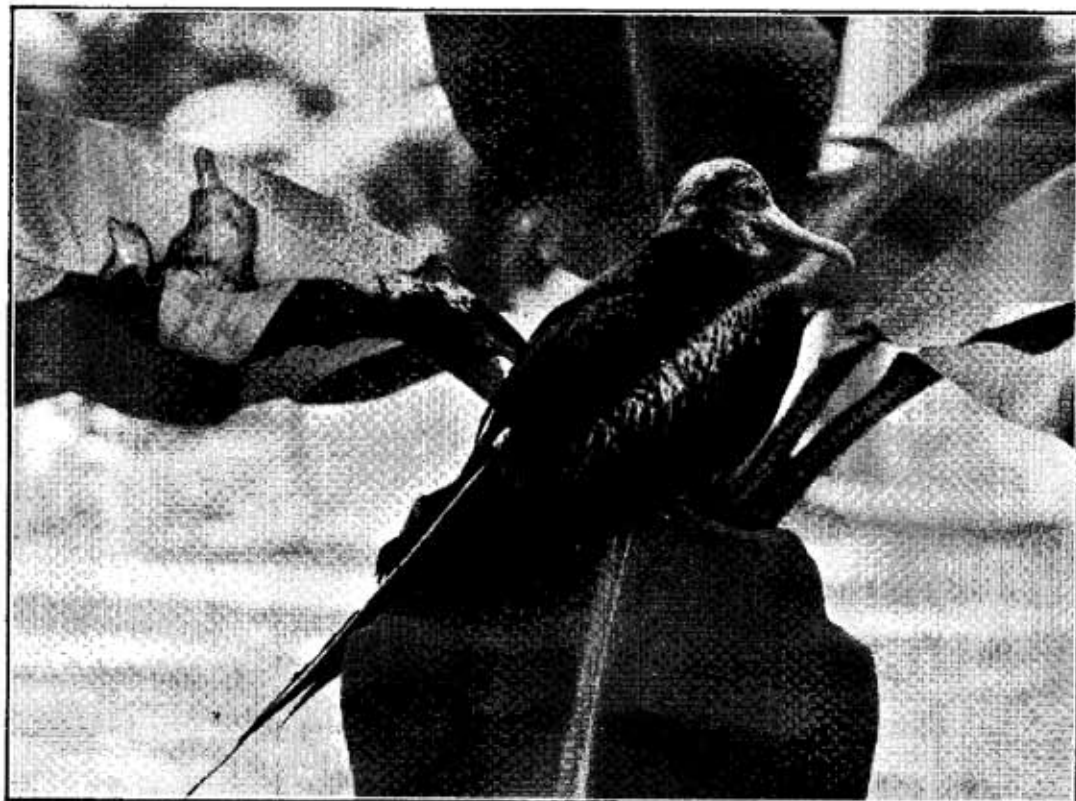


Nest and Eggs of Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platibis flavipes*).
See *Emu* for description, vol. xviii., p. 46, and Plate XI.

PHOTO. BY D. LE SOUEF, C.M.Z.S.



The Lesser Frigate-Bird (*Fregata ariel*).

PHOTO. BY CLYDE F. ELLIS.

swamp that has been drained. After the water has been put on this land, an immense Heronry will be started, so that the different Herons of the State, particularly the Egrets, may build their nests and raise their young in normal surroundings. Other innovations will be put in to attract water and insectivorous birds.—*The Christian Science Monitor*.

Camera Craft Notes.

MR. H. Gundersen, formerly Norwegian Consul, Melbourne, sends an excellent "snap" of the Lesser (or, rather, Least) Frigate-Bird (*Fregata ariel*, Gould), on a banana plant. The photo. was taken by Mr. Clyde F. Ellis, at Tahiti, Society Islands—probably about the eastern range of the species. The bird appears to be in immature plumage.—A. J. CAMPBELL.

Stray Feathers.

Foxes and Plovers.—Mr. W. M. Brennan, Forestry Department, Moree, N.S.W., states that the fox has practically killed out the Stone-Curlew and Spurwing Plover in his district; also, Magpies occasionally pick up the baits set for foxes, and so themselves succumb. He found two of these birds dead from this cause lately. He notices that many of our insectivorous birds are slowly but surely disappearing.

* * *

Queensland Bird Protection.—We are glad to notice that the Queensland Government has placed the Grass (*Psephotus*) and Ground (*Euphema*) Parrots, under the *Native Birds Protection Act* 1877-1884, amongst the birds for which total protection is provided. This has been done at the instance of one of the Queensland members of our Council, Mr. A. H. Chisholm, Brisbane. Also that Peel Island, in Moreton Bay, has been proclaimed a "bird reserve." Mr Chisholm has lately been appointed an honorary ranger for the preservation of native Queensland birds.

* * *

Trinomials.—Arising out of the din of the battle, binomials v. trinomials, one sometimes hears that the latter are an innovation of modern times, and quite unnecessary. But once again Tasmania can claim to lead the world. According to Dr. Milligan's "Vocabulary," the tribes of the north and north-western coasts of Tasmania over a century ago commonly spoke of the Bald-Coot as "*Lugoileah mungoinah leah*." And yet the early settlers claimed that the Tasmanian blacks were an uncivilized race, and wiped them off the face of the map!—CLIVE E. LORD, R.A.O.U. Hobart, 20/8/18.

Great Brown Kingfisher and Heron.—A day or two since I was walking along a forest gully when I heard simultaneously the pained screech of a White-fronted Heron and the boastful laugh of a Jackass, and saw both birds fly from the ground, the Heron apparently injured. At a small pool in the sandy gully there were two splashes of blood on the sand, and the water was bloody. The Jack had evidently made a wanton swoop at the Heron, and then flew, with the boastful laugh, to his mate, seeming to say, "I put in one on him, anyhow."—J. R. CHISHOLM. Prairie Table-land, North Queensland.

* * *

Crested Bell-Birds and Caterpillars.—I was interested in the remarks upon this subject in the last *Emu*. During my many trips and expeditions into the interior I have examined hundreds of Bell-Birds' (*Oreoica cristata*) nests, but never once, where the nest has been occupied by eggs or young, have the caterpillars been absent. I am not at all sure that the Crested Bell-Bird does not eat these caterpillars, for heads of caterpillars are found in numbers in their stomachs, and I know for certain that these very caterpillars are eaten in great numbers by the Pallid Cuckoo.—S. A. WHITE. "Wetunga," Fulham, S.A., 19/9/18.

* * *

Nests of Banded Finches.—Banded Finches (*Stictoptera bichenovii*) frequently nest in our garden in the spring of the year, and the interesting part of it is that they invariably choose an orange or lemon tree in which to build. One tree is a special favourite, apparently because the leaves are denser, and last year nine pairs of these little birds built in it. This shows one that all these nine pairs of birds had the same thought running in their minds when they were choosing the nesting tree, otherwise why should they have all chosen the same one? It could hardly be for company, as other trees were close by, and in them also were two or three nests. I have never noticed so many nests of these birds on one tree anywhere in the bush, although I have often found a single one.—MARY CURWEN-WALKER. "Midken," via Moree, N.S.W.

* * *

Tasmania's National Park.—It may interest the readers of *The Emu* to know that Tasmania has now a National Park. This is to be an absolute sanctuary for the fauna of the island, and, although such a reservation was practically a necessity, it took years to obtain. The reserve embraces an area of 27,000 acres, and includes practically the whole of the Mount Field Range, about 50 miles north-west from Hobart. It also includes the famous Russell Falls. Several fairly large lakes and numbers of small tarns are included in the area. Certain forms of bird-life are very plentiful on the mountain slopes, and their numbers will doubtless increase as soon as the birds recognize that the area is

a sanctuary. And all animals soon discover such localities. The park has only been proclaimed a few months, but already the wallabies can be seen occasionally in localities near the entrance, where they have not been seen for years.—CLIVE E. LORD (member National Park Board). Hobart, 17/8/18.

* * *

Swifts and Weather.—The summer just past has been remarkable for its warmth and dryness. For practically six months we have had sunny, genial weather, very little wind, and only a few showers; and even now, entering the second week of May, the atmosphere is warm and the ground almost as dry as the proverbial chip. The season has also been remarkable for the absence of the Spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura caudacuta*) from our North-West Coast, in this forming a marked contrast with last summer (1917—see *Emu*, vol. xvii., p. 223), when the birds were seen all through February and March until the third week of April. During the present summer not one individual came within ken of either my friend Mr. Will Buck or myself. We both spend a great deal of time out of doors, and keep a constant look-out. I heard of the Swifts being seen on two occasions—once during first week of April between Don and Spreyton, and once the week following between Mersey Heads and Bluff; they must then have been leaving for the Northern Hemisphere.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport, Tasmania, 8/5/18.

* * *

"Shamming Sick."—An interesting episode was witnessed by a friend and self while driving through the Harford and New Ground districts recently. One part of the road was bordered by bush on one side and by a partly-cleared paddock on the other. A Dusky Robin (*Petroica vittata*) flew across from the bush, just in front of us, alighted at a hollow in a dry tree within the paddock, and instantly left, minus the grub which he had carried in his bill. I jumped out of the trap, and on reaching the tree found the female bird on the nest. Directly she caught sight of me she tumbled from the nest to the ground, fluttered along with the greatest difficulty, then on to a log, the length of which she progressed in the same painful fashion. On returning to the nest, I found she had been brooding two greenish-blue eggs with an orange tint at one end. The male bird, after feeding her on the nest, had flown to the side of a tall stump, where he clung while watching the farce of his mate leading away a "tenderfoot." Our "Dusky" is quite as good at this acting business as is the familiar little White-fronted Chat.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport, Tas. 3/9/18.

* * *

The "Whisper Song."—Our trans-Pacific cousins have bestowed a good deal of attention of late years on that low, sweet melody uttered at certain seasons by certain species, and christened very

appropriately the "whisper song." Allusions to many kinds of birds which have been heard singing thus in various parts of North America may be found in the organ of the Audubon Society—*Bird-Lore*. My introduction to this class of song took place years ago, while living to the west of Table Cape, North-West Tasmania. One warm afternoon I was spending an hour in the garden which we had planted "on our selection," and in which the fruit-trees had grown to a fair size. A sweet melody, containing some rich notes, fell upon my ear; it gave the impression of a rather large bird singing in the distance, and I had listened to it for some time before it struck me that the performer might be closer at hand. I then traced it to a nut-bush only a couple of yards or so away, and on peering into this saw, ensconced in the shady centre of the bush, a White-eye (*Zosterops cærulescens*) warbling away as if purely for his own enjoyment. So wrapped up was he in this quiet, inward melody that he took no notice of my presence, and I was able to enjoy the song for some minutes longer.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport, Tas., 14/8/18.

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Maternal Courage.—While walking at the Mersey Bluff, North-West Tasmania, during the first week of January, I noticed the nest of a Wood-Swallow (*Artamus sordidus*) in a small fork near the end of a pine branch, and went under the branch, which was 10 or 12 feet above the ground, to inspect. The sitting bird immediately left the nest, rose up in an oblique direction to a distance of about 15 feet from the branch, then swooped toward me, passing over my head and just missing the white helmet which I wore. The impetus of the descent carried her a good distance in the opposite direction, whence she returned to the first aerial position, swooped again (just missing my hat), and continued the manœuvre until I left the spot. This is the first time that I have known an *Artamus* come near to making an attack on a human being, much in the same way that the Skua does in the Shetlands of the north. A pair of Superb Warblers (*Malurus longicaudus*) built in my garden during December in some long grass about the stem of a small cherry tree, and laid four eggs during successive days. After incubation had proceeded awhile something disturbed the nest during one night, and in the morning the eggs were out on the grass just beneath. When I stooped to replace them, the female Warbler perched on the nest close to my hand, scolding away very heartily, and remained there until my retirement.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport, Tasmania, 27/2/18.

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White-tailed Black Terns (*Hydrochelidon leucoplera*) **in Western Australia.**—In *The Emu*, vol. xvii., p. 95, I recorded the visit of large numbers of these birds to South-Western Australia in March, April, and May, 1917. I described this occurrence as "a remark-

able visitation" in view of the fact that only occasional specimens had previously been met with in Australia, in the extreme north of the continent. The Hon. Mr. Justice Burnside informs me that birds of this species again appeared in the neighbourhood of Perth in April, 1918. He states that on Sunday, 21st April, there was a very heavy blow from the north, and two days later, on 23rd April, he observed one of these birds flying round his yacht, anchored in Freshwater Bay, on the Swan River. On the following Sunday, 28th April, when anchored in the yacht off Applecross, on the Swan River, he and his companion, Mr. W. A. L. Knox, saw a great number of them flying about over the river. They were apparently mostly adult birds, the black on the under side being very clear and uniform in colour. Mr. Burnside frequently saw them on the river subsequently, but they disappeared when winter weather set in in May. I may mention that it was when on Mr. Burnside's yacht that I first met with these birds, as recorded in my previous article, and that he subsequently secured several specimens for me, also that Mr. Knox was present on these occasions, so that both these gentlemen are thoroughly familiar with these interesting birds, and there can be no doubt as to the occurrence, though no specimens were secured on this occasion.—W. B. ALEXANDER. Queen's College, Melbourne.

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A Skua and his Victims.—While cruising near Wright Island in the *Ripple*, with Mr. C. Roberts, during the month of April just past, we were entertained by watching the manœuvres of a Richardson Skua (*Stercorarius crepidatus*) to obtain food without the labour of diving. There were dark patches on the surface of the sea, indicating the presence of shoals of small fish, and over these many Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) were hovering, ever and anon making their shallow dives, or in some instances appearing to pick small fry off the surface. As soon as one had obtained a sufficient cargo and left the hunting-ground he was chased by the pirate Gull and forced to disgorge. The power of flight of the Skua was wonderful. The graceful Tern is no mean performer in the air, but, no matter what turns and twists he made, the pursuer was always there, swooping like a Hawk, until the luckless pursued dropped his fish, when the Gull immediately fell to the surface of the water, gobbled up the spoil, then rose to pursue another victim. The Richardson Skua is not a large bird—the one we saw appeared two or three inches longer than the Tern, but of much more robust build—of a dark brown plumage, and the long central rectrices were very prominent as he flew above the yacht. Mr. A. J. Campbell, in "Nests and Eggs," says that he first saw this species in Port Phillip in 1883, when returning from Tasmania, and has noticed them several times since, but always in summer. It must be a very occasional visitor to our North-West Coast, as this is the first time either

my friend or myself has seen it at work here, although we do a good deal of boating, and there is almost always a party of Terns within ken carrying on fishing operations. The Great Skua (*Megalestris antarctica*) we have never seen here.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport, Tasmania, 8/5/18.

On the Occurrence of the Australian Roller (*Eurystomus pacificus*) in Tasmania.

BY CLIVE E. LORD, R.A.O.U., TASMANIAN MUSEUM.

I HAVE received from Mr. George Hinsby, of the West Coast, the skin of a Dollar-Bird (*Eurystomus pacificus*), which Mr. Hinsby informs me was shot near Crotty. I have heard reports that a specimen of this species was shot on the North-West Coast of Tasmania about six years ago, but I do not know of this being placed on record nor have I seen a specimen, other than the one forwarded by Mr. Hinsby, which had been obtained in Tasmania. I consider that the specimen recently obtained, and which is now in the Tasmanian Museum, is the first to be duly recorded from Tasmania. It can therefore be placed on the Tasmanian list, but for the present will have to be treated as an "accidental."

Additions to the Library.

BY W. B. ALEXANDER, M.A., HON. LIBRARIAN.

PRESENTATIONS.

- "Birds of Australia." W. Broinowski. Presented by Dr. J. A. Leach.
- "Wonders of the Bird World." R. Bowdler-Sharpe. Presented by W. B. Alexander.
- "Re-naming Australian Birds: Is it Necessary?" A. J. Campbell. Pamphlet presented by the author.

PURCHASES.

- "Insectivorous Birds of Victoria." Robert Hall.
- "Bird-Life." W. P. Pycraft.
- "Gum Boughs and Wattle Blossom." Donald Macdonald.
- "From Range to Sea: a Bird-Lover's Ways." Charles Barrett.

PERIODICALS RECEIVED IN EXCHANGE.

- British Birds*, vol. xi., parts 4 and 12.
- Avicultural Magazine*, vol. ix., parts 6, 7, and 8.
- Ibis*, vol. vi., part 2.