

Cuckoo, Superb Lyre-Bird, Welcome Swallow, Tree-Martin, Jacky Winter, Flame-breasted Robin, Scarlet-breasted Robin, Grey Fantail, Rufous Fantail, Black-and-White Fantail, Whip-Bird, Song-Lark, Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren, White-browed Scrub-Wren, Blue Wren, Magpie-Lark, Grey Shrike-Thrush, Black-backed Magpie, Shrike-Tit, Yellow Robin, White-throated Tree-Creeper, Spotted Pardalote, Spine-bill, Noisy Miner, Red Wattle-Bird, Spotted-sided Finch, Red-browed Finch, Olive-backed Oriole, Satin Bower-Bird, Pied Bell-Magpie, Crow.

Many of the birds were noted feeding in the small flower-garden in front of the homestead, and others in the little orchard adjoining the house. The run had been judiciously cleared in the first instance, but that left insufficient food for the opossums, which destroyed many of the remaining trees. Many birds must on that account have been driven away.

Stray Feathers.

New Bird for Australia.—At a meeting of the R.A.O.U., held at the National Museum, Melbourne, on August 4th, Mr. A. J. Campbell, on behalf of Mr. H. L. White, Belltrees, Scone, N.S. Wales, exhibited a new sea-bird for Australia. It was washed up dead on Cottesloe beach, Western Australia, on June 6th after a storm, and was forwarded by Mr. F. L. Whitcock. The bird is known as the Kerguelen Petrel, or Fulmar (*Pterodroma brevirostris*). It is a neat bird in general dark drab-grey plumage with a slate-grey tinge, and is about the size of a Mutton-Bird. Expeditions to the south have met the species in sub-antarctic regions, and it is known to breed on Kerguelen Island, where Mr. Robert Gall found it in burrows, in Greenland Harbour, January 25th, 1898. The same storm washed up several bodies of Prions.

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Aboriginal Bird-names.—Further to the list of native names of birds given in my paper on the Pallinup Estuary in the last number of *The Emu*, the names of a few more species had also been ascertained but as they were not observed at the estuary at the time of my visit, were not recorded. As they may be of interest I give them here:—Mallee Hen (*Leipoa ocellata*), Gnow (the *gn* represents a sound which may be likened to that produced when starting to pronounce the word "new"); Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*), Gnampion; Western Swamp-hen (*Porphyrio bellus*), Moolar; Southern Stone-Plover (*Burhinus magnirostris*), Weeloo; Bustard (*Eupodotis australis*), Coolie; Barn-Owl (*Tyto*), Minnar; Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus naso*), Carrar; Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*), Cumbine; Miner (*Myzantha*), Puer; Crow (*Corvus coronoides*), Warrdong.—D. L. SERVenty, East Cannington, W.A. (2/8/26).

A New Bird for the Australian List.—In *The Emu*, Vol. XXV., p. 212, Miss J. A. Fletcher, R.A.O.U., describes a large Penguin which she saw on the beach at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania, 1925, apparently in March. Mr. G. M. Mathews has pointed out to me that there is only one species of Penguin which would agree with Miss Fletcher's description, viz. the Gentoo or Rock-hopper Penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*). Miss Fletcher describes the bird as having "a conspicuous semicircle of white part way round the neck on the upper surface, just below the nape." The Rock-hopper has "a white stripe across the upper part of the head from one eye to the other" (Brit. Mus. Catalogue). This conspicuous mark is actually above, not below, the nape, but it might be difficult to judge its exact position in the living bird. I think, then, that there can be little doubt that we can add *Pygoscelis papua* to the list of Penguins which occasionally visit Tasmania. In view of the known distribution of the species this is not surprising. The Rock-hopper breeds on Macquarie Island and is known as a visitor to the southern coasts of New Zealand.—W. B. ALEXANDER, England.

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The Toll of Bush Fires.—The thickly-timbered fern-tree gullies of the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria, have always been regarded as an ornithologists' paradise. As far back as we can go in the history of our comparatively young country those enchanting hills have been the haunts of numerous rare and interesting birds. There, in the depths of the forests, the Lyre-Birds built their nests in secluded nooks overlooking crystalline mountain streams, while the Mountain Thrushes, Rose Robins, Pilot-Birds and Helmeted Honey-eaters rejoiced in the shade of the gigantic gums.

But in many parts of the ranges these scenes have changed. No longer does one hear the Whip-Bird's crack or *Menura's* varied calls. Where have they gone and what has caused the change? Last summer bush-fires raged through these beautiful forests, leaving desolation in its wake. (A few weeks ago I visited a gully which had been burnt out; so complete was the destruction that scarcely enough material remained to complete the building of a small bird's nest.)

During a similar visit prior to the fire, 47 species were observed, but on this occasion only fourteen were seen. [It must be remembered, however, that migration was at its height during the first-mentioned visit]. The most prominent absentees were Whip-Birds, Pilot-Birds, Mountain Thrushes, and Honey-eaters of many kinds. During the night neither Owl nor Frogmouth broke the deathly silence; nor did opossums or squirrels sport in the dim moonlight. How changed, how different to the days of old! Soon, perhaps, under the kiss of Spring, the trees will be re-clothed in their leafy green garments, and sparkling streams will glide by the tree-ferns. But what of the birds? Will they be replaced so readily?—N. J. FAVALORA, Melbourne, (16/7/1926).

Winter Swallows.—The sporadic appearance of the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) in winter-time is curious. This autumn all the Swallows appeared to clear from the district before the end of March, and not a bird was sighted until mid-June. On the fifteenth of that month, just a week before the shortest day, I noticed a pair in spruce plumage flitting to and fro under the shop-verandahs in the town, and inspecting the high wooden ledge where the nests are usually built. Had this pair been over to the mainland for two or three months, and then felt an impulse to return, or had they been lying up in a quarry-crevice or hollow tree until the winter sunshine of mid-June tempted them out? They were, at any rate, in plump condition, and had not been on starvation rations.

Exactly the same thing used to puzzle good old White of Selborne about a century and a half ago; he would note the departure of all the Swallows and House-Martins in his district towards the end of September, and then, after not sighting an individual for six or eight weeks, suddenly, during a mild spell in November, a pair or two would make their appearance, and flit about as if they had never quitted the neighbourhood. Small wonder that, keen observer as he was, he nevertheless was inclined to favour the theory that some, at any rate, of the family hibernated in caves or hollows, and came out now and again in favourable spells, to pick up insects enough for sustaining life until spring-time.

After noting the pair in this locality, when the weather was mild and sunny, we had a few unpleasant days to follow, and I have not since seen them. On the same day, a Fantailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) in fine plumage, with plenty of rusty-red on throat and breast, was sitting on a small tree on Victoria Parade, which borders the Mersey River. A Crow-Shrike (*Strepera arguta*) has taken up his abode there, too, and a few days ago was sitting on a privet-bush gulping down the berries while I passed within a few feet of him.—H. STUART DOVE, West Devonport, Tasmania. (3/7/26).

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Spotted Bower-Birds at Home.—It has generally been observed that the Spotted Bower-Bird (*Chlamydera maculata*) is very wary as regards the sites of its bowers, or playgrounds, and its nests. Yet I watched one of these birds build both bower and nest. The former was situated under low-growing branches of a cumquat tree, not thirty yards from a much-frequented verandah of the Tortdale Station homestead, Central Queensland. It was built of stiff grass and small sticks, and was in the form of a U. This was, of course, the work and property of a male bird; nor were any others allowed in the playground. Other male intruders he chased from the vicinity, but admiring females were allowed to watch his parade from neighbouring branches.

His play consisted of hopping backwards and forwards through the bower, dragging his wings and keeping up an unending stream of

hissing and mimicing. Often one of the many articles, such as bits of glass or snail-shells, with which the bower was stocked, would be carried from one side to the other and then dropped. This bird's favourite colours seemed to be green and white, and all shining metal objects were treasured. Small green berries, green bottle-glass, and white snail-shells were the commonest things in the collection.

The nest was a very rough structure built at the top of a high brigalow tree, a couple of hundred yards from the house. It consisted of dry twigs, and the sky could easily be seen through it. The eggs had practically no protection, but were well camouflaged by the broad wavering lines of dark brown and purple, which were so numerous as to cover nearly the whole shell. As is to be expected under these conditions, the eggs are large considering the size of the bird.

These birds, though destructive in a garden, are extremely interesting to study, and it would be well worth while if a member of the R.A.O.U. could spend some time in procuring good photographs illustrating some of their habits.*—J. A. ARCHER, Southport, Queensland (31/7/26).

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Nesting of Eagles.—I have received a most interesting note from Mr. Russell Le Walf concerning the Bald Eagle of America. In a letter dated June 22nd, 1926, he writes :—

"The day before I visited the nest the wind blew it down, killing the three young Eagles about two weeks old. Last year the nest fell down owing to its great weight, and three years ago the male was shot, but the female returned with a new mate and proceeded with the raising of the family. The birds have nested there (Vermillion, Ohio, U.S.A.), for more than 50 years. We are all anxious to know whether or not they will return."

In a later letter (July 13) he says :—"I am glad to say that the Eagles have returned to their nesting grounds, and I hope they will build again."

It would be most interesting to know if our Wedge-tailed Eagles have been known to remain in the same locality after having experienced such set-backs. Possibly some of our members who are well acquainted with their habits may be able to throw light upon the subject. Only once have I known of a nest to be re-occupied after one of the Hawks had been shot. The incident took place many years ago at Castlemaine, when a Goshawk (*Astur fasciatus*) was shot from a nest in an iron-bark tree. The following season a pair of Goshawks reared three young in the same nest. We thought at the time that the remaining bird must have procured another mate, but, of course, it is quite possible that another pair of birds used the old nest.—N. J. FAVOLORA, Melbourne (12/8/26).

*Mr. D. W. Gaukrodger, R.A.O.U., of Queensland, has photographed the Spotted Bower-Bird, both at the nest and in the playground.—EDITOR.

The Masked Gannet.—The photographs appearing in this issue of the Masked Gannet (*Sula cyanops*) were taken on the Admiralty Islets, adjacent to Lord Howe Island, in March last. Although most of the young birds are said to hatch out in October and November, I found youngsters of almost all ages, from fluffy balls of about a month old to immature-plumaged birds just ready to fly, when I visited the islets in February and March. The nests invariably occupied elevated positions near the summit of the island, the parent birds continually planing down with food for their ever-hungry offspring. Disturbed but seldom, the birds are exceedingly tame. I was informed by the Lord Howe islanders that the Masked Gannet invariably lays at least two eggs, occasionally more; but in no case did I observe more than a single chick in each family. This seems to bear out the conclusion arrived at by other observers, that these birds deliberately limit their families to one.—E. F. POLLOCK, Strathfield, N.S.W.*

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White-backed Swallows in the East.—I was deeply interested in a note by Mr. M. Thompson in *The Emu* (July, 1926) in which he mentions having seen the White-backed Swallow (*Cheramaeca leucosternum*) in the Upper Hunter valley.

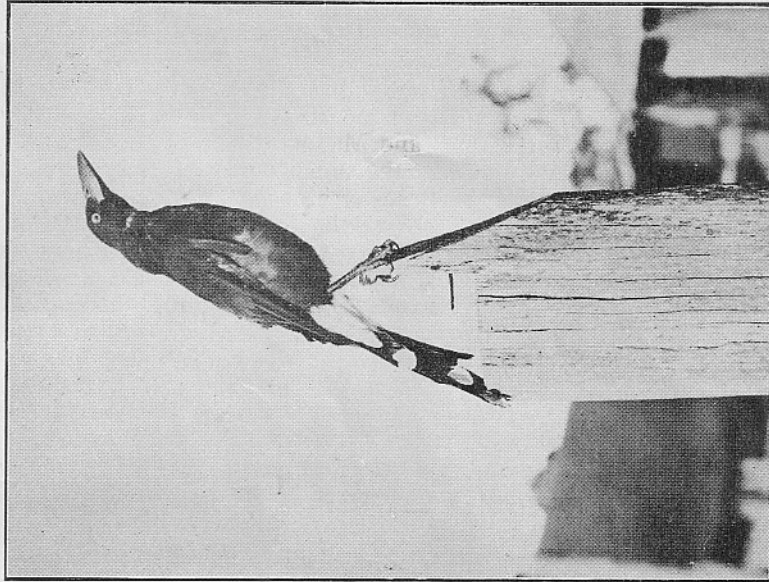
Nearly two years ago my attention was drawn to a flock of White-backed Swallows on the Clarence River, some four miles above Grafton. This was a surprise to me, as my previous knowledge of these birds had been only in the Western districts. The part of the Clarence where they are to be seen is very interesting, for the banks have broken away, leaving very high earthen walls which have become a favourite nesting-site for many earth-burrowing birds.

At low tide one could scramble down a narrow track, and, standing on the strip of sand exposed, look up at the steep, broken banks where numerous feathered cave-dwellers had made their homes. In largest numbers of all were the tunnels of the Rainbow-Bird (*Merops ornatus*), and the dainty White-backed Swallows built in their holes, not going to the end of them but scooping out a little cave at one side and building their grass nests there. This flock of birds was curiously local in its habits, seeming only to be found about one spot on top of the steep banks above-mentioned. I do not know how long they may have been there before I was first shown them, but to my certain knowledge they have been there ever since, making no attempt to leave during either last winter or this.—FLORENCE M. IRBY, Casino, N.S.W. (1/8/26).

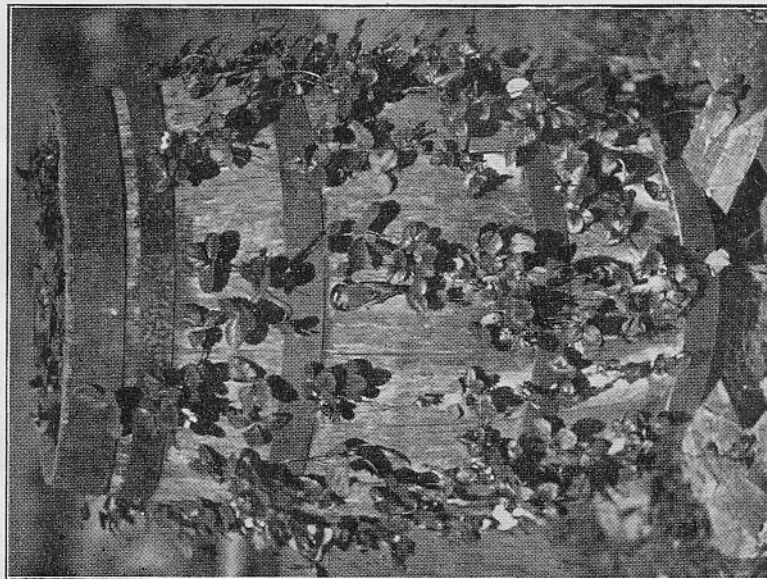
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The Currawong in Captivity.—Before I heard the musical call of the species breaking the silence of great river gorges, I was introduced to a Pied Currawong, born somewhere on Barrington Tops (N.S.W.). As a fledgling, the bird was brought from the plateau to his home at Ecclestone by Mr. John Hopson, my companion

* See Plates 21 and 22.



"MAGGIE," THE CURRAWONG.
Photo. by Charles Barrell.



BLACK-HEADED PARDALOTE AT NEST IN STRAWBERRY-BARREL.
Photo. by (Miss) Hilda Geissmann.

of a trip in January 1926. It has become a pct of the household, and enjoys large liberty. With flight feathers of one wing clipped slightly, "Maggie," as the bird is called, roams about garden and paddock, parades the verandah and the roof, and wanders indoors pretty freely. He is a cunning, quaint, and delightful bird, on the very best of terms with the home folks, but rather suspicious of strangers. He acknowledged my right, as an invited guest, to be at the homestead, but was irresponsive when I sought to be as friendly as his owners. Still, he was keenly interested in the new-comer—and his belongings.

A loud inquiry wakened me on the first morning at Mr. Hopson's home. It is a wearisome journey from Paterson to the green hills of Eccleston, and my sleep had been sound. At sunrise, it was disconcerting to be aroused by insistent cries of "What?—what?—what?" ; and to see a black form perched on the rail at the foot of one's bed. I thought of Poe's raven. It was "Maggie," a noble specimen of *Strepera graculina*. His note sounded, to the sleeper waking, like the word "What," but soon clearly resembled "Wok." Presently my visitor broke into song, or whistling rather, informing me tunefully that there was no luck about the house, there was—he did not complete the lines.

Thereafter "Maggie" was frequently my shadow. He followed me, came to inspect my collections, and usually announced his arrival with a cry of "Wok." After the return from Barrington, one morning, I left many fine beetles on a sheet of paper, out in the sunshine, to dry. The Currawong, when my back was turned, hopped from a hiding-place, snapped up one of the rarest specimens, and was away with it in a second. "Wok!" he called gleefully, "Wok!"—C. BARRETT, Melbourne.

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Australian Birds and British Artists.—The 1926 Exhibition of the Royal Academy suggests that British artists appreciate the beauty of some of the Australian birds with which they are familiar, since out of half a dozen pictures in which birds figure prominently four include Australian species. In H. A. Budd's picture "The Bird Shop," amongst the denizens of cages a Galah is easily recognised; and the proprietor is seen through the doorway reaching up to a Cockatoo on a perch. Miss M. Gear's "Fine Feathers" shows two Macaws, a White Cockatoo and a Pink Cockatoo in a bower of cinerarias and other flowers. Miss A. Airy shows a picture entitled "The Man with the Macaw." The man is obviously Spanish and has a Macaw perched on his left arm, whilst in his right hand he holds a slice of melon on which sits a Budgerigar! To an ornithologist this seems decidedly incongruous, but the incongruity is much worse in H. Harvey's picture "Rima." Hudson's famous story deals very precisely with the locality in which Rima lived, which was that part of Venezuela bordering on British Guiana. The artist has depicted Rima in a tropical jungle with Humming-Birds hovering around her, and perching on her right hand is a bird quite alien to this South American scene—an Australian Galah! The Royal Academy has Professors of

Anatomy and Chemistry among its officials. Surely it should also appoint a Professor of Biology.—W. B. ALEXANDER, C.F.A.O.U., England.

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Color Phases of Finches.—In Volume XII. p. 5 of his *Birds of Australia*, Mr. G. M. Mathews describes *Donacola castaneothorax* and *D. flaviprymna*. The latter he ascribes to north-west Australia and the Northern Territory, and the former is noted at various places from northern Australia to northern New South Wales. A species of *Donacola* first appeared to my knowledge in the Maitland district in 1883, when hundreds of them were breeding in the bullrushes along the Hunter River adjoining the town of West Maitland, and since then they have been noted at irregular intervals along the lower Hunter and Paterson Rivers. One hesitates to differ from such an authority as Gould, who states that *D. castaneothorax* is distinct from *D. flaviprymna*, but I have frequently seen the young of *D. castaneothorax* go through a stage of plumage development wherein it strongly resembles *D. flaviprymna* as described by Gould.

In April last I procured four young *D. castaneothorax* which had no signs anywhere of the black colors which appear on mature specimens, but now (19/7/26) are fully colored. Four or five weeks ago they were colored like the specimen shown in Plate 566 of Mathews' book.

Mathews states that the purity of the captive specimens is not certain, as these Finches interbreed, and the bird-catchers stated they were found together in flocks. If that is to be accounted as a reason for my experience, how is the want of purity of specimens so far south as the Hunter River to be explained? I do not know where the captive birds in my possession were taken, but I have seen wild specimens similarly plumaged about West Maitland.

D. flaviprymna has a wider range than Northern Australia. Mr. S. A. Hanscombe, R.A.O.U., informs me that he has noted *Donacola* on the lower South Coast of New South Wales. He does not say what species.—W. J. ENRIGHT, West Maitland, N.S.W.

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The White-fronted Heron.—Reading Mr. M. S. R. Sharland's interesting article, "The Haunts of the Heron" in *The Emu* for July, I wondered if I might venture to supplement his observations with a short account of a tame Heron (*Notophox novae-hollandiae*) which, although its liberty was in no wise restricted, took up its abode with us for over three years.

During our very wet season, when numbers of Herons, Ibises and other water-fowl were about the swamp behind the house, a pair of "Blue Cranes" built a nest high in a gum tree—so high that we had no chance at all of seeing the beautiful blue eggs that we knew it contained. But later on, when they had hatched, we used to see four clumsy-looking heads with great strong beaks poked over the edge; and whenever the parent birds drew near the little ones made as much din as a party of baby Magpies.

One night a furious gale arose, strewing the ground with fallen boughs, and next day we found a forlorn-looking little object stalking dejectedly by the side of a dam, near the nest. One of the four had evidently been blown out. Perhaps times were hard and there was one too many. (Possibly, as Mr. Sharland suggests, the usual clutch is but three). Certain it is that the parents never seemed to miss or worry about the waif, so we carried her home and put her down in the yard amongst a varied collection of fowls and cats and dogs; and from the first she held her own. We fed her with worms and we called her "Bluey."

No wonder that her relatives made no outcry about her loss, and made no attempt to seek and reclaim her, although they lived within sight; for such an appetite as hers I have never seen!

Everybody on the farm dug worms, and still, like Oliver Twist, she croaked for more. Later on she took to a more varied diet, and preferred raw meat to anything else. She never ran—she was far too dignified for that—but she would stalk hurriedly to the kitchen verandah whenever she heard the click of the meat-safe door, pecking angrily at any luckless cat or dog who might chance to be attracted by the same alluring sound. She had an extraordinarily keen sense of taste, and if given a piece of salt beef, or anything highly flavoured or with salt or pepper on it, would carry it gingerly in her beak to her water-dish, and wash it vigorously. Anything dry or hard was treated in the same manner, being soaked in the water until soft. "Bluey" had a curious aversion to having her photo taken, and would stalk with head erect and an expression of injured dignity, all round the garden and through the house just in front of the photographer who might be imploring her to stay still.

She lived with us for over three years. Sometimes she would fly away for the whole day, but almost invariably she returned in the evening, and was particularly fond of roosting on the back of a cane lounge on the verandah, scolding vigorously if anyone happened to be sitting in it. Her chief amusement was building nests. These usually consisted of a few dry sticks, which the bird would painstakingly place on the verandah where no one could help walking over them. It never seemed to occur to her to build in a tree. At times, too, she would dance. This was usually shortly before rain, or during damp weather. Slowly she would circle round and round with outstretched wings.

But there came a sorrowful day at last when "Bluey" did not return from one of her excursions. She may have been seized upon by some strolling fox and carried away to its den, but probably she heard, and could no longer resist, the mysterious Call of the Wild.—FLORENCE M. IRBY, Casino, N.S.W. (1/8/26).

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The Rock-Warbler.—The able and very interesting monograph on the Rock-Warbler (*Origma rubricata*), by Mr. K. A. Hindwood,

R.A.O.U., in the July issue of *The Emu*, vividly recalls my experiences of this remarkable bird, which I first met with in schooldays at Mittagong, on the Great Southern Railway, and about eighty miles south of Sydney.

The Rock-Warbler, though not numerous about Mittagong, was usually to be found in the deep gorge between the mountains known as Gog and Magog, which overlook the town. The bird was known locally as "Rock-Robin." In the side of one of these mountains are long-abandoned coal-shafts, partially filled as a rule with black, ice-cold water, and to the beams of which Rock-Warblers attached their long, pendant nests, practically safe from the attacks of any natural enemies of the bird except perhaps the Boobook and Powerful Owls, both of which occurred about Mittagong.

The position of the nest, when built in a coal-shaft, was so far above the water that a marauding monitor, or lace lizard—"Goanna" in bush parlance, and arch-enemy of many birds—could not reach it by swimming, while the steep sides of the shaft were so dank and slippery that the reptile could not ascend them.

Into these gloomy and somewhat dangerous shafts (which were liable to cave in suddenly), disregarding the icy temperature of the water, we schoolboys penetrated, proudly adding the Rock-Warblers' pure-white eggs to our collections.

In other instances the nest was found depending from overhanging cliffs, safe from the lace lizard, but quite open to attack by Crows and Hawks.

I next observed the Rock-Warbler many years afterwards (about 1903), on the yellow sandstone cliffs at the northern extremity of Balmoral (or Hunter's) Beach, near Sydney. The bird was even then rare in that quarter, and since this suburb has become much more thickly settled and built over, has probably disappeared from it.

As regards the Rock-Warbler's limited habitat, as delineated by Mr. Hindwood, I may mention that, about twelve years ago, I observed a pair of Rock-Warblers at the foot of cliffs above Araganui Beach, about midway between Bermagui and Tathra, on the South Coast of New South Wales. A little to the south of this beach lies the great bluff known as Bunga Head, the seaward face of which, timbered and scrub-covered in part, would afford an environment well suited to the Rock-Warbler. I should not be surprised if the Rock-Warbler were also to be found about the cliffs and gorges of the Dromedary Mountain, a few miles north of Bermagui.—H. V. EDWARDS, BEGA, N.S.W.

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