

Another Cuckoo-Shrike flew into a nearby tree, apparently having come across Gunnamatta Bay. The male immediately attacked the newcomer and chased it for about a mile along the eastern shore of the Bay. On his return to the gully, he flew for several minutes in long sweeping flights high over the area, finally settling in a tall tree and uttering the typical call. The female was not seen nor was the new nest, if any, located.

On August 31 the pair was seen working over the old territory and remained in view for about fifteen minutes. Towards the end of that period, the female was observed to return to the original nest site, on which there was no sign, viewed from the ground, of the old nest. The female perched on the fork and gathered the few remaining cobwebs, which were clearly seen in her beak. She then flew rapidly northward, towards the gully in which the male had been seen two days previously.

The ground under the old nesting site was closely examined but no trace of nesting material was found. From the last observed actions of the female, it appears probable that the original nest was removed, piecemeal, to the new nest site.

Stray Feathers

Aethya 1816 versus *Aythya* 1822

Aethya Dumont, *Dict. Sci. Nat. Levr.*, vol. 1, suppl. p. 71, Oct. 12, 1816.

Aythya Boie, *Tageb. Reise Norwegen*, p. 351, before May, 1822.

Aithya Boie, *Isis*, April, 1828, col. 359.

The derivation of the above names is from the Greek *Aithyia*, a gull, and this is the corrected name as used by Gloger in 1827. Gloger also used *Aethyia*, as did Agassiz in 1846. Ai is the Greek form and Ae the Latin form of the same word. As Boie changed his Ay to Ai we have *Aithya* Boie. How does this differ from *Aethya*? Other spellings are *Aythia* Salvadori; *Aythya* Bonaparte.—GREGORY MATHEWS, Canberra, 22/8/41.

Choosing the Nest Site.—Which bird chooses the nest site—the male, female, or both? Practically nothing is known of this interesting and important phase of behaviour, which must be repeated every year by nearly all birds, including the commonest species. That so little has been recorded is due, perhaps, to the fact that such knowledge is gained nearly always by chance. Once the nest site is selected it becomes the focal point of all the bird's activities,

and we can observe events with ease. Until the decision is made, however, the bird is free and untrammelled, moving from one point to another within the chosen territory. The nest site may be selected visually without any special kind of behaviour; or distinctive behaviour may be of very brief duration. It is certain, at least, that only close and constant observation of a mated pair can reveal anything of this domestic task, which determines to a great extent the success of their whole enterprise.

That chance may play a part in the revelation was brought home to me the other day. Walking along a road, I heard an unfamiliar and continuous chattering note. I proceeded in the direction of the sound and discovered a male Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) crouching against the bank and glancing upwards occasionally at a female preening her feathers. So intent was he on this performance that I was able to approach closely. The calling never ceased for an instant, and must have lasted for several minutes. Then the female, which had not been entirely uninterested in the pleading of her mate, flew away and was followed by the male, which kept just behind her. Together they flew over an irregular course, now higher, now lower, creating an impression that the flight was an expression of the emotions rather than an attempt to reach a desired destination. I found two holes in the bank where the male had been crouching—one a fairly large and deep one, and the other a small one extending two or three inches into the bank. It is my firm belief that the male was inviting the female to inspect these sites, for his position relative to the holes, his tense attitude and persistent calling hardly leave room for any other explanation. The incident is recorded in the hope that others may be induced to describe behaviour which seems to relate to this important task of choosing a nest site.—N. L. ROBERTS, Beecroft, New South Wales, 17/9/41.

Honeyeater and Ants.—About 9 a.m. on August 31, 1941, during the Gould League camp at the bird-cabin in the National Park, my attention was drawn to the actions of a Lewin Honeyeater. The bird was on the ground searching amongst the upturned soil. We were surprised to see that the bird was "anting" itself, picking up large ants (*Campanotus* sp.), holding them for a second or so, and then placing them under its wing. The ants were held there briefly and then eaten. That was not the case with the only other instance in which I observed a bird anting. There the bird, a Rufous Whistler, did not eat the ants but dropped them to the ground. A large party of us watched the Lewin Honeyeater for some minutes, from a distance of only a few yards, and we all agreed that it actually ate the insects. A search of the area later confirmed that, for

only one ant was found, and it had a crushed thorax.—P. A. BOURKE, Gilgandra, New South Wales, 13/9/41.

Kingfisher's Nest in Staghorn.—For three years in succession a pair of kingfishers has nested in a staghorn fern attached to a tree in Mr. H. O. Muddle's garden at Ashgrove, Brisbane. Each year the nesting hole has been made in a different part of the fern, the birds dashing against it from an adjacent fence and piercing the soft material with their bills. The kingfishers had not arrived when I photographed the fern in August, but from Mr. Muddle's description I believe the species is the Forest Kingfisher (*Halcyon macleayi*). In *The Australian Museum Magazine*, vol. 1, p. 151, Mr. J. Roy Kinghorn records (with photograph) a case of the Sacred Kingfisher (*H. sanctus*) nesting in a similar site.—N. L. ROBERTS, Beecroft, N.S.W., 8/8/41.

Feeding of the Swamp-hen.—In *The Emu*, vol. XXXIX, p. 290, Mr. C. E. Bryant mentions records of the Eastern Swamp-hen (*Porphyrio melanotus*) feeding "parrot fashion." On Lake Wendouree, at Ballarat, Victoria, dozens of these birds are resident, and may be seen feeding in the reed-beds close to the shore. On two visits to Ballarat, while on day trips from Melbourne, I have noticed Swamp-hens feeding in this unusual manner. On the first occasion, in September, 1940, one bird was noted feeding with the reed held in one claw and raised to the bill, the reed being drawn through the bill, the bird feeding, to all appearances, on small crustacea attached to the reed. Three birds were seen feeding in like manner and none had difficulty in keeping its balance.

On my second visit in February, 1941, twelve birds were noticed standing on one foot and feeding with the other. Each bird was feeding in a similar manner, pulling the young reeds from the water and holding them in one claw, then conveying them to the bill, where the reed was split open and the white centre extracted and eaten.—W. R. WHEELER, Elwood, Vic., 17/8/41.

Pink-eared Duck in southern Western Australia.—In *The Emu*, vol. XXXVIII, 1938, p. 57, I remarked that the status of this species in the southern portion of the State is not typified by the only two specimens (Lake Muir, 1912, and Wanneroo, 1922) hitherto recorded. The late Tom Carter noted it as "Not uncommon in the mid-west," and it is only to be expected that odd individuals will stray south from time to time. Further evidence of this is the fact that a specimen was shot at Gnowangerup on Christmas Day, 1940, and, after being roughly skinned, was sent to me. Unfortunately it was not sexed, so the following details are not so



Nesting hole of Kingfisher in staghorn fern.

Photo. by N. L. Roberts.

useful as they would have been were the sex known: culmen 62 mm., tarsus 33, wing 173, tail 60. These measurements were taken by me, and the collector noted the colour of the eyes as "dark greyish." The skin is now in the Serventy-Whittell Collection.—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 30/1/41.

Brush Bronzewing in South-west Australia. — This coastal species, *Phaps elegans*, has not hitherto been recorded inland in Western Australia, so the occurrence of a single bird at Bridgetown on January 22, 1940, is worthy of being placed on record. Still more interesting is the discovery that in a particular area, some twenty miles south-west of Narrogin, the species is numerous, whereas in other portions of that district the form is *chalcoptera*. I have been informed that *elegans* occurs only in the area mentioned, and I have been supplied with a wing of each species. The sex of the specimens from which the wings were taken is not known to me, but measurements were as follow: *chalcoptera* 194 mm., *elegans* 158 mm. The Common Bronzewing has increased enormously of late years in the lower south-west, possibly due to the suitable food of subterranean clover being so diffusely available. The occurrence of an individual of *elegans* at Bridgetown is possibly due to that cause, but the colony in the Narrogin district appears to be of long standing.—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 20/7/41.

Reviews

The Moas.—The Moas always have been of interest, yet few have taken up their study, apparently because skeletons are difficult subjects and are not easily available. Moreover, good material usually depends on lucky finds. The discoveries of the past relate mostly to swamps where, owing to the bones being mixed, it is impossible to allocate them to individual birds. Hence, there is conjecture in all work done on such specimens. A few discoveries in caves have provided better material, and of such full advantage has been taken. Lately, an excellent array of individual skeletons with the bones in perfect condition were found at Pyramid Gully, North Canterbury, not far from the famous find at Glenmark in 1868. In addition, Archey, by his own exertions, has brought to light from caves in the Auckland District a series of skeletons of the smaller North Island species. With this new and comparatively satisfactory material, and a study of the collections in New Zealand, North America, and Europe, Archey has had an opportunity not hitherto available to study anew the classification of the Moa. This he has done with true scientific thoroughness, "The Moa," by Gilbert Archey, *Bulletin of the Auckland Institute and Museum*, no. 1, 1941. But he has done more than classify the Moas. He has discussed their distribution, phylogeny, history, and extinction, and, as well, has given a list of all known publications on the group. The chief alterations in the classification (compared with the scheme published by Oliver, *New Zealand Birds*, 1930) are the following:—*Euryapteryx* is divided into two genera based mainly on