

I noticed one bird, probably a female, pretending to be hurt, and whenever she would lie over on her side, fluttering her wings, and squeaking, one of the others would run up to her, whereat she would jump up and make a little rush at it, as much as to say, "Don't you interfere in this," then after a short run she would go through the same performance again, no doubt trying to entice me away from her eggs.

Owing to the great wind- and rain-storms of the past two months, this site has undergone a considerable change as to its surface, and even since my last visit, about a fortnight ago, I could notice an appreciable difference, as I found the midden remains in little mounds, holding the sand together, and the birds had in every case chosen one of these mounds as the site for the nest. In one case the eggs were lying beside a short stick, in another a couple of stones were in close proximity, and, as I have previously noticed in the nidification of this species, there is nearly always some small object close to the nest, as if by design, so as to make the eggs less conspicuous.

I observed one pair of Hooded Dotterels (*Charadrius cucullatus*) in company with the Red-caps, and these, too, showed considerable uneasiness at my presence, uttering their beautiful low-pitched, flute-like call every now and then, as they flighted swiftly around, and ran within 15 and 20 yards of me. This species is not at all numerous on the East Coast, its numbers there being far exceeded on the great sandy wastes of the northern half of the West Coast.

Interesting it was, too, to note the first of the Double-banded Dotterel (*C. bicinctus*), represented by a single individual, no doubt not long arrived from New Zealand, after its long flight across the stormy wastes of the Tasman Sea. This specimen was in company of the Red-caps when I first made my appearance, but after a few minutes it took flight and alighted down on the beach hard by. The species is far more common on the West Coast, where I have seen it during mid-summer and early autumn in large flocks on the wide beaches extending northwards from Sandy Cape to Mt. Cameron West.

Camera Craft

Plover in Tasmania.—Since the introduction of the regulation giving total protection to the Plover in Tasmania these birds have increased to a noticeable extent in that State. In fact, at the present time, there is probably no

bird more numerous there than the Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ*). At one time, owing to constant shooting, their numbers were sadly depleted, but now every district holds its complement of them, and large flocks, amounting sometimes to many hundreds, are to be seen in the Lake country as well as in the Derwent Valley in the south and many places round the East Coast. They have probably never been so numerous. This is pleasing to both bird-lover and pastoralist, for they are graceful, interesting birds well worthy of study, and are protected by most landholders because of their destruction of sheep pests. The dreaded fluke in recent years has disappeared from many of the moist, swamp lands in the Midlands, particularly on the Eastern Tiers where it was common, and this to a large extent is attributed to the work of the Plover. The introduced Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) is also claimed to be useful in this connection.

While not increasing to the same extent as the Spurwing, the smaller Banded Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*) is becoming more common in certain districts as the result of protective legislation. Landowners recognise the value of this Plover, and have done much to ensure its protection by the prohibition of trespassing and hunting; but, unfortunately, the birds are still shot at, the "pot-hunters" claiming a few occasionally. There can never be total prohibition of killing, though it is consoling to know that the destruction of the birds is opposed by law. The Banded Plover, though not as common as the Spurwing, holds its own quite well, and in certain districts in the south has increased in the last few years. As it frequents scattered localities, it is not seen so much as the larger Spurwing. The two birds do not seem to get on well together, and, in most cases, it will be found that in districts frequented by Spurwings the Banded Plover are absent. They like a territory to themselves.

Coming to the Mainland of Australia I was grieved to note the absence of Plover. One can travel hundreds of miles in certain parts and never see one. During a trip through New South Wales last year, extending over 2000 miles, I saw but one Banded Plover, the solitary bird being noted on the road near Wellington in the valley of the Macquarie River. The Spurwing was neither seen nor heard, though the trip extended from Sydney to Albury, then through the back country to Orange and Wellington, thence to within a few miles of the Queensland border at Moree. I found some Banded Plover nesting at Werribee in September this year. They have been there for some time, but I have not seen the Spurwing near Melbourne, though one night in August I heard the notes of two or

three flying low down over the city. They are easily distinguishable from the calls of the Banded Plover.

Tasmania, however, is certainly to be regarded as the stronghold of the Spurwing Plover, and it is to be hoped that the ban on shooting will never be lifted.—M. S. R. SHARLAND, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

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Tree-creeper Nesting in Ground.—Is it unusual for the Tree-creeper to select as a nesting site a hole in the ground? The absence of published records of the discovery of such a site would appear to indicate that it is.

The perusal of several works on Ornithology and a search through back numbers of "The Emu" in which Tree-creepers were mentioned, failing to reveal the nesting site anywhere but in the hollow in the stem of a tree, a stump or a branch, the presence of a nest of the Brown Tree-creeper (*Climacteris picumnus*) in the bank of a creek close to Melbourne this spring was, apparently, by no means uninteresting.

For a day or two we had been watching Tree-creepers, both the Brown and the White-throated (*C. leucophaea*), in this particular locality, but could discover no nests until a few days later when crossing a bridge over a narrow creek a Brown Tree-creeper flew from a small hole in the bank. Investigating, we found a cavity warmly lined and three eggs resting at the end, eight inches from the entrance. The hole was just large enough to admit the bird, but it widened inside, and there was a slight ledge at the entrance on which the bird rested a few moments, looking about, before disappearing into the darkness.

A week later (27th September) the eggs were hatched, but one of the young died and was thrown from the nest. A feature of the nest was that the space between the entrance and the nest proper, the "passage-way," was comfortably lined, the same material being used as in the nest, namely, fur and hair, matted so that it resembled felt. We did not determine the purpose served by this lining. It may have been used as a resting place, or a shelter at night, by one of the adult birds, for the cavity was sufficiently large to accommodate two birds with ease. Lining material was taken into the nest by one of the birds in the intervals of feeding the young; in fact, a great deal of the bird's time was spent at the nest, either covering the young or standing on this lined passage with the head at the entrance. Once, as we were examining the nest, a piece of earth became dislodged and it rested on this lined compartment at the entrance. The bird when next visiting the young swallowed a mouthful of insects and set to work to move the offending

object, which it succeeded in doing, rolling it to the ledge, then lifting it in the bill and dropping it over the side. The same was done with smaller particles which we placed there in order to delay entrance to the nest so that we might get some pictures. The male, or that which we took to be the male, seldom came near while the camera was in position. He passed food to the mate on the bank, and once gave it to her on the nest, and she in turn passed it to the young. We spent several days observing them.—M. S. R. SHARLAND, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

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Blue Wrens and Cuckoo.—A pair of Blue Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*), which built a nest in a dry bush beside the irrigation ditch, has made suitable subjects for photography and has, incidentally, provided an illustration of the capacity for food of a young Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*). The Wrens had been victimised by the Fan-tailed Cuckoo, and a young Cuckoo was the sole occupant of the nest. During one minute and a half the Cuckoo disposed of the following animals:—Two large spotted-winged flies, a spider, a moth, a small worm, another spider, a grub, a couple of crane flies and a large dragon-fly. The dragon-fly was captured by the female, and the photograph shows her preparing to feed it to the chick. This presented some difficulty as the Cuckoo was a little scared of such a large prize and dropped it. The Wren at last succeeded in placing the head of the dragon-fly in the mouth of the chick and then pushed the remainder in by slow stages. For a few minutes afterward the Cuckoo refused further food, but, before long, had quite recovered his usual lusty appetite.—ALEX. D. SELBY, R.A.O.U., Quantong, Vic.

Stray Feathers

A Stray Bar-tailed Godwit.—An interesting "stray" was observed by my wife and self on the 4th inst. during one of our periodical visits to Long Point, near our home on the East Coast of Tasmania. We were walking along the beach on the northern side of the point, when we espied a lone Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) standing just within the reach of the surf as it came lapping up the beach. The bird was evidently much storm beaten, for it was disinclined to take flight, although we approached quietly to within 25 yards of it. It poised itself several times into the eye of the wind, as though it would not stand