

of Rufous Whistlers building their nest quite close to the house, also four pairs of Blue Wrens, three pairs of Scarlet-breasted Robins, one pair of Flame-breasted Robins, and endless Tits and Wattled Honey-eaters, Fly-catchers, Yellow-faced Honey-eaters, &c., &c. One day I noticed a very small White-throated Fly-catcher building its delicate little nest in a low bush. She was so tame that I could sit within six feet of her and watch her working. This season has been a bad one generally, and a good many birds are not nesting at all, and many tragedies of young dead birds have occurred amongst the few nests I have found here. Almost every Magpie's nest I found this season failed to rear its young, the little bird being found dead beneath the tree when half-fledged; food evidently was scarce. A Little Falcon swooped down above a Magpie's nest, and, without pausing a second in its flight, snatched a nestling in its talons and swept upwards, pursued by the shrieking parent. These Falcons have a chuckling call, which they frequently repeat while sitting on the branch of a tree. They are also keen on catching young rabbits—the more they catch the better.—Mrs. A. NORTON. Walcha (N.S.W.)

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**Invasion of Musk Lorikeets.**—The gardens of Devonport are at present invaded by large flocks of green 'Keets, which seem to have been driven away from the higher plateaux, where they absorb the nectar from blossoming eucalypts, by the severe weather. Although heavy falls of snow have taken place in the high country, down here on the coast the days are still warm and delightful, and the 'Keets are revelling in the sunshine and in the feast of late pears which still remain on some of the tall trees. There is an old tree near me from which the fruit was not gathered, and the birds spend the whole day there, their musical notes being evident quite a distance away. They have no fear, and I have walked up to within a few feet when dozens of them have been on the ground feasting on fallen fruit. Sometimes four or five will surround a single pear, all pegging away together until the spirit of jealousy seizes one, when he immediately attacks the rest, and there is a "rough and tumble" for a few minutes until matters are adjusted. Although in flocks, the pairs still cling together, and it is charming to see a male and female, when they can hold no more sweet fruit, sit on a branch nestling closely and caressing each other with their bills. All appear to be "Musks" (*Glossopsittacus concinnus*); there are no Little Lorikeets (*G. pusillus*) in the flocks which I have examined.—H. STUART DOVE. West Devonport (Tas.), 22/5/20.

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**One Effect of Land Clearing.**—It is stated that Cormorants are largely on the increase, but this may not really be the case, but that the birds from outlying parts are being forced into the more settled parts. When the blacks were plentiful in Central



Queensland they undoubtedly consumed large quantities of Cormorants' eggs, but in the days of the blacks there were numerous large swamps where the birds bred freely. Now, like the blacks, these swamps are gone, and the Cormorants breed there no more. Queensland is fast becoming a "dry" country; by "dry" I mean that the surface water is fast disappearing—not merely for a time, but for good. Thirty or forty years ago we had numerous large creeks, which formed chains of large water-holes and swamps, where the various kinds of waterfowl bred in considerable numbers, and which were teeming with fish, and which even a protracted drought could not dry. What do we find to-day? Where these large holes existed are beds of sand. One can follow the creeks from end to end, even after rain, and not find a drop of water; consequently the fish are restricted in their breeding-grounds, and the Cormorants are forced to remain at those waters that do not dry up, with the result that they are rapidly cleaning the fish out. Nor are the Cormorants the only culprits; the Pelican takes his toll—and it is not a small one.—H. GREENSILL BARNARD, R.A.O.U. Rio Station, Edungalba, Q.

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**The Black-listed Shag.**—While in the Monaro district of New South Wales, in April and May last, I noticed a considerable number of Black Shags fishing in the rivers—probably in quest of the fry of "English" perch, which are fairly abundant. The rivers in that quarter were at one time well stocked with trout—Brown, Loch Leven, and Rainbow—but now, apparently, only the Rainbow trout is present. These fish, in the main, seem to have died out during severe droughts, when the streams became abnormally sluggish, and therefore unsuited for the healthy existence of the trout. Their disappearance cannot fairly be attributed to Cormorants, as the carcasses of many adult fish were found lying near the banks. Yet the Cormorants were, say, 30 years ago, much less numerous in that quarter. The presence of tasty introduced fish has no doubt attracted these birds thither in greater numbers, though they always, to some extent, fed in these streams on the native minnows and young eels. Cormorants have, I think, at any rate two good points—viz., they include the young of the lagoon or river tortoise (*Chelidon longicollis*) and those of the brown eel (*Anguilla reinhardtii*) in their diet. The adults of both tortoise and eel are themselves greedy devourers of the spawn and fry of our valuable food fishes, which, by the way, do not include the dainty and fastidious trout. The latter fish is, I think, too difficult to catch ever to be of much economic value.—H. V. EDWARDS. Bega, N.S.W.

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**Macpherson Range Scrub-Birds.**—In his interesting description of his expedition to the Macpherson Range (*Emu*, April, 1920), Mr. Sid. W. Jackson, R.A.O.U., mentions that specimens of the



Barnard, Henry Greensill. 1920. "One Effect of Land Clearing." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(2), 105–106.  
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