



Nest of the Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps australis*), Thule Lake, N.S.W.

PHOTO, BY D. LE SOUEF, C.M.Z.S., R.A.O.U.

Stray Feathers.

Bird Sanctuary.—We have great pleasure in stating that, through the instrumentality of Captain S. A. White, the President of the R.A.O.U., helped by other bird-lovers in South Australia, the Government of that State has proclaimed Carlot Lagoon a sanctuary for birds—an ideal place for that purpose, very many water-fowl nesting there.

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An Albino Eagle.—During June I secured a splendid live specimen of a white Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaëthus audax*, Lath.), and presented it to the Sydney Zoological Gardens, where it arrived safely, and is now on view. The bird appears to be full grown; it was captured (being too gorged to fly, probably) at Ridgeland, near Scone, New South Wales, and, I believe, is unique. With the exception of a brown-shaded feather in the wing, the bird is pure white, even to its beak, legs, and feet; eyes colourless, with dark-coloured pupils.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees, Scone, N.S.W., 14/8/16.

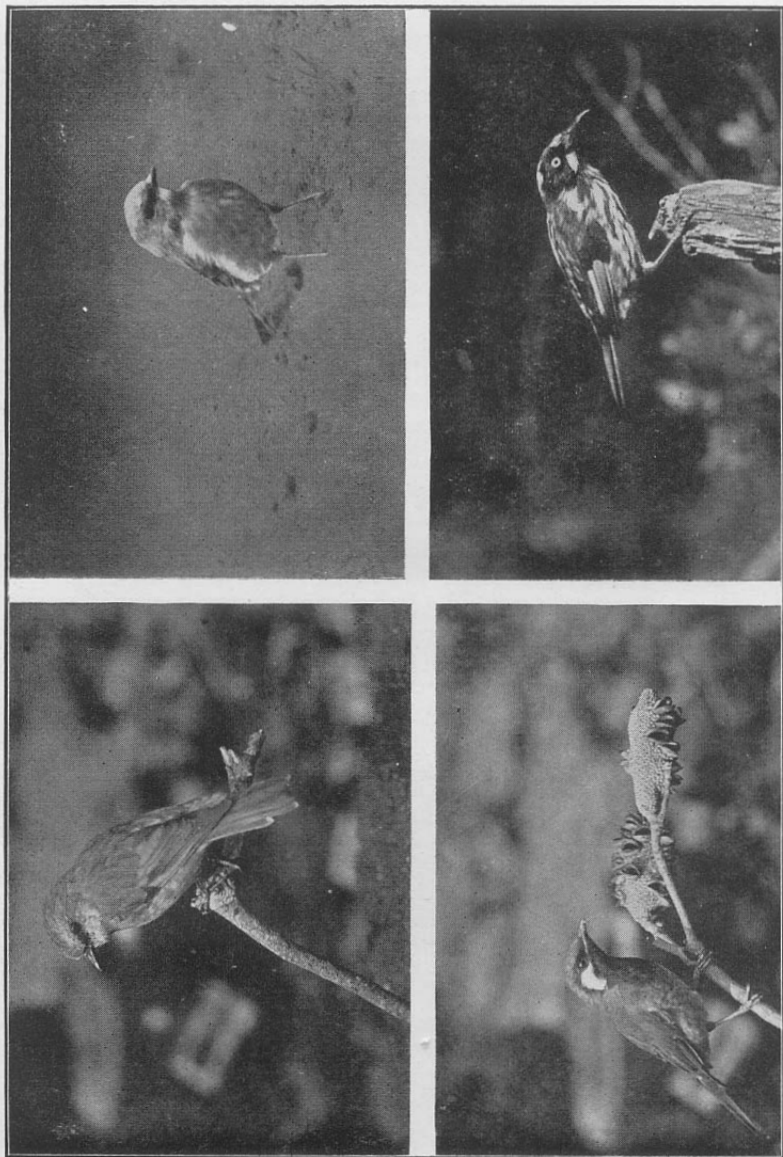
An Unusual Crimson Parrot.—Another curiosity received during June is a female specimen of *Platycercus elegans*, the common Lowry or Crimson Parrot, showing a wonderful variation from the normal. It presents the most beautiful instance of xanthochroism that I have seen, the whole of the usual black and dark blue being absent, and replaced by very pale yellow and blue. The head, neck, rump, and breast are bright crimson; cheeks and shoulders pale blue; back pale yellow, with each feather narrowly margined with crimson; wings and tail cream colour, with just a tinge of blue in some of the outer feathers. The bird was shot near here while in company with a small flock of normally-coloured "Lowries." A good skin has been made of it.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees, N.S.W., 14/8/16.

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Swifts Resting on Trees.—I would like to know if any of your members have seen Swifts resting on trees. On 1st February, 1898, my mother and I were watching the progress of a bush-fire before a strong east wind (we were very anxious, as all the men were away working at it), when we noticed a very large flock of Swifts, and their movements were peculiar, we thought, and as we watched they settled on the trees—not as ordinary birds do, on the horizontal limbs, but on the trunks of the trees and the perpendicular branches, clinging on sideways, as Wood-Swallows (*Artamus*) sometimes do. I have never met anyone yet who has seen them resting. My mother thought the air being so very smoky had something to do with it. That summer was very hot and dry in this district, and the Swifts came in great numbers. They used to fly low over the grass—to catch grasshoppers, we thought. Also I would like to ask if anyone has noticed how they come in a large flock in front of a thunderstorm.—K. CURRIE. Lardner.

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Early Combination Cuckoo Clutch.—My nephew, Mr. C. C. Hook, on 26th August, 1916, found at Ringwood a nest of the Victorian Brown Tit, *Acanthiza pusilla macularia* (*Acanthiza pusilla*), ready for eggs, and on visiting it again on 3rd September, 1916, he found in it two eggs of the *Acanthiza*, one egg of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo, *Cacomantis rubricatus rubricatus* (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*), and one egg of the Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo, *Neochalcites basalis mellori* (*Chalcococcyx basalis*). The nest and contents had evidently been forsaken, as the Tits had built another nest right on top, the opening of which was to the right of the bottom nest. Both nests were built of similar materials—viz., dry grasses, a few shreds of bark and moss, and lined with feathers. This peculiar structure was placed one foot from the ground, in a bunch of dead prickly tea-tree, on the bank of a creek at the foot of the hill. Both the Cuckoos and the Brown Tit were heard calling in the vicinity.—A. CHAS. STONE. 71 Tivoli-road, South Yarra.



Above—Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*).

Below—White-eared Honey-eater (*Philotis leucotis*), White-bearded Honey-eater (*Melthornis novae-hollandiae*).

Porosity of the Lyre-Bird's Egg.—On 12th July, 1916, a nest of the Victoria Lyre-Bird, *Menura novae-hollandiae victoriae* (*Menura victoriae*), was found in South Gippsland. The nest was domed, and made of small sticks, lined with fine rootlets twisted together, and finished off with breast feathers of the bird; it was placed 6 feet from the ground on a stump of blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), the entrance facing north-east and away from the creek, which was about three chains away. The nest contained the usual single egg, which was quite typical of the bird in size and shape, the surface somewhat smooth and slightly glossy, ground colour purplish-grey, and blotched and spotted with umber and darkish-purple; incubation, $\frac{1}{10}$. The nest was not further interfered with, and on 9th August following it contained another egg laid by the same bird, identical in shape and colour with the first egg, but covered over nearly the whole surface with small limy excrescences; incubation, $\frac{4}{10}$. The shells of both these eggs were so very porous that during the process of blowing beads of water exuded over the whole surface, as though the egg had been left out on a very dewy night.—A. CHAS. STONE.

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Resident Swallows and Cuckoos.—In a recent letter from Launceston, Mr. Thompson remarks that each season the number of Swallows and Fan-tailed Cuckoos which remain in his district seems to increase. Six years ago there appeared to be only one pair of Swallows which stayed; now there are a good many. My correspondent's idea is that the latest-hatched brood stays with the parents, and, as the latter remain, so do the young. If this be so, there should be a very rapid increase in the resident party, as the following season the young themselves will be parents, and will remain with their latest brood, in addition to the old birds of the previous season. The Swallows do not remain on the coast here, but the number of Cuckoos is certainly on the increase; this winter I could have put my hand on half a dozen within a short radius of the cottage, and, as there is no reason to suppose that this particular portion of the coast is more favoured than others, the number wintering with us must be very considerable. A somewhat singular thing is that they appear to be in pairs this season instead of isolated individuals, as usual. It will be very interesting if we develop a non-migratory race of Cuckoos as well as of Swallows. The species referred to are, of course, the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*), and the Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis*.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport (Tas.), 24/8/16.

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Bird Notes from Camp.—Opportunities for bird-observing in a military camp are rather rare, but during my two months' sojourn at Royal Park, Vic., I have been able to glean a few notes regarding some familiar species. The Starling and the Sparrow

are most numerous, and, with the Indian Mynah, come around the tents to pick up crumbs from the soldiers' "tables." I have seen a big flock of Starlings, high in air, above a platoon, and the manœuvres of the birds were so clever as to suggest that they, too, were moving to the commands of a sergeant-major. During the 15 minutes allowed us for "smoke-o" in the morning and afternoon, reclining on the grass, I watch the Starlings and other birds feeding, and the time passes swiftly.

Of native birds, the Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*) has been most abundant in the past two months. Day long their shrill cries have resounded all over the camp, and we have seen them patrolling marshy spots or perched on posts or in trees around the park fence. Next to the *Grallina*, in point of numbers, comes the Ground-Lark, or Australian Pipit (*Anthus australis*). Every day I see these restless little birds running through the short grass and onion-weed (now in blossom) searching for insects. Some, I fancy, have already begun nesting. Early in August a Scarlet-breasted Robin (*Petroica leggii*) was observed, flying above the tents in our (A.M.C.) lines, but it was only a casual visitor. Occasionally, just after the bugles have sounded reveille, one hears a Great Brown Kingfisher (*Dacelo gigas*) welcoming the dawn. Recently two Rosellas (*Platycercus eximius*) flew over from the direction of the Zoological Gardens, and on a clear, frosty night I heard the honking of a flock of Black Swans that was flying westward above the sleeping camp. Other birds were winging "across the moon"; I heard their calls, faintly, but could not identify the species.

The gum trees on the outskirts of the Park are frequented by Honey-eaters, Acanthizas, and other small birds, and if one had leisure in the day-time a fairly good list of species could be made. Several of my camp-mates are interested in birds, and one is a member of the Gould League, having joined it when at school.—(PRIVATE) CHARLES BARRETT, C.M.Z.S., R.A.O.U. Royal Park Camp, Vic., 5/9/16.

Bird Observers' Club.

THE Acanthizæ were the subject for special attention at the June meeting of the B.O.C. Mr. F. E. Howe read a paper on the genus. He showed the close relationship of some of the species and sub-species, and compared the methods of Australian ornithologists in classifying them. A chart showed at a glance how each worker had split up the species. Mr. Howe traced several dominating species through their geographical variations. Mr. A. Chas. Stone exhibited a series of eggs of the genus, and drew attention to *Acanthiza ewingii rufifrons*, from King Island, which had the characteristic of laying one white and two spotted eggs to a clutch.

The secretary, Mr. F. E. Wilson, showed a series of skins of the genus, including Victorian and Western Australian forms of *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*.