(vi) Appetite

For small birds this was exceptional. One Wren was observed to eat 38 termites in rapid succession.

(vii) Group Protection Behaviour

When the Wrens were trapped for disposal from the large aviaries, the adult males were observed to react to a very harsh call uttered by each Wren as it was handled. (Adult males, being suspicious by nature are far harder to trap even in an aviary). The bird would get on the floor with neck fully flexed and tail horizontal, a picture of aggression, and scuttle quickly to and from the offending person, uttering a series of shrill squeaks. This behaviour must be a distraction/protection response such as that reported in Jackdaws by Lorenz.

(viii) Other Sundry Observations

Juveniles do not appear to join in territorial or aggression song.

As in the field, the adult female appears to lead a group of Wrens.

Wrens will not tolerate the presence of other Wrens from outside their familial group, and it would appear that outcrosses in the field must be very uncommon.

Although these Wrens were not kept through a reproductive phase, some males were commencing to assume nuptial plumage. It appears that the feathers become pigmented in this change which is apparently not a moult. The moult occurred while the birds were in eclipse plumage (personal communication). Ecclestone of Bunbury reports that the change from nuptial to eclipse plumage is also very rapid and appears to be due to loss of pigment.

SUMMARY

Some observations on the behaviour of Malurus splendens under field and aviary conditions during the non-reproductive phase are reported.

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Pelecans Perching in Trees.—During 1956 I recorded, on three separate occasions, a flock of Pelecanus (Pelecanus conspicillatus) perched on the branches of a dead tree—along the rivers Murray and Mitta. All three places are in the north-east of Victoria—Wodonga, Tallangatta and Bungil. Although the size of the flocks varied from 30 to 60, only about six birds acted in this manner on each occasion.—GEORGE W. BEDGGOOD, Mooroorooa, Vic., 15/8/57.