

BIRDS OBSERVED AND BIRD-SKINS EXAMINED IN 1905.—Scarlet-breasted Robin (*Petræca leggii*): Variation in Plumage.—On the 13th of March my attention was arrested by the loud and oft-repeated calling of a small bird. The notes were those of the Scarlet-breasted Robin, and were unusually loud. On approaching the bird I observed that, although in other respects it resembled a male Scarlet-breasted Robin, it had a pure white breast. It thus resembled *Petræca toitoi*, but good reasons why it could not have been that bird readily occur. The white frontal spot was sufficient to distinguish it from the Hooded Robin (*P. bicolor*), and I have no doubt that it was a white-breasted variety of *P. leggii*. It returned on the following day.

Flame-breasted Robin (*Petræca phœnicea*).—One adult male was seen on the 4th of July, near South Bridgewater, in the company of a small flock of White-fronted Chats.

Satin Fly-catcher (*Myiagra nitida*).—The latest record in the autumn of this year is 20th February, when three or four birds were seen (Mr. W. Duffy). The bird utters a series of peculiar sibilant notes when flying. When it perches the tail quivers rapidly.

White-fronted Chat (*Ephthianura albifrons*).—A flock of eight White-fronted Chats was observed on the 4th of July on Bridge-water Causeway. They came from the east bank of the river, and paused to feed amongst the drift-weed and *débris* on the embankment. I have not observed these birds on the west bank of the Derwent.

Grey Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus cinereus*).—An adolescent male had the marginal wing coverts tipped with buff and the median wing coverts tipped with olive; the feathers of the mantle had brownish-olive tips. Iris light brown. Length, 10.5 inches; wing, 6 inches; culmen, 1.56 inches; tarsus, 1.53 inches.

White-bearded Honey-eater (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*).—In an adolescent male and an adolescent female the malar tufts of the adult were absent; the small projecting white feathers on each side of the base of the lower mandible of the adult were also absent, but there were a few small buffy-white feathers which extended from the base of the lower mandible to the ears; the hair-like feathers on the chin were darker in colour than the corresponding feathers of the adult; the heads were not black but brownish-black, and the colours of the breast feathers were not markedly contrasted. The feathers of the mantle of the adult are black, with white edges; those feathers of the adolescent birds were uniformly dusky-brown; the bills were brown, blended with horn colour.

Azure Kingfisher (*Alcyon azurea*).—The comparative scarcity of this bird in the south of Tasmania must be my excuse for mentioning a well-nigh belated instance of its occurrence. In March, 1901, an Azure Kingfisher (the stuffed skin of which I have seen) was shot near Broad Marsh, in the county of Monmouth (Mr. T. Bowden).

Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*).—The latest date in autumn at which I have a record of this Cuckoo in an adult state is 19th

March (Mr. W. Duffy); the earliest date in spring is 21st August (Mr. A. R. Reid).

Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*).—The latest autumn record is 27th February (Mr. W. Duffy); earliest spring record is 4th September, on which date a bird was seen by myself. It permitted a near approach, and I was able to perceive the rufescent tinge on the breast and the tothing of the tail feathers. When at rest on a branch the bird maintained an erect position, with the tail pendent; when it alighted it jerked the tail upwards, but not so much as the Pallid Cuckoo does.

Silver Gull (*Larus novæ-hollandiæ*).—One was observed feeding on small crabs, which were swallowed whole. It obtained them in shallow water, either by dipping its head into the water or by jumping out of the water and taking a little dive. As is the case every winter, many Seagulls visited the grass fields, but this did not occur in stormy weather only. Thus on the 10th of July about 100 Seagulls appeared in a field on a fine morning with a gentle southerly breeze blowing. Adolescent birds, having the wing coverts more or less speckled with stone colour, accompanied the adults, but were fewer in number than these.

Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*).—I take this opportunity of qualifying some of my remarks regarding this species which appeared in *The Emu* of April, 1904.\* The downy covering of a pair of young birds, which I called "nestling down," might be better named a second growth of down. It is what Gould has called "the downy dress of immaturity."† This down grows among the blue feathers of the back, and conceals them wholly or partly. But I do not think that the down in question has its origin earlier than the blue feathers, for the dorsal surface even of the fœtus has a covering of embryonic feathers which have some resemblance to the feathers which cover the back of the perfect bird. I have read that at the time of moulting the plumage of Penguins sloughs in patches, so that in not a few respects the processes connected with the growth and moulting of feathers differs amongst Penguins from these processes amongst other birds. The latest date on which I saw Little Penguins in the Derwent was the 17th of July. On the 11th of the same month I had seen two birds swimming side by side and diving simultaneously, and had inferred that the mating season had commenced.

Shieldrake (*Casarca tadornoides*).—A duck was shot at Pipeclay Lagoon, South Arm, about the 11th of March (Mr. W. Richardson).

Grey Teal (*Nettion gibberifrons*).—One bird (a drake) had the stomach full of the shells of a minute mollusc resembling a *Cantharidus*.

Freckled Duck (*Stictoneita nævosa*).—Two birds (duck and drake) were shot near South Bridgewater in the third week of March (Mr. A. Dickenson).—JAMES R. M'CLYMONT. Sandy Bay, Hobart.

\* Vol. iii., p. 237.

† "Handbook to the Birds of Australia," vol. ii., p. 521.



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