

* <i>Pardalotus punctatus</i> ..	..	Spotted Pardalote.
<i>Hirundo neoxena</i> ..	..	Swallow.
<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>	..	White-browed Wood-Swallow.
„ <i>sordidus</i> ..	..	Wood-Swallow.
<i>Ægitha temporalis</i> ..	..	Red-browed Finch.
* <i>Menura victoriæ</i> ..	..	Lyre-Bird.
<i>Dacelo gigas</i> ..	..	Laughing Jackass.
<i>Cuculus pallidus</i> ..	..	Pallid Cuckoo.
* <i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	..	Fan-tailed Cuckoo.
* „ <i>variolosus</i>	..	Square-tailed Cuckoo.
* <i>Chalcococcyx basalis</i> ..	..	Narrow-billed Cuckoo.
* „ <i>plagosus</i>	..	Bronze Cuckoo.
<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	..	Black Cockatoo.
<i>Callocephalon galeatum</i>	..	Gang Gang Cockatoo.
<i>Cacatua galerita</i> ..	..	White Cockatoo.
* <i>Aprosmictus cyanopygius</i>	..	King Lory.
* <i>Platyercus elegans</i> ..	..	Crimson Parrakeet.
<i>Leucosarcia picata</i> ..	..	Wonga-Wonga Pigeon.
<i>Ægialitis melanops</i> ..	..	Black-fronted Dottrel.

## The Kagu of New Caledonia.

BY A. J. CAMPBELL, COL. MEM. B.O.U.

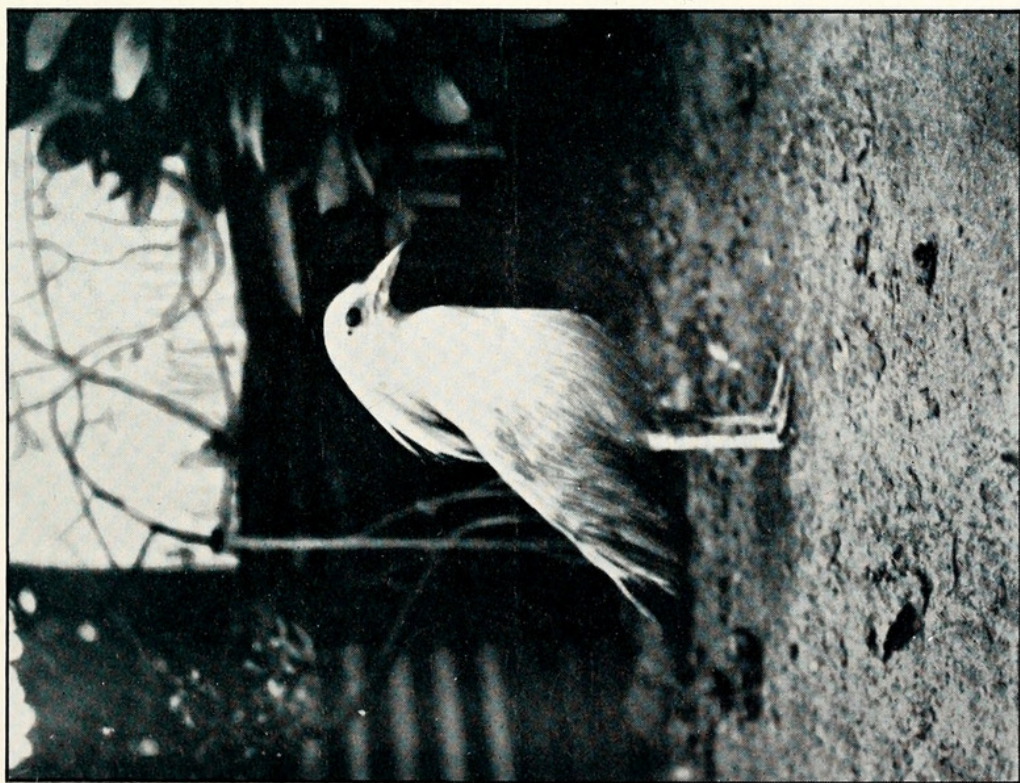
UPON the French occupying New Caledonia in 1852 this unique and most interesting bird was discovered. It is known to the natives as the Kagu, but it was not scientifically described and named *Rhinocetus jubatus* by Jules Verreaux and Des Murs (*Revue Zoologique*, p. 439) till 1860, when the first specimen was brought to the Colonial Exhibition, Paris.

The Kagu possesses a marked Ralline appearance, but in the systematic list its place is after the Rails, in the order Alektorides. Although it stands alone, its nearest ally has proved to be the Sun-Bittern (*Eurypyga*) of South America.

The bird, which is about 2 feet in length, is about the size of a domestic fowl, with longish legs. The plumage may be described as greyish or of a light slate colour, especially on the head and under parts, the back, &c., being darker, while the wings and tail are obscurely barred. Legs and bill are yellowish or reddish orange. The eyes are reddish, being bloodshot-like. The longest plumes of the crest measure 4 or 5 inches.

At Mosmans, at the private residence of Mr. H. E. Finckh (jeweller and optician, 300 George-street), while attending the recent Sydney Session of the A.O.U., I was extremely fortunate in seeing some of the interesting Kagus thriving in captivity—for they appear hardy creatures. The poses of the Kagus, either at rest or agitated, are extremely fascinating. Walking leisurely about the aviary with spasmodic Rail-like action of the tail and head, they occasionally strike a graceful attitude while bending over foot or leg, after the fashion of Plovers, &c. But when excited they stand straight, with erected crest, semi-expanded wings, and drooping tail (see illustration). In this attitude they





The Kagu (*Rhinochetus jubatus*).





bounce proudly at any intruder. When in a playful mood they throw about with their bills small sticks and stones. The birds call to each other, usually about daybreak, in loud, piercing, yelp-like notes, continued for some time, which can be heard a mile away.

Mr. Finckh was favoured in getting a pair of his Kagus to breed. They commenced nesting in a hollow on the ground in a secluded part of the aviary, into which they threw a few coarse sticks and leaves for a day or two. When the egg was laid more sticks were placed about it. The male sits continuously on the single egg, but his mate may relieve him occasionally, possibly at night. The birds defend their nest vigorously. Mr. Finckh reckoned his birds were about seven years old when they commenced to lay. It was observed that the egg was laid fourteen days after "mating," and that incubation lasted five weeks. The following data, by courteous permission, are taken from Mr. Finckh's records relating to one pair of birds:—1902.—Three eggs were laid; first on the 6th April, last the 3rd October. 1903.—Four eggs were laid; first on the 16th April, last on 16th November. 1904.—Egg laid 14th April, which disappeared in a mysterious manner; a second egg was laid 23rd June, but it was not fertile. A third egg, which was deposited on 15th September, was placed in an incubator. A small spot was noticed in the egg on the tenth day, and it chipped on the 19th October. The chick has hatched on the 21st October, but it appeared slightly prematurely born, and died on the 24th. A fourth egg laid this season on the 4th October was also being artificially hatched when incubation ceased after the twentieth day. By these data it will be observed that if the egg is taken, or anything happens to it, the birds lay again. But, probably, in a state of freedom the birds would only lay once or hatch one young a season.

The egg is a stout ellipse in shape; surface slightly glossy; shell comparatively fine; stony-grey in colour, moderately marked with spots and blotches of umber and dull grey, the latter colour underlying the surface of the shell. Except for its fine texture and elliptical shape the Kagu's egg might be taken for that of a Gull. Dimensions in inches,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by 2 inches.

Two eggs presented by Mr. Finckh to the Australian Museum were described and figured in the *Records* of that institution—*vide* vol. iv., part No. 7 (1902).

I had frequent opportunities of seeing the birds fed, chiefly on finely-cut beefsteak, of which a pound weight did not seem to go far with them. They disdain meat that is at all stale. I saw them taking large centipedes, 5 inches long, which were thrown to them. The bird picked up the squirming insect, which was passed by a nibbling action quickly through the bill crosswise and back a couple of times until it was pulped, then swallowed. When these birds fight they peck at each other's legs. Their moult occurs about midsummer.

In their native island-home Kagus live in pairs about the marshes



in the scrub, feeding upon worms, slugs, beetles, frogs, &c. On account of their restricted habitat it is predicted that the species will early become exterminated. Indeed, in Layard's time, 30 years ago, it had already disappeared from the neighbourhood of the more settled parts. Can some measures not be devised to save this singular bird from becoming, like the Dodo, extinct?

### Stray Feathers.

MELBOURNE ZOO NOTES.—Saw flock of about three hundred Straw-necked Ibis flying high in irregular lines over Melbourne from west to east on 13th December.

Have hatched and reared at Zoo this season White-bellied Plumed Pigeon (*Lophophaps leucogaster*), Partridge-Bronzewing (*Geophaps scripta*), and many Stubble Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*).—D. LE SOUËF.

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BIRD-NAMES OF ABORIGINES. — A pleasing feature of the National Park, Sydney, is the fact that most of the creeks are named after the aboriginal names of birds, such as "Mullion" Brook, meaning Eagle; "Wurrul" Brook, meaning Bee-eater; "Burowa," the Bustard; "Karoga," White Crane; "Gorra Worra," Laughing Jackass; "Buralga," Native Companion; "Kobardo," Parrot; "Birumba," Plover; "Dirijiri," Wagtail; "Murrindum," Quail; "Dumbal," Crow; "Tamur," Bronze-winged Pigeon; "Burunda," Swan; "Karani," Duck; and "Palona," Hawk.—A. H. M.

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LITTLE NIGHTJAR (*Ægotheles novæ-hollandiæ*).—These little birds appear to vary much in plumage. I have taken a detailed description of one shot near this station. Although the Nightjar sleeps all day, it constantly wakes and calls from out the hollow limb it which it roosts, "Chirk, chirk, chirk," and goes to sleep again. I have heard them at this often and often, but never knew what to put it down to until to-day, when, locating the sound in a dead tree, I frightened out the bird. I hear a cry at night that I put down to this bird, but it is then short and abrupt—"Che'ok" or "Che'oak"—and uttered disconnectedly. The day call is just as I have written it.—FREDK. L. BERNEY. Wyangarie (N.Q.), 15/1/05.

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HYPOTÆNIDIA PHILIPPINENSIS.—The Pectoral Rail has bred in our garden, but I have not had the luck to see the little ones. Some young pigs also spoiled one or two clutches, or we might have had quite a number about. These birds have been very fearless with us, and it was quite the usual thing a month ago to hear a bird "grunting" at you from underneath a shrub not more than 8 or 10 feet from where you stood, and often even much



Campbell, Archibald James. 1905. "The Kagu of New Caledonia." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 4(4), 166–168.

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