

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

a much nearer inspection, but as I could see that it was tired out, we decided not to disturb it, and as we passed out of sight it was still standing in the same spot. Probably this bird was one of a flight making its way on to one of the two great tidal estuaries to the south, either the Moulting Lagoon, or Pittwater, both of which are favourite feeding grounds for all the Asiatic migrants which visit Tasmania regularly. The fearful gales which have swept over Tasmania for the past two months must have been responsible for the loss of many a migrant in its way across Bass Straits, despite the well-known and wonderful powers of flight all these birds possess.—ROBT. W. LEGGE, R.A.O.U., Cullenswood, Tas.

Lyrebird and Pilot-Bird.—It has been stated that the Superb Lyrebird (*Menura nova-hollandiae*) and the Pilot-Bird (*Pycnoptilus floccosus*) are on very friendly terms; that the Pilot-Bird warns the Lyrebird of the approach of danger—hence its name. It has been stated also that the Lyrebird, whilst scratching for centipedes and grubs, is quite agreeable to the Pilot-Bird sharing its food. During a walk in the forest at Sherbrooke on 25th May, 1928, a friend and I had an example of this very interesting feature. We heard the Pilot-Bird's call of a "Guinea-a-week," quite close to us and repeated several times. Walking on some distance, we heard the Lyrebird's call. Being very careful not to make the slightest sound, we approached to where we heard the first call, which now had become a concert. The Lyrebird was on a large fallen tree, from which he gave us a fine collection of bird calls, liberally interspersed with that of the Pilot-Bird. After a time the bird crossed the track from which we had been watching it and commenced scratching about 20 to 30 feet away. Watching closely, we saw a Pilot-Bird fluttering about, and then saw it darting down and picking up the food the Lyrebird was uncovering with its powerful feet and claws. The Lyrebird was also taking a mouthful every now and then. We watched this most interesting proceeding for about twenty minutes until someone came down the path and disturbed the birds.—MISS L. WIGAN, R.A.O.U., Ivanhoe, Vic., 30th September, 1928.

The Black Currawong in Queensland.—Re *Strepera fuliginosa*.—In *The Emu*, Vol. XXVII., 1928, p. 284, I wrote: "In the Museum Collection there is a typical specimen from Central Queensland, which was shot from the nest by H. G. Barnard, in 1892." I have received a letter from Mr. Barnard, in which he states that this is an error, and that, though on several occasions he forwarded specimens to the late Mr. A. J. North for the Museum, on no occasion did he forward a skin of a *Strepera*. He has never taken the nest and eggs of

a *Strepera*, and as far as he is aware the only species of that genus on the Dawson River, in Central Queensland, was *Strepera graculina*. I accept this statement from Mr. Barnard, as he should know. Furthermore, it shows that in this instance several specimens must have been mixed. Mr. North, in his *Nest and Eggs*, Vol. 1, p. 17, states "that *S. graculina* has a still more widely extended range is proved by my receipt of a specimen for identification that was obtained, with its nest and eggs, in a mountain range in Central Eastern Queensland." The registered catalogue number of the bird in question is O. 11820, presented by A. J. North, 11.9.1900, and in the remarks column is written "shot from nest by H. G. Barnard in 1892." I am not making any apology for my statement, as all I have to go by is the information in the register, and on the label attached to the bird. It seems strange that Mr. North did not enquire into the matter when he knew at the time that the bird, supposedly coming from Queensland, was so far away from its known haunts in Tasmania and the islands of Bass Strait. I am glad to be able to correct this. — J. R. KINGHORN, C.M.Z.S., Aust. Museum, Sydney.

Bird Notes from Lardner.—All the winter we have found at various times little birds dead about the garden, none far from the house—two waxbills, two wrens, a pipit, a mistletoe-bird, a magpie, a bower-bird, a kookaburra and a parrot. In the fields the young magpies in one nest also died. We hardly thought it unusual, as birds must die I suppose, but to our great regret the baby wrens have died in the nest. The old birds watched my sister while gardening, and we think now they must have been hungry, though it does not seem possible this year, and I am wondering if there is any association with the cause of their deaths, and the fact that I cannot rear the young ducklings (White Runners) this year. Last Monday I had 50 day-olds with the fowls that hatched them; to-day there are nine left. Has any other observer noticed this mortality amongst birds this year? The Satin Bower-Bird was our favourite; he was a solitary one, since it lost its blue-black mate (by a sportsman we think) about four years ago. This bird was a wonderful mimic and was always about the house and garden.—C. C. CURRIE, R.A.O.U., Lardner, Gippsland.

The Blue Petrel Near Bunbury, W.A.—Whilst walking on the beach at Bunbury, on 26th September last, I observed a Petrel which the waves had just cast ashore. It was then expiring, probably having been dashed against some adjacent rocks. I at once saw it was a species new to me, and I was immediately struck with the broad square tail and the pronounced arch of the anterior portion of the culmen. The general colour of the beak was black, but between the nasal

tube and the arch of the culmen was a narrow line of pink, and the edge of the lower mandible was also pink. The legs and feet were clear, but very pale blue distinctly suffused with pink; the webs were creamy at the base, shading into neutral in front. These colours were noted down at the time of discovery, whilst they were bright and fresh. On dissection the bird proved to be a male of the Blue Petrel (*Halobana carulea*), with the breeding organs much enlarged; nevertheless the presence of brown feathers along the anterior margins of the wings, and traces of the same colour on the crown suggest incomplete maturity. Writing some years ago Mr. G. M. Mathews in *The Birds of Australia*, Vol. II.—“in view of but a single specimen picked up in Victoria”—considered that the Blue Petrel has very slight claims to be called an Australian bird—a fair comment to make at that period. Since then further evidence of its occurrence has come to hand. Mr. L. Glauert informs me there is one in the Perth Museum which came ashore at North Fremantle five or six years ago. Mr. A. G. Campbell writes that there is a specimen in the H. L. White collection, and in *The Emu*, page 156, October, 1928, Miss J. A. Fletcher records the probable occurrence of another in Tasmania. In addition, I believe there are one or two additional Australian specimens in other collections. In estimating the claims of oceanic birds to be included in the Australian list several contingencies should, I think, be borne in mind. Supposing a flock of Petrels is overtaken by a storm and five per cent. come to grief. Before the bodies of these victims reach the shore they have to escape the jaws of voracious fishes and other dangers on reaching the beach. Large birds of prey and hosts of small crustaceans are waiting to make a quick end of them, not to mention stray cats and rats. Lastly, if they escape these mischances it is essential they should arrive on some inhabited beach, and fall at once into the hands of an ornithologist, or at least into the hands of someone sufficiently interested in bird-life to forward the body to the nearest museum. In conjunction with the further records, and bearing in mind these adverse chances, I think it reasonable to consider the Blue Petrel as a regular visitor in small numbers to the Australian coast. I must add that owing to an unfortunate accident my specimen was badly damaged later on, the typical square tail being totally destroyed.—
F. LAWSON WHITLOCK, R.A.O.U., “Ocean View,” Bunbury, W.A.