

## Obituary

Mr. W. G. HARVEY

The death is reported of Mr. William G. Harvey, of Mackay, Queensland, whose name is well known as that of a skilled photographer of birds. He was aged 73 years.

The late W. G. Harvey had followed farming pursuits, mainly cane-growing, for most of his life. He became interested in photography about 50 years ago, and in collaboration with his brother, Robert, he began to take pictures of the birds and flowers of his tropical area. The two men soon developed competence and in the course of years they produced a great number of striking pictures, many of which were the first photographs made of the subjects. An article on birds of the Mackay district, which they contributed to *The Emu* in 1919 (vol. 19, pp. 34-42), was illustrated with 14 photographs. Other examples of their work appeared in various popular journals and in books by E. J. Banfield and A. H. Chisholm.

Field-work on the part of the brothers ceased some years ago because W. G. Harvey's health failed and because R. C. Harvey removed, with his wife, to Blackheath in New South Wales. W. G. Harvey was not married. The many photographic negatives which the brothers made remain in the possession of Mr. R. C. Harvey at Blackheath.—A.H.C.

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## Stray Feathers

**Vocal mimicry by the Southern Figbird.**—During mid-1959 a friend and I were walking across an open paddock admiring a picturesque little scene in which a belt of stately eucalypts bordered a small creek. Isolated from this was a small tree with round, dark-green foliage, and perched on a limb was a male Southern Figbird (*Sphecotheres vieilloti*).

It was not its plumage colours that first attracted our attention, but its "whispered" imitations of several bird-calls, and as we watched it softly voiced their calls over and over for several minutes before departing. Those mimicked were the Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*), Pied Currawong (*Strepera graculina*), Noisy Miner (*Myzantha melanocephala*), and the screech of the King Parrot (*Aprosmictus scapularis*).

In a subsequent letter to Mr. A. H. Chisholm I related our observations and he replied that the species had not previously been known to mimic. In my next letter I mentioned that, during the past months, I had heard a bird which seemed to "revel" in mimicry, and had tentatively identified it as a female Southern Figbird; but later observations proved it to be the Olive-backed Oriole (*Oriolus sagittatus*), a species unfamiliar to me at the time, and one which is confusingly similar to the female figbird.—L. M. HOLLAND, Woolgoolga, N.S.W., 1/3/62.

**Low nesting of Striated Thornbill.**—While spraying soft-weed in our bananas on August 20, 1961, my father discovered a nest of the Striated Thornbill (*Acanthiza lineata*) attached to an isolated weed ("farmers' friend"), close to a clump of stools. The distance from the base of the nest in relation to the plant-base was a neat 11 inches but, because the plant had a distinct lean, the nest was even closer to the ground than the above indicates. Three eggs were present and incubation was slight. The bird never returned; it was flushed from its well-camouflaged nest, and in the course of exit may have been engulfed in spray.

This is by far the lowest nesting record I have of the species in the Woolgoolga district, but by no means the earliest. In 1958 a nest was discovered with well-grown fledglings; taking into consideration the age of the fledglings, and the incubation period, I surmised that the eggs were probably laid in the latter part of July. That type of record, however, is not unusual.—L. M. HOLLAND, Woolgoolga, N.S.W., 5, 4/62.

**Calls of the Striated Pardalote.**—After reading Cooper's paper on the nesting of the red-tipped pardalotes (*Emu*, 61: 1-6), and Sedgwick's note on the calls of *substriatus* in Western Australia (*Emu*, 61: 276), I would like to place on record my findings with the Striated Pardalote in the Jandowae district of southern Queensland.

*Pardalotus substriatus* is common throughout this area, especially along the tree-lined creeks which intersect the box country and the ironbark forests. To date, after much trapping at nesting burrows, *P. substriatus* is the only pardalote I have found.

Both calls to which Cooper and Sedgwick refer are rendered by my birds, either call being heard at any time where the birds are plentiful. I have heard and watched birds calling the double note, and then suddenly switch to the triple note. I could detect no apparent reason for this "crossover". Although both calls are uttered freely, there seems to be a slight preference for the double-note call, as was the case with Sedgwick's birds.

The calls of my birds seem to fit the word "chip", the notes being an even "chip-chip" for the double-note call, and a "chip-chip-chip" for the other. There is a slight pause between the first and second syllables of the triple-note call.

There is little doubt that these different calls can lead to mis-identification, especially in an area where both species of red-tipped pardalotes are present, and I fully endorse Cooper's opinion that a clear, close view of the bird is advisable before recording the species.—LLOYD NIELSEN, Jandowae, Qld., 18/5/62.

**Grey Fantail breeding at Irymple, Vic.**—Until recently the Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) had always been regarded by Mildura district (i.e. the area within a radius

of 50 miles from the Mildura post office) ornithologists as an annual winter visitor to their area, and in the opinion of most its comings and goings were sufficiently regular for it to be classed as one of the few true migrants of which the district could boast. My personal records, which date back unbroken for 20 years, show that, prior to 1960, its arrival in and departure from the district has always fallen within fairly close limits of time, April being the month during which it appeared and September the month in which it left. Records of other observers tallied closely with that: the earliest arrival date of which I have knowledge was that of a single bird recorded by Mr. P. Thatcher at Irymple on March 29, 1945, and the latest record known to me was made by Mr. N. J. Favalaro when he noted a bird in the Kulkyne State Forest (40 miles south of Mildura) on October 8, 1943.

This, then, was the state of affairs until, with Mr. A. Hawtin of Irymple, I visited Yatpool on November 13, 1960. We were in mallee country to the west of the Mildura-Ouyen railway, at a point some 20 miles to the south of Mildura, when Mr. Hawtin discovered a Grey Fantail. Mr. Hawtin, who is a keen ornithologist and appreciated the fact that the bird was "out of order" fully as much as I did, went so far as to suggest that it may have been one of a nesting pair. However, neither of us took this suggestion as seriously as, in the light of later knowledge, we should have; the bird was put down as a belated straggler and no proper search for a nest was made.

It was not until November 21, 1961, that the definite possibility of the Yatpool bird having had a nest in the vicinity was made apparent. On that date Mr. A. G. Smart of Irymple described to Mr. Hawtin a bird that was nesting in his garden for the second year in succession (it having successfully raised young in 1960), and asked him what it was. From Mr. Smart's description Mr. Hawtin felt convinced that the bird was a Grey Fantail, and hastened to confirm this by personal observation. I accompanied him when he re-visited the nest later in the day.

The nest was in a fairly exposed position on a horizontal branch of a flowering gum and perhaps 9 or 10 feet from the ground; although empty it appeared ready for eggs. A bird was heard calling from some nearby citrus and shortly afterwards it was seen in a tree not far from the nest. There was no sign of a second bird. Four days later, on November 25, the nest was again visited by Mr. Hawtin; a bird was covering it as he approached and when the bird was disturbed the nest was found to contain three eggs. Regrettably, the nest was subsequently deserted and the eggs vanished.

In view of the above it seems reasonable to conclude that the Grey Fantail breeds occasionally in the Mildura district.

Full credit must go to Mr. Hawtin, both for the discovery

of the bird at Yatpool and for the identification of the bird in Mr. Smart's garden. Thanks are due to Mr. P. Thatcher and Mr. N. J. Favaloro for permission to quote from their records.—H. F. THOMAS, Irymple, Vic., 25/11/61.

**"Squatting" in mud nests.**—Various species of birds have been known to adopt old nests of the Mudlark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*), the most persistent one in this respect being, perhaps, the White-breasted Wood-Swallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*). Records of the kind relating to other bowl-shaped mud nests, those of the White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) and the Apostle-bird (*Struthidea cinerea*), are fewer, but the large nest of the Chough appears to be finding increasing favour with birds of appropriate size. Recently I have known two instances of Choughs' nests being used by Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*), and in the second of these the Pigeon actually took possession a few hours after the young Choughs left the nest.

That "squatter" pigeon, it would appear, had kept an eye on developments. Certainly some resolute checking-up was done by another pigeon, of the domestic kind, which I saw brooding in the old nest of a Mudlark at Chiltern, Vic.; for a local resident, Mr. Bruce Kirkwood, told me that the pigeon had inspected the nest several times while the young Mudlarks were present, evidently being impatient for them to "vacate the premises".

Perhaps, however, the most remarkable instance of the "borrowing" of a mud nest is one reported to me recently by Mr. G. Cooke of Blackall, Qld. After referring to the fact that nests of the Mudlark and Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) are often found in close association, he says that in one nest of a Mudlark, which was situated near the top of a windmill, he saw two eggs of the owner and two eggs of a Wagtail. When the nest was first seen a Mudlark was brooding and a Wagtail was perched close by. Unfortunately, Mr. Cooke was not able to keep a check on that combination.

It may be added that shortages of normal home-sites, caused mainly by the clearing or thinning-out of native trees (including bushy stumps), have in recent times forced various species of birds in parts of central Victoria to nest in unusual spots. Cases in point, apart from the use of old nests, have included one of a Crested Bellbird (*Oreoica gutturalis*) that built a nest of sticks in a tree-fork; several of Yellow Robins (*Eopsaltria australis*) and Wagtails building on roots down old mine-shafts, and several of Grey Thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*) nesting in cavities in the sides of such shafts, as well as two cases in which Thrushes nested on the ground at the base of trees.

For a general discussion of nest-appropriation see N. L. Roberts, *Emu*, 55: 110-26 and 173-184 (1955).—A. H. CHISHOLM, Sydney, 1/6/62.

**Grey Plover in Tasmania.**—The status of the Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) in Australia was reviewed briefly by W. R. Wheeler (*Aust. Bird Watcher*, 1: 107-109), and included a reference to a specimen recently shot in Tasmania.

The species was first included in a list of Tasmanian birds by W. V. Legge (*Pap. and Proc. Roy. Soc. Tas.*, 1886), but the basis for its inclusion is not known. Following that, the same author recorded in a paper, "On the geographical distribution of the Australian Limicolae", presented at the Fourth Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, in January 1892: "In Tasmania it is found in small numbers, chiefly on the north coast, in which locality Mr. Atkinson informs me stragglers may be seen in the summer season."

F. M. Littler, in *A Handbook of the Birds of Tasmania and Its Dependencies* (1910), stated: "The only locality from which I have records of it for Tasmania is in the Lake district." R. Hall (*Emu*, 23: 286) stated that it had been recorded in the Derwent estuary, but gave no other details.

In none of the above references has there been any mention of a specimen having been taken, or any precise detail of a sight record, and I have not been able to trace any skin labelled "Tasmania". It would seem, however, that if the records of Legge and Hall were based on their personal experiences they must be respected. Littler, on the other hand, relied very strongly on the observations of others, doing much less field work than the other two mentioned, and I think it most likely that, although he recorded it, he relied on someone else's observation.

Any doubt that might have been felt about the authenticity of previous listings can now be dispelled with the shooting of a specimen at Pittwater, Sorell district, about 10 miles east of Hobart, by J. R. Cunningham of the Tasmanian Museum, on January 13, 1960, to which reference was made by Wheeler (*loc. cit.*). The following details are recorded on the label: weight 8 oz; length 317 mm; wing-span 627 mm; wing 191 mm; culmen 30 mm; tarsus 50 mm; bill black, eye brown, feet and legs slate grey.—L. E. WALL, Hobart, Tas., 20/6/62.

**Another Arctic Tern in Tasmania.**—On a small sandspit at Ralph's Bay, in the Derwent estuary, about 11 miles south-east of Hobart, a dead specimen of the Arctic Tern (*Sterna macrura*) was found on January 13, 1962. The bird had been dead for some time and was completely dried out. It was impossible to make a study skin of it, but it has been lodged at the Tasmanian Museum, which has obtained confirmation of the identification by sending it to the Australian Museum, Sydney.

The description is as follows: forehead and crown light buff, mottled brown; nape black; tail white, the outermost feathers light grey; bill black; legs and feet reddish; wing

primaries dark grey on outer web and portion of inner web, the latter tipped white; underparts diffused with grey; upper parts medium grey. Measurements (millimetres): total length 305+; wing 241 (worn); tail 121 (worn); depth of fork 40; bill 31; tarsus 16; middle toe and claw 22.

The only other specimen recorded from Tasmania was collected at Tunbridge on November 27, 1957, by R. H. Green (see *The Emu*, 58: 262).—L. E. WALL, Hobart, Tas., 30/6/62.

**A New South Wales record of *Pelecanoides urinatrix*.**—The skeletal remains of a Common Diving Petrel (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) were found by the writer on Bellambi Beach, 45 miles south of Sydney, on August 27, 1961. The only dimensions obtainable were those of the culmen, c. 15 mm, and the wing, 108 mm. The remains have been preserved—No. 23.277 Gibson/Sefton Collection.

The recovery constitutes the first known New South Wales record for the species and, by a strange coincidence, the remains were only a few hundred yards from the spot where the only Australian specimen of the Georgian Diving Petrel (*Pelecanoides georgicus*) was collected on December 28, 1958 (*Emu*, 59: 267). The only other record from the eastern coastline of Australia is of a bird collected by M. P. Hines on Stradbroke Island, Queensland, on August 14, 1961 (*Emu*, 62: 63).

Although certain bill characteristics suggested that the latest recovery might be *P. urinatrix*, the fragments—wings and portion of the skull including the mandibles—were sent to Dr. R. A. Falla at the Dominion Museum in Wellington, New Zealand, for conclusive identification and comment. His reply reads in part as follows: "It is clearly a very small example of *P. urinatrix* possibly belonging to one of the numerous races of small size. . . . It is possible, of course, that amongst your Australian breeding birds there may be large and small races undetected, so it is altogether a different matter to refer your fragments to any described subspecies. I should say, however, that it is some form of *urinatrix* and not *exsul*."

Beach-washed examples of *P. urinatrix* are not uncommon in Victoria after periods of inclement weather, and W. B. Alexander (*Birds of the Ocean*, 1954, p. 67) quotes the species as breeding on islands in Bass Strait and the coasts of Victoria and Tasmania. It seems remarkable therefore that this tiny sea-bird is not found more often along the eastern seaboard of the continent, especially the southern coastline of New South Wales.—A. R. SEFTON, Thirroul, N.S.W., 21/2/62.

**Penetration of Central Australia by *Malurus melanocephalus*.**—Until 1926 the boundary between Northern and Central Australia, agreed upon by the Northern Australia

Commission, stood at 20° S. lat., 14 miles south of Tennant Creek, which roughly coincides with the northern limit of the main mulga belt, although *Acacia aneura* extends in patches as far north as Banka Banka, 80 miles away.

Now, the Lands and Survey Branch of the Northern Territory Administration takes as its boundary a point at the intersection of the Stuart and Barkly Highways, 30 miles farther north. Weather forecasts for Tennant Creek formerly included in the Alice Springs-Finke district, are now contained, with greater accuracy, in the Barkly district.

Whatever the political boundary was, or is, there is an overlapping zoogeographical region with Tennant Creek towards its southern limits.

Five miles to the north and a little to the west of the road junction at an exact point 19° 19' 06" S. lat. by 134° 09' 08" E. long., on May 12, 1962, a party of three bird observers, including myself, came upon a colony of Red-backed Wrens (*Malurus melanocephalus*)—one fully-plumaged male, one partly-coloured male, one dark-billed bird, five brown. The patch of tall brown silky-top (*Eulalia fulva*) occupied by these wrens was 50 yds. by 150 yds., bordered on one side by a dry watercourse with a scattering of white-barked snappy gums (*Eucalyptus brevifolia*) in which were several White-plumed Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga penicillata*). The surrounding Mitchell grass plain had its quota of Brown Songlarks (*Cinclorhynchus cruralis*).

This area is part of the 1,500-sq. mile pastoral property of Phillip Creek containing mulga scrub to the south-west, patchy spinifex country, Mitchell grass plains and turpentine (*Acacia lysiphloia*), *Cassia notabilis*, *Grevillea juncifolia*, and *Melaleuca* scrubs, as well as Phillip Creek itself, which after two years of good rainfall (12 and 13 in.) is at present a chain of shrinking waterholes stretching 12 miles east of the "Bitumen". Here were present the Masked Plover (*Lobibyx miles*), Plumed Tree-Duck (*Dendrocygna eytoni*), Green Pygmy-Goose (*Nettapus pulchellus*), and the Red-capped Dotterel (*Charadrius alexandrinus*). The elevation is 1250 feet, average rainfall (taken over the last 30 years) is 13.85 in. The average summer temperature 89.6° and the average winter temperature 65.2°, giving an average mean, frost-free, temperature of 77.4° with an average relative humidity of 34 per cent and a 3 p.m. R.H. of 24 per cent.

As we tried to drive the wrens from their tiny, restricted, and drying depression, which they determinedly circled, eluding us, the fully-plumaged male came to the top of a dead stick and gave the typical whirring song of this most brilliantly striking species, displaying its rich reddish-red, rather than orange-red, back to a staggering extent. We wondered aloud and at length how this bird had first found its way to its grassy fastness, 185 miles north of Central Mt. Stuart.

To the north-west lie over 200 miles of sandy semi-desert

before the influence of the Victoria River system is noticed. The shortest route to the coastline (290 miles) lies north-east, first crossing 50 miles of patchy desert, 100 miles of Mitchell grasslands and a final 140 miles of well-watered country of the McArthur River system which reaches the Gulf of Carpentaria close to the Pellew Islands group. However, it is to the north that a possible route lies just east of the "Bitumen".

There the main north road closely follows the eastern edge of stony, hilly country (for availability of road-making material) from which drains a succession of watercourses, across the track and into the western edge of the Barkly Tableland, and waterholes with a black soil base persist there for a period after rain. From the most northern of these it is a short hop of 30 miles across to the southern tip of Lake Woods, at present dry, but sometimes holding a considerable quantity of water. From there the country passes into the region of monsoonal influence.

The problem as to how this wren arrived is intriguing. What is more so, not just how, but *when*. Is it a recent arrival? Is it a relic of a past ecology? Or are there just more bird observers?

My thanks to the following departments and officers of the Northern Territory Administration: the Meteorological Branch; the Lands and Survey Branch; Mr. G. Chippendale, Botanist, and especially to Mr. A. Newsome, Biologist and Chief Guardian of Fauna in the N.T., whose perpetual words are: "Get it down on paper."—VIVIEN ROTHWELL, Alice Springs, N.T., 17/5/62.

**Hybridizing of Rainbow x Scaly-breasted Lorikeets in bush and aviary.**—Interspecific hybrids in the family Psittacidae are not unusual amongst aviary birds, particularly where only one male of one species and one female of another species are confined in the same aviary. However, with free-living birds observation of the probable inter-breeding of two species is sufficiently rare to warrant recording. In October 1961 I saw, for the first time, the hybrids of the male Rainbow x female Scaly-breasted Lorikeet in an aviary and, within a few weeks, a similar bird in the bush.

During the 1961 Field-outing of the R.A.O.U., held on the north coast of New South Wales, Mr. Noel Burnett of South Grafton showed me a number of hybrids of the above cross that he had bred in his aviary over a period of many years. These birds were similar to the Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*) but the breast was orange with mottled streaks of green; the abdomen was green without any trace of the normal dark blue, and there was a rufous-red patch under the wings, similar to the bright red patch of both the adults.

Notes on the breeding and the ages of the birds have been supplied by Burnett and are of interest. The male Rainbow Lorikeet is now  $14\frac{1}{2}$  years of age, and was only four to five



weeks old when first received by Burnett. The female Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (*T. chlorolepidotus*) died at the age of nine years and eight months, and at the time of her death she was brooding three eggs.

Of the hybrids that have been retained, the oldest bird was seven years on February 16, 1962; a pair was six years old on October 23, 1961, and the remaining bird six years on March 19, 1962.

The hybrid pair mated 22 months after birth and three eggs were laid. One of these eggs was infertile, the second contained a partly-formed chick, and from the third egg a young bird was hatched, which lived for 27 days. At this stage the feather-sheaths were still unbroken but the colours were beginning to show through the walls of the sheaths. These hybrids have continued to lay each season, the date of the last laying being January 16, 1962, but all the eggs have been infertile.

On my return journey to Melbourne I called at a private home in Sydney where lorikeets were regularly fed each afternoon. The birds were in large numbers and many of them must have come from distant parts each day to the feeding trays. The majority were Rainbow Lorikeets with a small number of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets. The colouring on the breast of the Rainbow Lorikeets varied considerably. In most birds it was the normal red of the adult but in others it varied to a bright yellow-orange, which was occasionally flecked or barred with faint markings of green, but in each instance the abdomen was coloured dark blue. It would appear that the latter birds were juveniles.

However, two birds were observed that were coloured orange on the breast, which was marked with mottled streaks of green, and the abdomen was green without any trace of blue. It appeared that these birds were the hybrids of the Rainbow Lorikeet x Scaly-breasted Lorikeet. I was unable to observe the shade of the reddish marking under the wings, due mainly to the flight pattern of the bird. A coloured photograph taken of one of these birds confirms the markings on the breast and the absence of blue on the abdomen.

In a nearby jacaranda tree a Rainbow Lorikeet and a Scaly-breasted Lorikeet were observed sitting close together, with the latter species preening the feathers of the former bird in the behaviour pattern of a mated pair.—ROY P. COOPER, Melbourne, Vic., 10/7/62.

**Sea-bird mortality on Illawarra (N.S.W.) beaches during November 1961.**—Gale-force winds and torrential rain, caused by a deep cyclonic depression over the Tasman Sea, lashed the southern New South Wales coast and adjacent tablelands during November 1961 in what proved to be one of the wettest months on record. Regular patrols of the ocean beaches in the Illawarra district during similar periods of inclement weather have, in the past, been responsible for

the recording of many rare and interesting sea-birds, and November 1961 proved no exception in this regard.

Of particular interest were four examples of the Brown-headed or Providence Petrel (*Pterodroma melanopus*) a species which, though breeding in numbers on Lord Howe Island, is singularly rare in its occurrence as a casualty on the Australian coast. These specimens bring the total of known Australian records to nine (see McGill, 1955, *Emu*, 55: 127-129; Gibson and Sefton, 1956, *Emu*, 56: 133-135). Very few references to actual dimensions of this species are to be found in the literature; the details of these latest specimens, which are retained in our collection, should therefore be of some use and are as follows:

Number 1.278. Bulli Beach, 18/11/61, P. Strong. Wing 281 mm, tail 115, culmen 31.2, tarsus 39.5, middle toe and claw 54.6. Sex male (gonads measured 16 mm). Stomach contained brown paste and a single cephalopod beak. Study skin made.

Number 1.279. Bulli Beach, 19/11/61, P. Strong. Wing 302 mm, tail 120, culmen 33.5, tarsus 45, middle toe and claw 62.3. Study skin made.

Number 1.280. Thirroul Beach, 19/11/61, J. D. Gibson. Wing 300 mm, tail 127, culmen 30.2, tarsus 40.5, middle toe and claw 54. Remains somewhat damaged. Flat skin only made.

Number 234.281. Corrimall Beach, 22/11/61, A. R. Sefton. Wing 306 mm, tail 122, culmen 33.9, tarsus 42.5, middle toe and claw 60.3. Only skull, wings and legs kept.

The first specimen (1.278) was of remarkable appearance. The whole undersurface of the body rearward from a sharp line across the breast was white, a fact which initially posed a problem in identification because of its violent disagreement with the description of *melanopus*. Closer examination revealed that the tips of all the feathers which provide the dark body colour were missing, the sharp unevenness of the edge giving the impression that they had been eaten away, thus revealing the white portion underneath. This bird was alive when found and had just been washed ashore. The assumption is that its submerged parts had received the attentions of small marine scavengers while it was confined to the surface of the sea, unable to fly.

Other sea-birds rarely recorded from New South Wales were collected on Illawarra beaches during the same period. They included two specimens of the Grey-faced Petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera*), and single examples of the Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis*), Fleshly-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus carneipes*), Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*), and White-tailed Tropic-bird (*Phaëthon lepturus*).

At the same time the foreshores were strewn with corpses of the southward-migrating Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), while on the beaches closer to Wollongong and Port Kembla were large numbers of nestlings

and young fledglings of the Silver Gull (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) and Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*) from rookeries on the nearby Five Islands.—J. D. GIBSON and A. R. SEFTON, Thirroul, N.S.W., 3/8. 62.

**A Tasmanian record of the Blue Petrel.**—A Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*) has been found in Tasmania under unusual circumstances. Though doubtless they are not uncommon on the adjacent seas, Tasmanian records are almost non-existent.

This bird was found dead at Evandale, about 45 miles inland from the mouth of the Tamar River, on July 2, 1962. The finder was Mr. Arthur Flemming, who presented it to the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. It has been added to the Museum collection of study skins, registered number 1962:2:3.

Upon examination it was found to have a large cyst-like swelling on top of the head which, when opened, was filled with fluid. No doubt it must have affected the bird's health, and possibly accounts for it being found so far from its usual environment. Though it was found in the vicinity of overhead wires, there was no indication of injury caused by it having struck these while in flight.

The condition of its plumage was very good, but fat deposits were non-existent, and the stomach was empty.

It measured in millimetres: total length 295; wing 210; tail 85; tarsus 30; bill 28; middle toe 41. The iris was brown; legs blue; bill black; sex male, and it was carrying considerable numbers of ectoparasites.—R. H. GREEN, Launceston, Tas., 9/8/62.

**Spice Finch in Queensland.**—During a visit to Cooktown, north Queensland, from August 19 to 23, 1961, a small flock of 35 Spice Finches (*Lonchura punctulata*) was seen regularly in gravelled streets and along roadsides near the camping ground, which is situated just south of the town. They appeared to be feeding on ground insects and seeds. The flock kept strictly to itself, at no time associating with other birds. In "Birds of Cooktown" (Storr, *Emu*, 53: 225), and in the World Bird Day list, compiled by Brig. H. R. Officer in Cooktown during August 6-8, 1958, no mention is made of the species and one could assume that this flock had only recently arrived in the area. Bell (*Emu*, 61: 94) records their northern limit as Cairns.

Whilst at Port Douglas, 40 miles north of Cairns, during August 23-28, 1961, Spice Finches were regularly seen about the camping ground. These observations suggest that the species is extending its range northwards along the Queensland coast. Cooktown, by air route, is approximately 120 miles north of Cairns. Spice Finches were also observed at Airlie and Noosaville, two areas not mentioned by Bell.—J. R. WHEELER, Belmont, Vic., 13/4/62.