

insects, small snails, and beetles. This was an adult male. The other was the bird I shot for Mr. Campbell.

I have spent many hours watching this bird feeding and building its nest, and to my mind it closely resembles the Tree-creepers (*Certhiidae*). With its mouse-like movements, it will fly to the base of a tree fern, run rapidly to the top and down the other side, just pausing long enough to grasp an unwary beetle, or some such small object, then off again to another tree, and repeat the performance.

When building it is very wary, and if it sees anyone watching it will at once begin to put the material which it is carrying in quite a different place from where its nest is situate, and will do this for some time, making several trips and bringing material to do so. This I have noticed several times, and when the intruder has withdrawn for some time it will go on building at the nest, sometimes using the material it has placed in the false position, but more often leaving it where it was first put. They will go a long way for material suitable to their needs, and on one occasion I followed a pair of them for over a quarter of a mile. They had found a dead opossum, and were engaged in lining their home with its fur. It took me just over an hour to find that nest, though some 200 yards of the distance was open country.

Whilst it is feeding its note is a short "Cheep, cheep," but at times you will hear it trilling out a little song something like the Calamanthus (Field-Wren), but not so full or sustained as that bird's note.

It would be a difficult matter to place any limit to the distribution of this species, as I have seen members of it at the Huon, Carnarvon, North-West Bay River, Glenorchy, Bismarck, New Norfolk, &c., and as high up on the mountain as the Springs, and under the Organ Pipes.

There is just one word to say in closing, and that is, I hope that members and others will not destroy this interesting bird, but will remember that, as the land is being cleared, it will retire to the backwoods, and only leave a few of the more venturesome of the tribe to eke out an existence in some secluded spot. Watch them, note their habits, but do not take their life.

Stray Feathers.

FOUR CURIOUS NESTING PLACES.—I am sending two photos. of peculiar nesting places. One is the nest and three eggs of the Grey Thrush (*Collyriocincla harmonica*), in the wickerwork off a demijohn, and the other a nest and two eggs of the Pipit (*Anthus*). The latter was found on the Casterton Golf Links, the former in the scrub along the River Glenelg, evidently carried there at flood time. I have also had presented to me a nest with four eggs of the Little Crake (*Porzana palustris*). The nest was placed in an old jam tin in a vertical position, in a clump of

round rushes in swampy ground in the town, and quite close to a road with much traffic. I have been to the locality to see for myself, and flushed the birds, which may possibly breed again. Again, at the local rifle butts, there is a Swallow's (*Hirundo neoxena*) nest built in a old pair of trousers hanging up in the marker's shelter alongside the target. I must say it is a very remarkable thing to get these four nests in such unusual sites, especially those in the old tins. The Crane's nest is made of the round rushes only, and the tin is one of the size of a "lobster" tin, and as the nest material is small in amount, it means that the bird must have had to manœuvre somewhat to get in, but her long legs would doubtless come to her aid.—(DR.) ERNEST A. D'OMBRAIN. Casterton, Victoria, 12/11/05. For the nest of the Grey Thrush see Plate XII.

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LONGREACH (Q.) NOTES.—The Tricolored Chat (*Ephthianura tricolor*) was very rare on the Peak Downs before the drought, but now flocks of 20 and 30 can be seen feeding on the ground, generally on a bare red soil ridge with dead timber. Since I have been working near Longreach I have seen flocks of 60 or 70, and they are quite common in the Boree forest, where the soil is brown.

The Red-capped Robin (*Petræca goodenovi*) is here now, but I have seen only females, or else the males have lost their bright colours.

A great part of Central Queensland was visited last December by an irruption of Native-Hens (*Microtribonyx ventralis*), upper mandible green and lower red, much resembling in general appearance a Game Bantam hen. They came in tens of thousands, and ate the frontages of all waterholes quite bare, besides polluting the water. They became very tame, and came into the streets of the country towns, and suddenly left in April, but from what direction they came or which way they went nobody seems to know. At first they were welcomed as allies of the Ibis army doing battle with the young locusts, but examination of their crops showed that they were vegetarians strictly.

A sight for bird lovers is a flight of Betcherrygahs or Warbling Grass-Parrakeets (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) on the Peak Downs. To attempt an estimate of the numbers in some of the flocks is useless, and one would be accused of exaggerating, but I have seen some masses of green and gold some chains long and over a chain wide. The speed and concerted movement as they sweep round and round and in and out of the timber in a perfect ecstasy of flight are, I think, unequalled by those of any other bird: one minute they will be almost lost to sight as they turn edgeways, and the next present a broad waving ribbon.

Flock Pigeons (*Histriophaps histrionica*) came to the Peak Downs this year for the first time to my knowledge, the drought which still rages at Winton being, I expect, the cause.—F. B. C. FORD.



D'Ombra, Ernest A. 1906. "Four Curious Nesting Places." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 5(3), 157–158.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu905157a>.

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