

The description of these performances of Ostriches are strikingly like those described by myself in *The Emu* of April, 1906, p. 192, in connection with Southern Stone-Plovers. My words are as follows:—"At times these Plovers performed peculiar antics or dances. When in this humour one of the birds would run with outstretched wings about 20 or 30 yards, bending occasionally to this or that side, or even turning suddenly completely round. (Is there any connection between this and, on the one hand, the weird dances of the Native Companion (*Antigone australasiana*)—on the other, the peculiar little duck of the head when walking practised by some of the Dottrels and their allies?)" I hardly think the explanation given in the case of the Ostriches (*i.e.*, escape from pursuers) can apply to the Southern Stone-Plovers, and to me it seems more likely that all these peculiar actions—in the Ostrich, Stone-Plover, Australian Crane, and various Dottrels—are individual specific or even generic characteristics, as bound up with the bird in question as any other recognised descriptive trait, such as plumage, size, &c. While on this question of bird actions, can anyone give an explanation of the peculiar flicking of the tail in some Bald-Coots (*Porphyrio*), which takes place when they are alarmed? This flicking exposes a patch of pure white feathers, which are then very noticeable.—(DR.) J. B. CLELAND. Perth (W.A.), 25/2/08.

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CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE TASMANIAN MAGPIE.—In support of the contention that the Lesser White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hyperleuca*) is a bird of distinctive character, I will narrate an incident which I witnessed a few years ago. I preface the narration of it with the remark that it is a matter for regret that the name "Magpie-Shrike" was not bestowed upon this bird in preference to a name which has been for so long a time and until recently was exclusively applied to another bird. A Grey Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus cinereus*), which affected a certain locality, darted suddenly in pursuit of a small bird—I think, a House-Sparrow—whereupon a Magpie appeared and intercepted the Butcher-Bird, and by circling round the smaller bird caused the former to desist from its purpose and to take to flight. I have already alluded in *The Emu* to a habit of chasing Ground-Larks (*Anthus*). On a later occasion I saw the Ground-Lark overtaken by the Magpie. The Magpie, however, only brushed past the Ground-Lark (which uttered a shrill cry) and went its way.

A tame female Magpie, which I have seen on one or two occasions, was sometimes attacked by a wild bird of the same species, and defended itself by lying on its back, and in that position warding off its opponent with beak and feet. If decisively worsted, it retired beneath a leafy bush, whither the

wild bird did not venture to follow it. The demeanour of the Magpie, when it is slowly moving across fallow land and searching for the earthworms which lie hidden below the excrement of cattle, remind one of a Rook. But in other respects the Magpie is dissimilar to the Rook, for, whereas the young of that bird build their nests in the rookery in which they have been hatched, young Magpies leave the immediate vicinity of the nest before building nests for themselves. Towards the close of summer Magpies wander further afield than at other seasons, and it is probably at that time of year that young Magpies, which will nest during the following spring, seek fresh feeding grounds. A distance of two or three miles divides the nesting quarters of Magpies in the vicinity of Hobart; in some parts of Tasmania they are much more numerous. Their increase and distribution are doubtless partly governed by the quantity of food obtainable. But, having regard to the protection which they receive, it is surprising that they do not multiply more rapidly.—JAMES R. M'CLYMONT. Queenborough, Tasmania, 10/2/08.

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LIST OF AUSTRALASIAN BIRDS in the Zoological Garden at Breslau on 31st December, 1907 :—

2 <i>Dromæus novæ-hollandiæ</i>	75 <i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>
2 <i>Anas superciliosa</i>	6 " " " (var.)
1 <i>Dendrocycna eytoni</i> (male)	2 <i>Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
1 <i>Chenonetta jubata</i> (male)	2 <i>Platycercus eximius</i>
2 <i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	1 " <i>browni</i>
1 <i>Cereopsis novæ-hollandiæ</i> (male)	1 <i>Aprosmictus scapulatus</i>
2 <i>Chenopsis atrata</i> (male and female)	1 <i>Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ</i>
1 <i>Zonifer tricolor</i>	1 <i>Dacelo gigas</i> (male)
1 <i>Antigone australasiana</i>	1 <i>Gymnorhina leuconota</i>
1 <i>Ocydromus australis</i>	1 <i>Brachyprorus cinereus</i> (?)
2 <i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	1 <i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>
1 <i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	1 <i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
1 <i>Licmetis nasica</i>	2 " <i>sordidus</i>
1 " <i>pastinator</i>	4 <i>Tæniopygia castanotis</i>
1 <i>Cacatua gymnopsis</i>	1 <i>Bathilda ruficauda</i>
1 " <i>sanguineus</i>	1 <i>Poephila hecki</i>
1 " <i>goffini</i>	1 <i>Munia pectoralis</i>
5 " <i>roseicapillus</i>	1 <i>Meliphaga phrygia</i>
1 " <i>leadbeateri</i>	1 <i>Acanthochæra carunculata</i>
2 " <i>galerita</i>	1 <i>Tropidorhynchus corniculatus</i>
1 <i>Callocephalon galeatum</i>	1 <i>Grallina australis</i> .

Cereopsis novæ-hollandiæ.—Female died 17th February, 1907. In 1903 the birds mated, and on 11th May four eggs were hatched. On the 25th November birds again mated, without result. In 1904, on the 25th January, the female laid again, and on the 9th March two eggs were hatched. In 1905, on the 31st January, the birds again sat, without result, leaving the unhatched eggs on the 19th March. In 1906, on the 19th January, they again sat, and on the 1st March two young were hatched, which were killed by frost on the 10th of the



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