

differed somewhat from the usual type, being heavily banded with spots round the larger end. Another nest, containing two eggs, was found in the centre of a clump of band-grass, some 6 inches from the ground.—FRANK M. LITTLER. Launceston, 28/11/08.

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TASMANIAN NOTES.—My friend, Mr. H. C. Thompson, of Launceston, has sent the following notes made in the brief intervals of a busy life :—

“ The Scarlet-breasted Robin (*Petraca leggii*) had three eggs on 6th September, and on 11th September a Flame-breasted Robin (*P. phænicea*) was sitting on three eggs in her nest built in Owen's timber yard on the Tamar, amid all the whirr of machinery and rending of logs. Probably the same pair built last spring on a rafter in a pole-shed situated in the Council's yard, Launceston, so they are not averse to the society of the working man. Two Brown-tails' (*Acanthiza diemenensis*) nests and several Yellow-tails' (*A. chrysorrhoa*), with eggs, were found at beginning of September. In a few reeds in the Dépôt grounds were two pairs of Grass-Birds (*Megalurus gramineus*), also a fine pair of Bald-Coots (*Porphyrio melanonotus*) about the same place. The latter were very tame ; one was resting on some bent reeds only a few yards from me, preening its feathers and taking no notice of me, not even when I stood up and got as close as the water would permit. When I projected a small missile into the water near him he flew very clumsily, with the legs hanging straight down, giving him an awkward appearance on the wing.” In a letter dated 1st November Mr. Thompson mentions that a third Coot had joined these two, one of which was sitting on five eggs, so it is evidently a case of a *ménage à trois*, one of those mysterious associations of three individuals which have been observed in the “ old country ” in several species, and discussed in the nature journals without eliciting any very satisfactory explanation. “ The Reed-Warblers (*Acrocephalus australis*) arrived at the North Esk about the middle of September. Several Yellow-throated Honey-eaters' (*Ptilotis flavigularis*) nests were found built close to the ground in saggs on the side of a tree-clad hill, three of them having eggs by the 4th October. Some of the Robins had fledged young about the same time. Bronze-Cuckoos (*Chalcococcyx plagusius*) were making their voices heard ; and both the Grey-tailed Thickhead (*Pachycephala glaucura*) and the Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) were sitting. No Shining Fycatchers (*Piezorhynchus nitidus*) had been seen by that date, although one or two pairs are generally located near Launceston each spring.” On 18th October Mr. Thompson and his son left home at 5.30 a.m. and went down the Tamar in a small boat, the wind southerly and cold until the sun got well up. At 8 a.m. they were at Tamar Island, and breakfasted in the

boat, as the tide was too low to allow of landing, on account of the mud-flats. After breakfast they landed and walked over the island, finding Reed-Warblers, Grass-Birds, Crescent Honey-eaters (*Meliornis australasiana*), and Swift-Lorikeets (*Nanodes discolor*). They then boated to the other side, and, landing, walked to some flats, where they found several Bald-Coots' nests, some with eggs, also a Swamp-Hawk (*Circus gouldi*) sitting. She would not allow them to approach very near, but took flight, rising high and then circling round with the wings quite motionless.—H. STUART DOVE. Moonee Ponds, 14/11/08.

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NOTES ON THE BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE (*Graucalus melanops*, Latham).—This fine insectivorous bird generally makes its appearance in the Hawthorn district each year about the end of March, and is to be seen during the day searching amongst the leaves and beneath the bark of trees for caterpillars, spiders, beetles, &c. One morning in March last my attention was drawn to one of these birds which was struggling to remove from the bark of a large red gum tree (*Eucalyptus rostrata*) a case of one of the case-moths (*Psychidæ*). These cases require rather a smart jerk to dislodge them from the bark or twig they are attached to. Knowing that most of these stick-cases contained fine fat larvæ, I was curious to see, firstly, if the bird was capable of removing the case from its fastening, and, secondly, how it would get the larva out of its stout covering if successful. I will now give a brief account of how the bird succeeded in doing this. Taking hold of the case with its beak by the lower end, and at the same time clinging firmly to the bark by its feet, by a series of short, sharp jerks, continued for some time, to my surprise it succeeded in removing it, when, flying off to an adjacent tree, carrying the case in its bill, it started to beat it, first to the right and then to the left, against a bough. After performing this operation for some considerable time, these continuous shocks were the means of driving the grub up into the neck of the case, when another dose or two of the same medicine forced it in a stunned condition to partly leave the case. Then, flying to the ground, carrying the case with it, the bird seized the grub, and, returning to a bough, gave it a smart rap, thus dislodging its prey. By the continuous tapping that was going on amongst the trees it was evident these birds were doing yeoman service. The Cuckoo-Shrike does good work in an apple orchard by eating the larvæ of the painted apple moth (*Teia anartoides*, Walk.), also another caterpillar similar in its habits to the above, but much larger, and very destructive to the foliage of the apple tree. Early settlers in the Melbourne district used to call this bird the Blue Jay or Banded Thickhead, and in the Warragul district, Gipps-



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