

vestigating in this locality. It seems almost certain that the *Leipoa* living in this apparently isolated and certainly wet locality will show some specialized differences; one would expect that, at least, it will prove to be a new sub-species.

I met one resident living back from the coast in the forest who evidently knew the Noisy Scrub-Bird. He described its loud ascending whistle and its build and colour most accurately. He said he had heard it occasionally in the big timber, close to the spot where we were talking, within the last 18 months. He said it kept to the thick under-bushes in the karri country, and would sometimes, when disturbed, fly up a few feet and cling to the rough bark at the base of the tree-trunks, apparently to enable it to take stock of the intruder, but otherwise it kept close to the ground or in the low bushes. I feel confident that this bird still exists in these extensive untouched forests. Probably it should be searched for at the pairing season, when it will be calling; otherwise the finding of it in these immense forests is next to impossible.

BIRDS OBSERVED DURING THE VISIT OF THE R.A.O.U.
TO THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT—OFFICIAL
REPORT.

BY S. A. WHITE, C.M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U.

THE period over which the following observations were made ran into barely a week. The area worked extended from Cape Naturaliste in the north to the Margaret River (although observations were made down to Cape Leeuwin). Our field extended from the sea on the west for some distance inland to the east. The country varied much in character. First there were sand dunes in places facing the ocean, and at other times rugged rocky coast-line, at the back of which was invariably a narrow belt of dwarf vegetation characteristic of such an exposed situation. Further back, undulating country covered in forest trees and undergrowth. In places deep ravines extended to the very coast-line, and here and there down these ravines small streams found their way to the sea. The rainfall in the winter months is very heavy, and during our stay the days were bright and often warm; yet there was not one night that rain did not fall, but not a sign of water lying about could be seen next morning. But this can easily be understood when it is seen that the country consists mostly of a light sandy soil over a very porous limestone, with in places a network of caves underneath.

The vegetation was striking, for there were big forest trees stretching over vast areas of country—first of all the jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), karri (*E. diversicolor*); but the most widely distributed tree is the so-called "red gum" (*E. calophylla*), the latter bearing a wealth of white blossoms. The undergrowth consists of a wonderful growth of flowering shrubs and plants, forming much food for bird-life. First of all the banksias play a

big part, some of them bearing gigantic flowers, such as *Banksia prionotes*. There is a large number of wattles (*Acacia*), the seeds of which form good food for many birds. A very ornate shrub, growing to 25 feet, is one of the *Agonis*, locally called "peppermint." There are also many "paper-barks" or tea-trees (*Melaleuca*). Several species of *Grevillea* and *Hakea* (including the "wooden pear"—a tree often over 20 feet high) produce seeds which may be eaten by birds. Even the "blackboys" or grass-trees (*Xanthorrhœa*) throw up their flowering spikes, which, in full blossom, produce much honey for the Honey-eaters, and the seed is much sought after by the Black Cockatoos. Closer to the ground are the cycads (*Macrozamia fraseri*), also no end of shrubs and plants bearing honey-laden flowers and also berries. The vegetation of the coastal fringe is composed principally of stunted *Melaleuca* and *Acacia*, forming a dense cover for such birds as the Bristle-Bird (*Sphenura*).

The following list of birds observed would not be an exhaustive one, for it would be impossible to compile a list embracing all the species in so short a time. I have to thank many members of the party for their ready assistance in comparing lists and giving information. I wish to thank especially Mr. J. Neil M'Gilp for his valuable notes upon the nesting birds. Mr. M'Gilp is a very painstaking and keen oologist, and accomplished some good work during our visit to the south-western district.

The birds observed and field notes made are as follow:—

Phaps elegans. Brush Bronze-winged Pigeon.—The writer flushed two of these birds from the dense tea-tree scrub on the coast-line near Cape Naturaliste. They appeared to be of an exceptionally ruddy coloration.

Sterna bergii. Crested Tern.—Small parties seen in many places along the coast-line.

Bruchigavia novæ-hollandiæ. Silver Gull.—Numbers were seen all along the coast; sometimes they were in large parties of from forty to one hundred or more.

Charadrius ruficapillus. Red-capped Dottrel.—Several pairs were seen on the sandy beaches of the bays along the coast-line. Nests containing both eggs and young were found just above high water mark.

Charadrius cucullatus. Hooded Dottrel.—One or two pairs met with on the sandy beaches.

Burhinus grallarius. Southern Stone-Plover.—Heard calling at night in the clearings.

Notophox novæ-hollandiæ. White-fronted Heron.—Fairly plentiful through the district where water was found.

Demigretta sacra. Blue Reef-Heron.—Met with along the coast-line. One party reported that they had been found nesting under the rocks (?).

Phalacrocorax varius. Pied Cormorant.—Met with on the rocks along the coast-line.

Phalacrocorax melanoleucus. Little Cormorant.—Not plentiful; only an odd bird here and there met with.

Astur fasciata. Australian Goshawk.—Recorded by several members of the party.

Uroaëtus audax. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—Not many seen; it does not seem to be a common bird.

Hieracidea occidentalis. Western Brown Hawk.—An odd bird here and there was met with in the forest country.

Pandion haliaëtus. Osprey.—The historical nest at Cape Mentelle was found to have been occupied this season, for broken egg-shells were seen in the nest.*

Glossopsitta porphyrocephala. Purple-crowned Lorikeet.—A few of these birds were moving about in small parties.

Zanda baudini. White-tailed Black Cockatoo.—A number of these birds were met with in the forest country. The writer observed as many as forty in one flock. They were feeding upon the seed of the banksia, and were also tearing the blossoms to pieces in search of the young seeds in the cones. Their crops and stomachs were distended with particles of the tender white seeds.

Barnardius semitorquatus. Twenty-eight or Yellow-collared Parrot.—This bird was not as numerous as one would expect; only a few examples came under notice.

Purpureicephalus spurius. Red-capped Parrot.—These birds were not numerous, and only a few examples were seen.

Dacelo gigas. Great Brown Kingfisher.—This bird was introduced about 1896, and it has now practically spread all over the south-western district. It seems quite at home, and thriving well. It is wonderful what a large scope of country it has now taken possession of.

Halcyon sanctus. Western Sacred Kingfisher.—Quite a common bird, but does not seem to warrant a specific separation.

Merops ornatus. Australian Bee-eater.—Very numerous; seen congregating up to a dozen upon the tops of dry trees.

Cacomantis flabelliformis. Western Fan-tailed Cuckoo.—Reported by some of the party as having been seen.

Lamprococyx plagusus. Western Bronze-Cuckoo.—Observed upon several occasions.

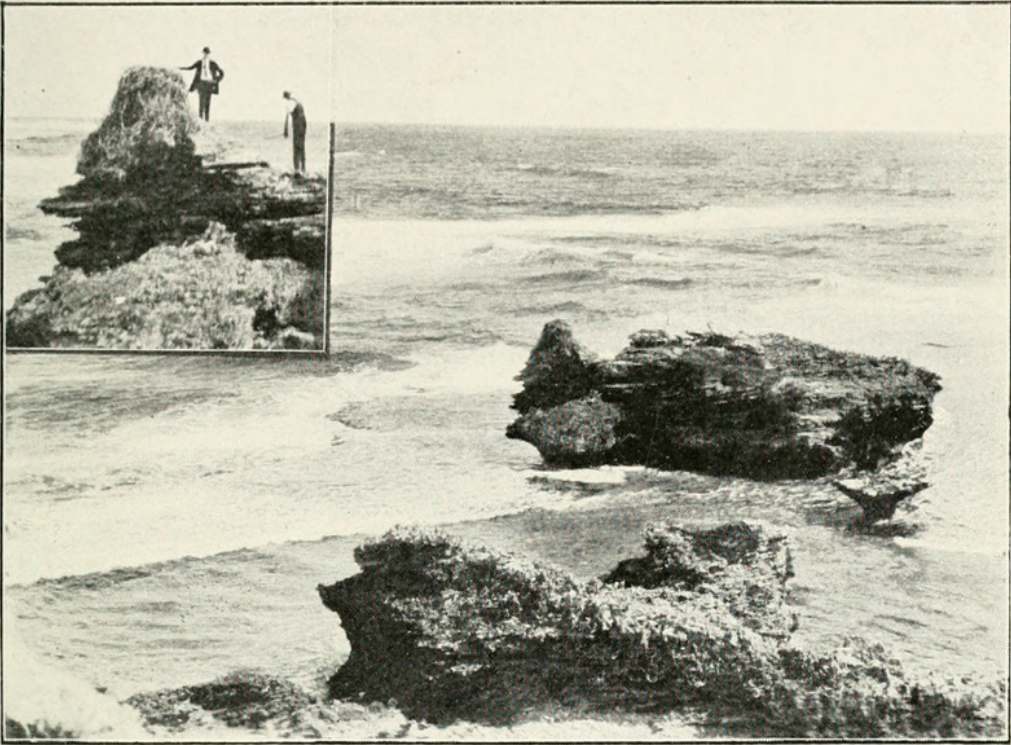
Hylochelidon nigricans neglecta. Western Tree-Martin.—Met with in the forest country.

Lagenoplastes ariel. Fairy Martin.—Not plentiful; seen upon several occasions.

Petroica multicolor campbelli. Western Scarlet-breasted Robin.—Quite a common bird; seen flitting about amongst the timbered country, and there is no doubt it was nesting.

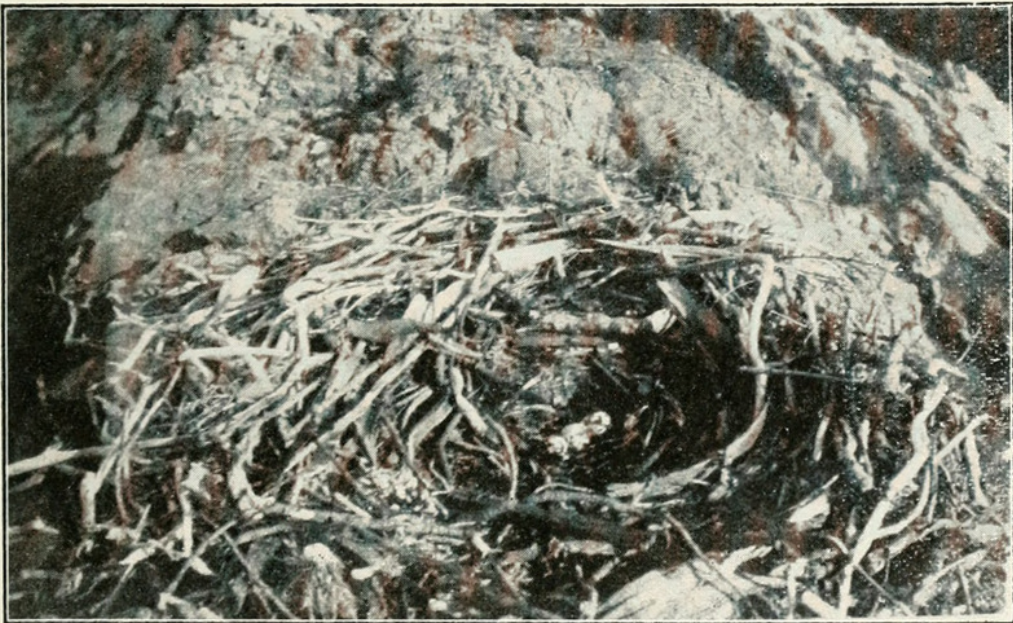
Gerygone culicivora. Western Fly-eater.—A very common bird, found in many situations—in the forest country and out in the open in the low vegetation between the timber and the sea. It is a very

* The photograph of the Osprey's nest with three eggs was taken on the South Keppel Is., Queensland, by Mr. E. M. Stretton, Rockhampton, and was communicated by D. S. A. Drain, Gracemere, Rockhampton.



Nest of Osprey, Cape Mentelle, W.A.
The inset shows two members of the party at the nest.

PHOTOS. BY H. E. HURST, R.A.O.U., GEELONG.



Osprey's Nest with Three Eggs on South Keppel Island, Queensland.

PHOTO. BY E. M. STRETTON, ROCKHAMPTON.

lively little bird, seems to be always on the move, and possesses a most wonderful range of notes, which are loud and clear for so small a bird. Mr. M'Gilp kindly supplied me with the following notes of a nest he observed :—" Nest pear-shaped ; entrance near the top, with a small hood, having the usual tail-like appendage at bottom of nest. Formed of fine shreds of bark, grass, and spiders' cocoons ; inside lined at bottom with fine grass and feathers, attached to small branches of a mistletoe (*Loranthus*) about 20 feet from the ground."

Pachycephala pectoralis occidentalis. Western Thickhead.—Found all through the timber country ; found nesting. A nest observed by Mr. M'Gilp is as follows :—A cup-shaped structure formed of very fine rootlets and a few leaves, placed 16 feet from the ground in a small sapling overgrown by a creeper.

Eopsaltria griseogularis. Grey-breasted Shrike-Robin.—Found in pairs all through the timbered country. They were nesting at the time of our visit, and nests with young birds were found.

Rhipidura preissi. Western Fantail.—Quite a common bird, and its strange little soft note would be heard very often in the deep ravines near the sea.

Graucalus novæ-hollandiæ. Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.—Often seen, and a pair was found nesting in a red gum (*Eucalyptus calophylla*).

Acanthiza apicalis. Broad-tailed Tit-Warbler.—A very common bird, met with in almost every locality—sometimes high up in the forest trees, at others near the ground. They were nesting while we were there. One nest was composed of strips of bark fastened together by cobweb. It was dome-shaped, with entrance high up, placed in a sapling 13 feet from the ground.

Geobasileus chrysorrhous. Yellow-rumped Tit-Warbler.—Quite a common bird, and several nests were seen. One had been added to for some time, and there must have been three or four nests attached. Mr. M'Gilp observed a nest with two eggs and one of the Bronze-Cuckoo.

Sericornis maculata. Spotted Scrub-Wren.—A common bird in the thick, dwarf vegetation along the coast-line. Mr. M'Gilp found three nests, all containing young. I fancied this bird to be different from *S. m. osculans*, but upon comparing a series I find that it would be impossible to separate them, so that *maculata* has a wide range.

Malurus splendens. Banded Wren-Warbler.—This bird was not nearly so plentiful as the writer expected it to be. In 1889, during my first visit to Western Australia, these birds were exceedingly plentiful. Probably the domestic cat gone wild has accounted for their disappearance. These birds were nesting. Mr. M'Gilp discovered a nest with three eggs. It was the usual dome-shaped structure placed in a thick tea-tree three feet six inches from the ground, constructed of soft grass lined with fur and feathers.

Sphenura longirostris. Long-billed Bristle-Bird.—The writer made a determined effort to locate this bird, but, other than noting a call which he feels sure was that of this bird, and the tracks on the sand in the low scrub south of Cape Naturaliste (the tracks were identical with those made by the South Australian form), nothing more was recorded ; but there is little doubt the bird is still there.

Colluricincla rufiventris. Buff-bellied Shrike-Thrush.—This bird was met with in the timbered country, but was not plentiful anywhere. The habits of this form seem identical with those of the South Australian bird, but the note is not so deep or rich as that of *C. harmonica*.

Neositta pileata. Black-capped Tree-runner.—This bird was reported as having been seen in the timbered country, but did not come under the writer's notice.

Climacteris rufa. Rufous Tree-creeper.—Only seen once, in the timber country.

Zosterops gouldi. Green-backed White-eye.—A very plentiful bird, especially along the sea-coast, where it was nesting amongst the tea-tree and low shrubs. Its call is a short, mournful one, like that of the other members of this family of birds. Its bright coloration is very noticeable. Several nests were seen containing eggs. The position of the nest must vary very much, for the writer saw a nest 20 feet from the ground in a large tea-tree, one 12 feet, and Mr. M'Gilp tells me he discovered a nest of this bird "ten feet from the ground, in an overhanging tea-tree bough; a compact, cup-shaped structure, composed of dry grass bound together with fibrous roots and tendrils"; in some instances cobweb is used.

Dieæum hirundinaceum. Mistletoe-Bird.—Seen only upon one occasion.

Pardalotus striatus. Red-tipped Pardalote.—This bird is identical with the South Australian bird. The writer fails to see the slightest variation.

Melithreptus chloropsis. Western White-naped Honey-eater.—The birds had paired off, no doubt owing to the nesting season, and often their loud musical note was heard in the tree-tops.

Acanthorhynchus superciliosus. White-browed Spinebill.—This charming little bird was found all over the country—in the big timber, brush, and heath-like country on the coast—and their sharp note was to be heard all through the day. They were often seen clinging to the large bottle-shaped banksia flowers. These birds were nesting during our visit. Two nests were found; one contained one young one and the other two.

Glyciphila fulvifrons. Tawny-fronted Honey-eater.—Recorded from the coastal belt.

Stigmatops indistincta. Brown Honey-eater.—A common bird on the coast-line, where every ravine running down to the sea was clothed in thick undergrowth, and here these birds had their homes. Their beautiful notes were much admired for their full and liquid silvery ring. The birds were nesting at the time of our visit. Mr. M'Gilp gave me the following notes in reference to a nest taken by him:—"A neat, cup-shaped structure of dried grass, bark, and spiders' cocoons, beautifully lined with *Zamia*-palm wool, forming a felt-like lining. It contained two eggs, and was placed four feet from the ground in the top of a flowering shrub not far from the seashore."

Ptilotis sonora. Singing Honey-eater.—This bird was reported as having been seen by members of the party.

Meliornis longirostris. Long-billed Honey-eater.—A plentiful bird, especially along the coast-line. The writer is doubtful of this being a good species, for many birds in South Australia have just as long a bill. They were nesting, and Mr. M'Gilp kindly gives me the following notes :—" Nest found with two eggs ; cup-shaped, formed of flower-stems, lined with grasses and flower down, placed four feet from the ground in a low tea-tree."

Myzantha obscura. Dusky Miner.—Only one bird was seen.

Anthochæra carunculata. Red Wattle-Bird.—These birds were fairly plentiful, and they were calling in their harsh tone. The flowering banksias seemed to be attracting them. Did not see or hear of their nesting.

Anellobia lunulata. Little Wattle-Bird.—These birds were very numerous, and in habits and call resembled the more eastern Brush Wattle-Bird (*A. chrysoptera*). They were nesting at the time, and a nest with its single egg came under observation.

Anthus australis. Australian Pipit.—Almost every clearing or open space had a pair or so of these birds.

Zonæginthus oculus. Red-eared Finch.—We met with these beautiful little birds on the coastal belt, where they were rare. A pair was building a nest at the time of our departure.

Corvus coronoides. Australian Raven.—Not plentiful ; one would not expect them to be so in a heavily-timbered country.

Strepera plumbea. Leaden Crow-Shrike.—These birds were occasionally seen and heard, but they did not give one a chance to make any observation, for they were very timid and wary.

Cracticus leucopterus. White-winged Butcher-Bird.—Very few of these birds were seen. An occasional pair or odd bird would be met with in the forest country. The nesting season seemed to be over at the time of our visit.

Gymnorhina dorsalis. Varied Magpie.—This is a very puzzling bird, and one would require a good long series to give a definite opinion upon the colour-phases. The mottled coloration of the immature bird is very remarkable, and the writer is of the opinion that this bird is worthy of specific difference.

The party under the leadership of the president, Mr. C. A. Barnard, visited Ellenbrook, a few miles south of the Cave House at Yallingup, and recorded in addition :—

Platycercus icterotis. Yellow-cheeked Parrot.—One bird, not fully adult, seen in low scrub close to the coast.

Lophoëtinia isura. Square-tailed Kite.—It was strange to see this inland bird so far south, but the party, including the president, Mr. C. A. Barnard, who is familiar with the bird, had a good view.

Mr. A. J. Campbell spent a week in the forests of Leeuwin Land, where he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Lightly, of the Kauri Timber Station, Barabup, near Nannup. From that centre Mr. Campbell was enabled to explore in various directions, but no trace of the Scrub-Bird (*Atrichornis*) was observed, nor had

the oldest timber-getters in the district heard anything of it. Birds generally, both for numbers and species, were remarkably scarce. The reason was not far to seek. The forests bore ample evidence of fire, both recent and remote. However, one interesting sight was a flock of about 30 Black Cockatoos (the White-tailed species, *baudini*) seen on the ground by the wayside. As the birds rose and flew from tree to tree, dispersing, they uttered quaint cries like that of a captured domestic hen. Although the bush-fires had played havoc with the fauna, the flora had been greatly refreshed, as evinced by the abundance and beauty of remarkable flowers seen everywhere.

On the return journey Mr. Dudley Le Souëf and Mr. A. J. Campbell together spent a week-end with Mr. Bruce W. Leake and family at Woolundra, which is 140 miles inland from Perth. The district was typical jam-wood (*Acacia*) and salmon gum (*Eucalyptus*) country, and was brightened by many flowering bushes. One "Daisy of the Desert," by its elegance and keeping qualities, threatens to rival the fame of the flannel-flower of New South Wales. Specimens kept fresh, in water, for a fortnight after they were gathered. Birds were not numerous, but a few were observed nesting about the homestead, notably Grallinas or Magpie-Larks, which had a curious and very distinctive call compared with that given by the same species in eastern parts. The Black-tailed Parrot (*Polytelis melanura*) is reported as occasionally seen in the district. One has since been obtained.

NOTES ON BIRDS OBSERVED IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, FROM PERTH NORTHWARDS TO GERALDTON.

BY EDWIN ASHBY, F.L.S., M.B.O.U., WITTUNGA, BLACKWOOD,
S.A.

MR. J. W. Mellor and the writer visited Geraldton, 370 miles north of Perth; but, except for one day at Geraldton and part of a day at Moora, our observations were made separately. By this means we were able to cover more ground, each visiting different localities. We beg to acknowledge the courtesy of the Western Australian Government and the officials of the Midland Railway Co. in granting us facilities without which it would have been impossible to cover as much ground in the limited time at our disposal.

The occurrence of two rare species of Sandpiper at Dongara is interesting, and suggests that these may possibly be regular visitors to the North-West coast of Australia, and only accidental visitors on the eastern side of the continent. The replacement of *Barnardius semitorquatus* by *B. zonarius* or its ally such a short distance inland and northwards is remarkable; also, the fact that the Purple-backed Wren-Warbler (*Malurus assimilis*) takes the place of the Red-winged Wren-Warbler (*M. elegans*) at Dongara and Geraldton suggests that the latter has a limited range. The discovery of the Yellow-tinted Honey-eater (*Ptilotis flavesceus*)



White, Samuel Albert. 1921. "Birds Observed During the Visit of the R.A.O.U. to the south-Western Districts - Official Report." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(3), 124–130.

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