

The specimen obtained by Storr from the Swan River on October 10, 1955 (described in *W.A. Nat.*, 5: 70) had no trace of the species' nuptial plumage and was presumably less than two years old. The present specimen, however, had retained a considerable amount of its nuptial plumage. A few white feathers were beginning to appear in the otherwise brownish-black forehead. The legs were red, the toes only were beginning to blacken. The bill, however, was entirely black. The dark internal strip along the inner web of the outer primaries was distinctly broader than that in the Swan River bird.

Measurements were as follows: culmen 29.5, tarsus 15, middle toe 21.5, wing (abraded) 252, outer rectrices (abraded) 150 mm.

This is the fourth specimen of Arctic Tern obtained in Western Australia.

—G. M. STORR and N. E. MILWARD, Nedlands.

**The Ghost Bat in the North-West.**—A. Douglas (*W.A. Nat.*, 5: 140) records the recent finding of the Ghost Bat (*Macroderma gigas*) on an island off King Sound and cites other instances of its occurrence in the State. As observations of this bat appear to be rare I wish to record its probable presence in the Barlee Range country in 1932.

The exact date I cannot recall, but I was inspecting a new fence through the range on Ullawarra Station. I entered a cave beside the fence and though at first there appeared no life in it I was suddenly in the midst of numerous large bats of a light grey colour which swept past me into the open and disappeared. There were at least 25 in the swarm and I vividly remember the amazement I felt at the time at the large size of the creatures. They were considerably bigger than the usual small and darker bats seen in the area. This is the only occasion on which I saw them in the 12 years I spent between the Barlee and Hamersley Ranges.

The cave, which was in slate cliff, was about 12 miles E. of Mt. Palgrave and 10 miles N.N.E. of the new Ullawarra homestead. It was situated on the right bank of the Wannery Creek.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, Coolup.

**A Possible Record of the Spine-tailed Swift.**—In his *Birds of the Swan River District*, 1948, D. L. Serventy states that the Spine-tailed Swift (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) has never been satisfactorily identified from Western Australia. However, he quotes an observation by W. H. Loaring made at Bickley on March 23, 1944, which Loaring felt sure applied to this species.

On February 7, 1956, I saw a single swift over Eclipse Island after a quiet day in which the wind had been from the east in the morning, calm during midday and coming in from the west and south-west in the late afternoon. This bird was watched for some time. It had a short squat tail, with white below the tail and on the throat. The body was noticeably squat and compact. The bird was silent but appeared to be feeding as were the resident



Welcome Swallows at the same time. Its description appears to agree with that of the Spine-tailed Swift but I am not familiar with this species.

I noted Fork-tailed Swifts (*Apus pacificus*) in the Albany district about the same time. On January 21 three of these swifts were circling in the sky near Little Grove. The wind at the time was changing from north to west. On January 26 a single swift was seen momentarily over Eclipse Island.

—JOHN WARHAM, Perth.

**Red-backed Kingfisher at Perth.**—On June 28, 1956, a Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygia*) was seen at South Belmont. The bird was so far out of range as given by Serventy and Whittell (*Handbook of the Birds of W.A.*), i.e., all over the State, except the south-west corner, to Geraldton, Kellerberrin and Norseman, that particular notice was taken. It was perched on a telegraph wire sunning its back. The wings were drooped, exposing the back to the sun. This revealed that the lower back was a conspicuous rufous-brown. The bird's head had almost no black on it, except for a line through the eye and a few streaks on the crown, the remainder being white.

I am familiar with this species as I kept a bird in captivity at Nedlands for over six months. However, in an absence of six weeks during May and June, 1956, the bird disappeared. No corpse was found in the cage so I assume it escaped. The captive bird was moulting at the beginning of May and had a number of broken tail feathers, and also "hunger bars" across the other tail feathers. The bird at Belmont had a perfect tail.

The habit of sunning itself was noticed often with the captive bird. In addition to drooped wings the bird would raise the rufous-brown back feathers so the sunlight and heat could penetrate to the skin (cf. Warham's observations on similar behaviour in the Senegal Dove, *W.A. Nat.*, 4, 1954: 91).

If the bird I observed at Belmont was the same as that which escaped from my home at Nedlands it would be a remarkable, though not impossible coincidence.

—ERIC LINDGREN, Nedlands.

**Silver Gull and Blowfish.**—The poisonous properties of the common blowfish (*Spherooides pleurogramma*) were well illustrated by an incident which occurred at Point Peron on December 10, 1956. My attention was drawn by the fact that an immature Silver Gull (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) had found a dead fish and was being allowed to eat it without any interference by other gulls in the vicinity. This unusual behaviour caused me to watch the bird through binoculars. The following details from my field notes tell the story:

9.15 a.m. Seagull, immature, flecks of brown on neck and wings. Found dead blowfish and tried to swallow. Kneaded along body with beak several times.

9.17. Able to swallow fish head first.



Warham, John. 1957. "From Field and Study: A Possible Record of the Spine-tailed Swift." *The Western Australian Naturalist* 5(8), 232–233.

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