behind the eye was not clearly discerned unless the bird was close. The white and brown (sometimes almost black) on the tail were well marked as the bird occasionally spread out the tail just before alighting. The crest was generally likened by observers to a dunce's cap. The younger birds had only scanty, straggling crests. During flight, and sometimes as the birds flitted through the foliage of the trees, or remained perched, the top-knot was directed well backwards. The voice did not so often contain the challenging note I previously observed. Often the birds were quite silent, or indulged in much low chattering, during which the throat was seen to swell greatly. Some of the notes were harsh or shrill and whistling. Occasionally one or two single notes were uttered, not at all unlike those of the Starling, which is exceptionally plentiful in the same areas. Could this be imitative? The flight was always low—never high like that of the Starling. The posture was not always erect, but often the bird perched in a hunched position, with the head well down between the shoulders. A favourite position to preen its feathers was on the topmost twigs of the Camphor Laurels. Its habits are sociable: small companies generally move about together. It is restless, constantly moving about. But it is not very timid, and many disported themselves within a few feet of the open window at which we sat. They made a very charming picture as they flew actively about the Camphor Laurels, lilli-pilli (*Eugenia*), and Pepper Trees (*Schinus molle*), or perched on the Poinsettias, or plunged deeply into the Honeysuckle and other dense creepers. Sometimes they seemed to be everywhere—amidst the foliage or low down on the trunks of

the trees, the telephone and electric lighting wires, the fences, gate-posts, and even on the ground of the garden and foot-paths.

As regards their food, they appeared to pick aphides or other insects from the creepers on the fences, but did not attack the beautiful blue-and-black marked Butterfly (*Papilio sarpedon chloredon*), which fluttered about the Camphor Laurels. Unlike the Silver-eyes they did not eat the drupaceous fruit of the Pepper Tree, although they would tear off small twigs with foliage and beat them against the trunk. Nor did I see the Loquats touched; but I was informed that they devoured the Guavas in an adjoining garden. There have been many references in the Press to their destructive onslaughts upon Peas, Figs and Strawberries, but in Double Bay their favourite food was, in the Autumn, the drupaceous fruit, popularly termed "berries" of the Camphor Laurel. In this quest they competed with the Silver-eyes, Starlings and Rosella Parrots, all of which eagerly devoured this fruit. The drupe of the Camphor Laurel is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter, and weighs about nine grains. It contains a "stone"  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. in diameter, and weighing about three grains. The outer layer of the stone (endocarp or putamen) is dark brown and hard, but brittle. The enclosed seed is somewhat firm and yellow. The epicarp, when unripe, is green; when ripe, a rich blue-black. The pulp is soft. These fruits were eaten readily both green and ripe. Two or more were swallowed, quickly, one after the other. They were not broken up or masticated, but just held momentarily in the beak, and then swallowed whole. In tearing off the fruit, the birds often fluttered and hovered like honey-eaters, frequently unsupported in the air, or again hanging head downwards.

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**Crow and Pelican.**—On a recent trip to Forster in the motor launch, I saw a rather uncommon sight. On the run down the lake a fishing boat was passed, and floating outside the net I saw a dead Pelican, evidently shot by the fishermen, as these birds will follow a net in and do great damage to the net by tearing the fish out with their enormous beaks, for which the fishermen levy heavy toll if they get the chance. Returning later in the day, I saw a peculiar-looking object ahead of the launch. This was right in the middle of the big lake, and the water was very rough, with a big sea running. On coming up to the object, I saw a Crow perched on the breast of the Pelican, dining very much at his ease, despite the rough water. The Crow flew off as the launch drew near, but returned after we had passed, and went on with the feast. Where will these birds not go?—J. F. H. GÖGERLEY, R.A.O.U., Ellerslie, Wallis Lake, N.S.W.