

made sure of its mate's presence by calling inquiringly. The male also used the piping whistle freely. It became excited when I gave a call, and, seeming to think a rival was in the field, came down at once, with crest elevated, piping close to me. It is a powerful, swelling note that the little throat emits, though the bill does not open at all widely. Following the piping came a polyglot chatter in the soothing undertone a human mother might adopt to a restless infant. Something of this confidential "croodle" is, I believe, possessed by many other birds, and little is known of it.

The manner in which the Shrike-Tits treat an imitation of their simple monotone gives further evidence of their capricious nature. A bird on the nest will usually peer inquiringly over the rim when it hears the call, and nearly always a solitary female will respond thereto. One I whistled to in early spring followed me excitedly for half a mile. On many other occasions, however, the same whistle has been treated by individual birds of both sexes with disdain. While this monotone is the most characteristic note in the Shrike-Tit's repertoire, it is by no means the most attractive. A number of undertones are given forth at intervals. Possibly it is a mimic, but I rather think that the notes are the natural chatter.

Finally, it may be well briefly to refer to the *F. flavigulus* of Gould. A few years ago Mr. G. M. Mathews issued an invitation* for definite information concerning this doubtful species, but since then he has, I understand, written of it as the Victorian and South Australian (sub-specific) form of *F. frontatus* of New South Wales. Never having handled a *Falcunculus* at all, I am not competent to express an opinion of worth, but I have seen any number of young, and know that all the rest of the adult colours take strength before the darkness of the throat; so that small size and "entire under surface yellow" strikes one as hardly a broad distinction. The adult Shrike-Tit is really a much smaller bird than it appears to be from a distance when the heavy crest is erected. When the bird is close to one, slimness of the body at once becomes noticeable. On some such occasions I have been struck, too, with the uncommonly warm yellow displayed on the back by individual birds of both sexes.

Great Brown Kingfishers and Starlings.—Mr. G. Murray Black, of Lower Tarwin, states that a pair of Great Brown Kingfishers (*Dacelo gigas*) nested for a season or two in a box which he had put up in a tree for that purpose, but lately the Starlings drove them away and occupied the box for rearing their own brood. The native birds, not to be beaten, visited the box later in the season and paid the Starlings out by eating their young ones. Butcher-Birds (*Cracticus destructor*), Mr. Black states, frequently take his young chickens.—D. LE SOUËF. Melbourne, 30/7/15.

* *Emu*, vol. xi., p. 105.



Le Souef, William Henry Dudley. 1915. "Great Brown Kingfishers and starlings." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 15(2), 85–85. <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu915085>.

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