

trampled reeds and scattered feathers testified. Her assailant must have been a cat or dog, but then a cat could hardly have got out in the water. The breast and neck of the dead bird were torn and gnawed, but her would-be eater had evidently been disturbed. The Duck was in splendid condition, linings of fat showing on her mangled frame. Quite safe in the nest were two eggs, cold, so the bird must have been dead some hours. The eggs were quite fresh. The same date another nest containing three eggs was discovered. Of these it was interesting to note that two eggs were partly incubated; the third had the vein system just showing. This latter was the smallest of the three and an ordinary typed egg. The others were whiter, with a calcareous formation at smaller end. One naturally wonders if the fresher egg were an intrusive one. The next find was another nest of same species. It was interesting, owing to the fact that it contained four eggs. When lifting these out for examination one was noticed to be smelling so badly, though no crack was apparent, that it was set aside for inspection when away from the nest. The other eggs were apparently quite fresh, good examples of their kind, except that one was a trifle smaller than usual. When the fourth egg was opened it was found to contain a Duckling clothed in black down and with tiny black feet. Decomposition had set in. I suppose in this instance the Musk-Duck had repaired an old nest and laid her three eggs over the one. Later on, on the 22nd of November, two more nests were found, each containing two eggs; also a nest from which young had gone. All nests were in deep water, and were built in the tall reeds. The second nest with two eggs was cunningly hidden, with entrance hardly visible. Strange to say, on top of it a pair of Harriers (*Circus gouldi*) had a nest partly built. I wonder how the two would have lived together if the Duck had not finished incubation when the Hawk commenced to sit! Close by was the Harriers' nest of last year. I should have very much liked to watch these strange neighbours, but was unable to do so. Lagoon observations are very difficult; standing in the icy cold water with leeches as companions is certainly not very enjoyable. Most of my observations were made between 4 and 7 a.m., and as I always found the eggs of the Musk-Ducks well covered up, I suppose this early hour was the feeding time of the birds.

---

### Stray Feathers.

STORM-PETRELS.—As an illustration of the manner in which errors in natural history are disseminated by popular writers, I may refer to a statement in "Creatures of the Sea," by Frank T. Bullen (1905). In his chapter on Petrels he describes Storm-Petrels (Mother Carey's Chickens) as never seeming to rest upon



the sea surface either by day or by night. When I was leading a seafaring life it was my experience that these birds did not follow a ship at night, but made their appearance an hour or two after dawn. I remember on one occasion, when our ship was tearing before a howling gale, we passed a little colony of Storm-Petrels floating on an oasis of oil, unbroken by a ripple, while all around were raging "white-caps." When I called the attention of an old sailor to this, he said he had several times seen them taking their ease in a similar manner, and he added that before arising on the wing again the birds would have drunk up all the oil.—GEO. GRAHAM. Scott's Creek (Vic.)

\* \* \*

GLADSTONE (Q.) NOTES.—I found a double set (four eggs) in the nest of the Brown Flycatcher (*Micræca fascians*). The nest was built in a sapling at the height of about 12 feet. One bird was on the nest and another on the edge close to it. When the lad who was with me climbed the tree, two more birds (apparently males) came flying up and joined in the chorus of protest during inspection of the eggs. Two of these were of the usual steely-grey colour, but the other pair was more beautiful, being bluish-grey with a clearly-defined band of dark spots round the larger end.

Blood Honey-eaters (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) were very numerous this year. They showed a partiality for clumps of scrub, patches of brigalow chiefly, dotted about the open country, and did not seem to care for the larger scrubs. I have never observed them here before, so their visit was a pleasant surprise. Two nests with eggs were seen, both in brigalows.

A pair of Brown Hawks (*Hieracidea orientalis*) nested this year in what appeared to me to be an unusual place—a huge clump of orchids growing on the trunk of an ironbark. The leaves of the plant at the top were tramped flat to make the nest, with a thick fringe left round the sides that effectually screened the sitting bird.—ERNEST D. BARNARD. Kurrajong, 4/12/08.

\* \* \*

MOVEMENTS OF WOOD-SWALLOWS.—I quote a note taken at the time of observation last summer:—"What would seem to be a strange systematic trait of periodical changing of localities has taken place among the Wood-Swallows here. Last year these birds were represented by practically only one species—viz., the Wood-Swallow (*Artamus sordidus*). This season things have changed. Owing to the drought up north, the White-browed (*A. superciliosus*) and rarer Masked (*A. personatus*) species are here in considerable numbers, whilst a Wood-Swallow (*A. sordidus*) is a comparative rarity. In October-November of this year I found White-brows and their nests (but no Masked)



Graham, George. 1909. "Storm-Petrels." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 8(4), 214–215.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu908214a>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/88007>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu908214a>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/379579>

#### **Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

#### **Sponsored by**

Smithsonian

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

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>.