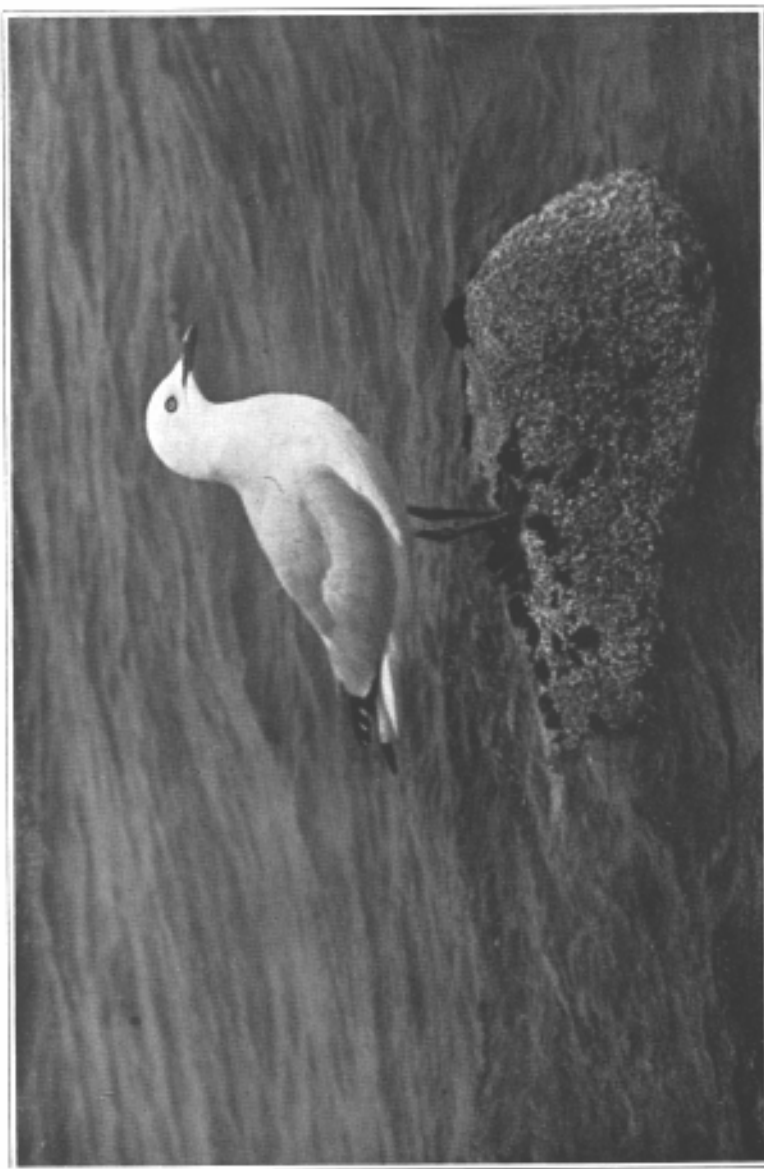




The Princess Parrot (*Polytelis alexandrae*).
For note see Camera Craft, page 75.



The Silver Gull or Red-billed Gull (*Larus nova-hollandiae*).
Photo by R. T. Littlejohns, R.A.O.U.

726. "The Council may appoint any additional secretaries or assistant secretaries or other officers for special duties and in particular may appoint local secretaries committees or representatives in all or any of the States of the Commonwealth of Australia and in the Dominion of New Zealand or in any dependency district or districts of the said Commonwealth and Dominion and also may appoint any committees therein respectively and may delegate to them such powers authorities and discretions as such Council possesses and may think fit to delegate. The Council may at any time revoke any such appointment or appointments."

⁸An editorial committee is under consideration.

Camera Craft

The Princess Parrot.—The beautiful Princess Parrot was discovered in 1862 by the Stuart Exploratory Expedition into Central Australia, at Howell's Pond, in latitude 16° 54" South. The new species was, in 1863, named *Polytelis alexandrae*, in honour of the then Princess of Wales, by John Gould. This very rare Parrot was observed by the Horne Expedition to Central Australia in 1894. It was seen, too, by the late Mr. G. A. Keartland in 1896-7, when with the ill-fated Calvert Expedition to the North-West. We are again indebted to Mr. J. A. Kershaw, F.E.S., R.A.O.U., Curator of the National Museum, Melbourne. He kindly granted permission to use, for the coloured plate, photographs of the fine group of three specimens mounted in different positions so as to show the chaste, delicate colouring of these exquisite, rose-throated birds, which are generally considered to be amongst the most beautiful of the parrot tribe. The total length of the bird is 15½ inches.

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Silver Gulls at Elwood.—At many of the popular sea-side resorts the Silver Gulls have become accustomed to the presence of crowds, and will approach quite closely for scraps of food. Subjects in this semi-tame state do not appeal to the photographer while other birds are nesting, but, after the close of the nesting season I spent one morning in an endeavour to obtain close-up pictures of this species, whose beauty, by the way, is likely to be overlooked by reason of its familiarity. Notwithstanding the apparent trustfulness, however, I found them rather difficult to photograph at rest. Raw meat was used as a lure, but the birds disliked the near presence of the camera, and persisted in snapping up the meat while they were on the wing. They were much too active for my fastest shutter speed. Eventually a tempting piece of meat was anchored to a large stone below the surface of the water, and the camera was trained on the nearest protruding rock. After two or three unsuccessful attempts to obtain the prize one fine Gull was surprised into perching

for a few seconds on the rock to survey the position. I know of few other birds which have contours as pleasing as that of the Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*) of Australia, Tasmania, New Caledonia and New Zealand.—R. T. LITTLEJOHNS, Melbourne.

* * *

Australia's Tailor Bird.—Though it is not generally known, in the Golden-headed Fantail-Warbler or Corn Bird (*Cisticola exilis*) of Australia, Tasmania, and the islands to India and Formosa, we have a bird which sometimes adopts methods of nest-building closely similar to those of the Tailor Bird of India, a related species. One nest which I found, instead of being securely woven in the centre of a tussock, after the style of most other nests of the species, was placed within two inches of the ground, and was without the protection of any tussock whatsoever. Instead, the nest was carefully camouflaged with the broad leaves of a common weed, whose seed stalks formed the main support of the nest. Several leaves had been drawn round the nest and fastened on with cobweb till almost the whole of the downy exterior of the nest was hidden from view. A casual spider's cocoon and a few dead leaves and stalks completed the deception. — T. V. GIVENS, R.A.O.U.

Stray Feathers

Spine-tailed Swifts Perching in Victoria.—A specimen of the Spine-tailed Swift (*Hirundapus spinicaudus*) was found dead beneath the telephone wire at 7 a.m. on the morning of the 10th February, 1925. Almost underneath the wire were several scarlet flowering gums, both *Eucalyptus calophylla* and *E. ficifolia*. They were just covered with blossom, and hundreds of moths were attracted to them by the quantity of honey. Apparently, the Swift struck the wire when hawking for his breakfast. It was the first I had seen at close quarters, though we were then used to seeing them in great numbers, especially before a storm. We used to marvel at the late hour they were flying round, even after the stars were out. Perhaps they had a roosting place in the tall timbers near the house. In February, 1898, was the only time we saw a Swift perch. That year, for days, one could see no distance for the smoke of bush fires. There was more standing dead timber then, and the Swifts, doubtless confused by the smoke, perched or propped themselves on the trunk of the trees. We have noted that Swifts are much rarer than they were formerly, though this year they have been unusually numerous.—C. C. CURRIE, R.A.O.U., Lardner, Gippsland (1928).



The Nest of the Fantail-Warbler or Australian Tailor-bird (*Cisticola exilis*).

Photo by T. V. Given. R.A.O.U.