

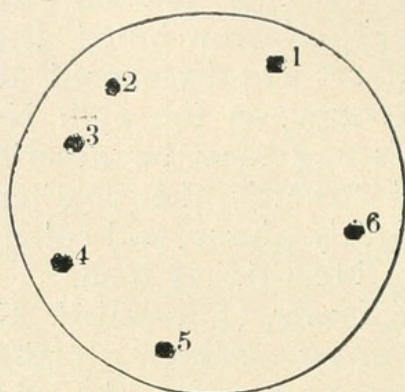
ANNOTATIONS.—*Mesocalius palliolatus* (Black-eared Cuckoo).—Mr. Gerald F. Hill has kindly sent me an egg of this species. It was taken with three eggs of *Malurus cyaneus* (Blue Wren)—a new foster-parent for this Cuckoo—together with an egg of *Chalcococcyx basalis* (Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo). This extremely interesting set was discovered at Dunneworthy, near Ararat, by Mr. L. Mooney, on the 25th November 1906. The Black-eared Cuckoo's egg may be described as elongated in form (more tapered towards the smaller end than known examples), surface slightly glossy, and colour of a uniform rufous-brown. Length, .91; breadth, .55 inch.

Cacomantis flabelliformis (Fan-tailed Cuckoo).—While the Field-Wren (*Calamanthus albiloris*, North) has been recorded as one of the foster-parents for the Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo, I was not aware that the Field-Wren was also a foster-parent of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo until I saw recently an interesting combination clutch in the collection of Mr. G. E. Shepherd, Somerville—season 1905.

Eurystomus australis (Dollar-Bird).—These birds have been frequently noticed in the north-eastern province of Victoria. But some have appeared more westward this season, notably on the Goulburn, at Mount Macedon, and at Eltham, near Melbourne. At the last-mentioned locality, in January, one bird was shot out of nine which were said to be attacking peaches.

Lipoa ocellata (Mallee-Fowl).—In a back number of *The Australasian* (15/12/06), Mr. Charles H. M'Lennan, writing under the *nom de plume* of "Mallee-Bird," contributed a most interesting and valuable article on the "Haunts and Habits of the Lowan" or Mallee-Fowl. While giving us so many interesting notes of his field observations of the bird, Mr. M'Lennan omitted to touch on the disposition of the eggs within the hatching-mounds, a matter which is somewhat perplexing to oologists. In reply to my queries Mr. M'Lennan has promptly and kindly sent the following remarks:—"I find, as a rule, the Mallee-Fowl lays its eggs in the mound in the following manner:—Three or four eggs are always laid at the bottom of the egg chamber, the large end of the egg being placed upwards, with from 6 to 12 inches of sand, &c., between each egg. The next egg is laid from 4 to 6 inches above these—in fact, the rest of the eggs are laid here and there around the egg chamber, with from 4 to 10 inches of material separating them—no two eggs being placed directly over each other. The eggs are always found near the side of the egg chamber. I have often noticed what you could term tiers or circles, of 4, 6, and 4; 4, 5, and 3; 3, 5, 4, and 3 eggs respectively in odd mounds; but, as stated, the Mallee-Fowl lays its eggs without any respect to regular formation of tiers or circles. I am sending you a

rough diagram of a mound I opened on the 9th of this month (December), which contained six eggs, one freshly laid. The size of the egg chamber was 20 inches wide and 18 inches in



depth. The eggs marked from 1 to 4 are what you would term the top tier; from number 1 to 2 there were 7 inches of sand dividing them; from 2 to 3 there were $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches between them; from 3 to 4 there were 5 inches of sand between them; from 4 to 5 there were 8 inches of sand; and number 5 egg was on a plane about 4 inches below that of number 4 egg. From 5 to 6, 7 inches of sand intervened, and number 6 egg was about 3 inches below number 5 egg. The eggs marked from 1 to 4 did not vary in depth from each other more than 2 to 3 inches. I took six eggs out of this mound a few weeks previously.* At the start of the season for laying, the Mallee-Fowl is most regular,† but from the middle of the season to the end the period between the laying of one egg and another varies considerably." Supplementing Mr. M'Lennan's valuable notes, I venture to add a recent personal one. On the 2nd December last I visited an egg-mound over the South Australian border. It was situated in Mallee scrub (*Eucalyptus incrassata* and *E. oleosa*), with a ground scrub of *Melaleuca uncinata*. The mound was composed of dark greyish sand, was about 45 feet in circumference, and open on the top like a miniature extinct volcano. The removal of about 2 feet of sand revealed the apices of three beautiful pinkish eggs within a kind of egg-chamber 14 inches across. The eggs were on the same plane, and formed a rough triangle, 1 and 2 being separated by $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches of sand, 2 and 3 by 5 inches, and 3 and 1 by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Immediately underneath these was the formation of a bottom tier containing one egg. For more complete information I regretted there were not more eggs in the mound, which probably had been visited by other persons earlier in the season. I should mention that it was shortly before noon when we visited the egg-mound, which, if it were heaped in its usual pyramidal form, would be

* This may account for the irregularity.—Eds.

† Usually one egg every third or fourth day.—A.J.C.

about 3 feet high. A local friend subsequently visited the mound, which was conical-shaped on that occasion. It contained a single egg, at a depth of about 18 inches, where the thermometer registered 93° , the temperature of the sand on the top of the mound being 121° .

Psephotus hæatorrhous (Red-vented Parrakeet).—The true "Blue Bonnet" is one of the most interesting of elegant Parrakeets, and makes an endearing aviary pet. Mr. J. A. Hill (Victoria), who was spending a holiday near Wellington, about 170 miles inland or westward of Newcastle, N.S.W., kindly brought me a skin of the Red-vented species from that locality. It distinctly differs from the Victorian and South Australian bird—*P. xanthorrhous*—by having (1) the under tail-covert crimson-red instead of primrose-yellow; (2) point of the shoulder verditer-green instead of blue; and (3) the centre of the greater wing-coverts reddish-chestnut instead of saffron-yellow. For other details see Gould's "Handbook," vol. ii., pp. 62–65. Wellington is about 160 miles south of the Namoi, where Gould obtained his type of *P. hæatorrhous*. It would be interesting to know how much further south it extends, or where it intergrades with *P. xanthorrhous*. As there has been some confusion about the two varieties, I do not think authentic eggs of the former have yet been described, although, doubtless, they are similar to those of the Yellow-vented Parrakeet.—A. J. CAMPBELL.

From Magazines, &c.

CLOSE SEASON IGNORED.—The close season for game throughout the Northern district seems to be little better than a farce. Game is almost openly shot, and wild-fowl is a common article of diet in several quarters. Land-owners in the vicinity state that shooting parties are numerous, though the most common game is that named in the Act.—*The Argus*, 13th December, 1906.

* * *

HAWK AND WILD DUCK.—A strange scene was witnessed at Mooroopna on Monday evening, when a wild Wood-Duck was chased about the township by a Hawk. The latter was gaining rapidly on it, when the Duck darted under the verandah of a store, and darted through a frosted window-pane. Inside it caused great consternation, narrowly missing a table covered with kerosene lamps. Eventually it was caught, and was found to be cut on the head and feet. The Hawk flew into a tree near the footpath, and waited for the Duck to reappear.—*The Argus*, 2nd February, 1907.



Campbell, Archibald James. 1907. "Annotations." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 6(4), 197–199.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu906192i>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/34190>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu906192i>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/379400>

Holding Institution

American Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.