

Even in these early days (about 1834) Bennett had cause to lament the rapid disappearance from settled parts of "the kangaroo, Emu, and Lyre-Pheasant," while the writer (in the "Penny Cyclopædia," 1839) to whom I am indebted for much of the above information "hopes that some spirited individual will not suffer the Lyre-tail to become extinct, but will bestir himself to import these magnificent birds into our country (England), where they would form a striking addition to our aviaries." This beneficent hope was, unfortunately, doomed never to be fulfilled—for obvious reasons.

Although the Lyre-Bird (*Menura superba*) is tending to some extent to place its huge nest in elevated situations—such as tall stumps, tree-ferns, &c., it still breeds in many instances on or close to the ground. The two nests, recently photographed, were built—one in the heart of dense ferns and the other in perfectly open forest recently devastated by a bush-fire. One nest was well concealed and the other totally destitute of cover. In both instances, however, the egg and the loud-voiced chick were quite at the mercy of prowling foxes. In another instance the nest was built at the butt of a tree-fern, again quite destitute of cover, and, from its great size, a most conspicuous object. Many other birds, at times, exhibit the same want of caution in the selection of a nesting-site. Thus, the common Magpie (Crow-Shrike) has been known to build its conspicuous nest on a heap of road-metal.

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### Some Bird Notes from Bega.

BY H. V. EDWARDS, R.A.O.U., BEGA, N.S.W.

THE White-browed Wood-Swallows arrived here about the middle of this month (October), as they do pretty regularly. Not very long after their advent the big brown chafer beetles began to emerge from the ground. These beetles now annually defoliate the finest gum-trees in many districts. In early years on Monaro, N.S.W., I only remember them as appearing sparsely on gum suckers and small gums—chiefly cabbage gum, white gum, and box. Is the reduction in the number of insectivorous birds responsible for the increase in this pest?

Quail have also put in an appearance. I found one (of the Stubble variety, *Coturnix pectoralis*) impaled by the neck on the top (barb) wire of a fence. It had flown directly into a barb, and was just beginning to decompose when found.

The Cormorants are arriving from their breeding-grounds contemporaneously with the stirring of mullet fry in the ponds and rivers and the awakening of aquatic life generally.

The Oriole (*Oriolus viridis*) arrived in August. These birds were rather troublesome in orchards last summer. I also saw them feeding on the purple-black berries of a species of laurel. The



spring traps set by rabbiters seem to capture incidentally a good many birds. I found a White-backed Magpie caught by the leg, which was almost severed. I completed the severance without protest from the bird, and it flew off; but in another instance I found one of these birds with its beak cut clean off, not far from the root. It could not eat, and died a day or so after discovery. In another instance a fairly large black snake, furious at its detention, was found imprisoned in the jaws of a rabbit trap.

*The Soldier-Bird.*—Professor Newton, "Dictionary of Birds," page 428, makes a curious misstatement regarding the Sanguineous Honey-eater or "Blood-Bird" (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*), which, he says, is "called 'Soldier-Bird' by the colonists owing to the colouring of its plumage—crimson or scarlet." It is, of course, the Garrulous Honey-eater (*Myzantha garrula*) which is known as "Soldier-Bird," from its pugnacious disposition. By the way, at a time when the whey from cheese factories was allowed to remain outside in open barrels, &c. (to be subsequently fed to hand-reared calves), the "Soldier-Birds" in some South Coastal (N.S.W.) districts manifested a strange fondness for this by-product, and many of the birds fell into the receptacles and were drowned. This winter—a very dry one—these bold birds, with Magpie-Larks, Common Magpies (Crow-Shrike), Black-and-White Fantails, &c., are drinking from my horse's water-tub.

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### Stray Feathers.

**Migration of Crows.**—Lately I have noticed an exceedingly interesting migration of Crows. As many as 2,000 of these birds were seen in one flock, all flying in one direction. They all seemed to be cawing at the same time, and made a noise like a train going through timbered country in gloomy weather. I have never noticed such a large flock apparently migrating before. It is probably due to the dry weather and the consequent lack of water.—J. R. CHISHOLM. Prairie, North Queensland, 25/4/20.

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**Native Companions.**—Probably owing to the severe drought in New South Wales, two fine specimens of Native Companions (*Antigone australasiana*) visited Mr. R. Sammon's farm, Boorhaman, during September, 1919. These two birds became very tame, strutting about the homestead paddocks, and were a source of pleasure to the Sammon family, who fed them with wheat. Early in December one of the birds disappeared, probably being shot. The remaining bird is still to be seen gracefully strolling around. The writer, on 31st May, 1920, drove within 15 yards of this lonely bird. The Native Companion was a common species in this district years ago, Mr. Sammon informing the writer that these two birds are the first he has seen for 16 years or so. What



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