

bird, I feel sure it will interest many readers to learn that the bird still frequents, as well as breeds in, southern Victoria. The birds usually arrive here about June, leaving again towards the end of the year, although a few pairs seem to stay on right through the year. The largest number I have seen together was in 1919, when I came across a mob of sixteen; but as a rule* they seem to stay in pairs. I have had the good fortune to notice several nests (if such they may be called), all containing one egg only. One egg I found on a large flat stone; another between two large stones on the top of a stony rise; and two others alongside small tussocks. The nesting months are from August to December. During the season 1920, although I did not notice any eggs, I know of four different young birds having been seen. The young Bustard has some peculiar calls, and on being surprised it utters two quick barks, which sound like the bark of a young dog. Another call is a long-drawn-out, mournful whistle, which can be heard for a considerable distance. A bird which I have mounted (shot many years ago) stands just over three feet high. Unfortunately, there is no record of weight or measurements.—J. K. RUSSELL, R.A.O.U. Barunah Plains, Hesse, Vic.

* * *

The White Honey-Eater.—One of the most interesting finds of the R.A.O.U. in Western Australia was the White or Alfred Honey-eater (*Lacustroica whitei*), also called the Inconspicuous Honey-eater, owing to its small size and dull mousey-grey colour. Resembling an *Acanthiza*, it is little wonder that the bird has rarely been procured. The first specimen—a male—was obtained in 1909 by Mr. F. Lawson Whitlock at Lake Way, in the East Murchison district. Mr. North described the bird as a new genus and species—*Lacustroica whitei*, after Mr. H. L. White's son Alfred. A full description appeared in the *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. xxvi., p. 138, and a coloured plate of the bird appeared in *The Emu*, vol. ix.; but this plate is somewhat misleading, as there is a certain amount of yellowish tinge about the upper surface of the birds. This is not in the live bird, there being no "adornment" whatever in its feathers. The species was not included in the list in the last issue of *The Emu* owing to lack of identification until after *The Emu* had gone to press. The bird was shot in low bushes in very dry country, and its habits and actions resemble those of an *Acanthiza*. The taking of the bird near Ajana extends the range of the bird a considerable distance westward on the Murchison, and nearer to the coast-line.—JOHN W. MELLOR. Locksley (S.A.), 27/2/21.

* * *

The Gracemere Bird Reserve.—At the invitation of Mr. R. S. Archer, who has been patron of the Central Queensland Native Birds' Protection Association since its inception, a party of members of the association recently journeyed to Mr. Archer's homestead. After enjoying the hospitality of Mr. Archer and

Mrs. Archer, the members of the party took advantage of the visit to inspect the boundaries of what is known as Archer's Reserve, which, including the mere, has an area of about 1,000 acres, and is one of the first areas to be proclaimed as a sanctuary for bird-life in Queensland. Only those closely associated with the movement can realize what an immense advantage has been the fine sheet of water, known as the "Mere," of long-established permanence even in dry seasons, and the surrounding country also contained in the reserve, in preserving and perpetuating the water-birds of this country, apart from the historic aspect of the locality, where there was ended, in 1853, the overland trip of Messrs. Charles and William Archer, a notable circumstance in the settlement of Central Queensland, and where there still stands, in an excellent state of preservation, the home of the Archers. A place more charmingly situated it would be difficult to imagine. Thousands upon thousands of all kinds of birds, large and small, and of great variety, frequent this delightful neighbourhood in complete safety from the gunmen, some of whom have at times been very strongly tempted to take a shot; but, as a rule, the reserve is respected, and the birds themselves know it well.

* * *

A Hawk Irruption.—Every year, in January or February, we have a wave of Hawks, which, I think, are mostly Collared Sparrow-Hawks. I fancy they are young birds migrating from inland, somewhere where people and guns are not, for they simply rush for and take little chickens, and always try to get the Finches in the aviary on my verandah. Lately one, trying to catch Finches on a lemon-tree, came within a few feet of me. We did not shoot them, but in letters from my neighbours one mentioned shooting nine and others mention a plague of Hawks after the chickens and little Turkeys, that simply had to be shot to stop their carnage. Probably from now on only odd ones will be observed. Talking of birds travelling, last killing morning about 100 Crows stopped to eat the offal, and made a dreadful noise all day. Next morning they were all gone, the only ones remaining being the few old residents who are always about, and who take eggs when they can find them. They show marvellous instinct in disappearing when a man goes out with a gun. Really, I am sure we do not average more than two killed by shooting each year. The Butcher-Birds (Crow-Shrikes) are very numerous and tame here, and come to be fed. One day I killed a small snake, and a Butcher-Bird came and dragged it all over the place, so I cut it into little sections, and he carried it off to his family. They sing gloriously nearly all the year round here.—(MRS.) A. BLACK. Pajingo, Charters Towers (Q.)

* * *

Four Eggs in a Clutch of the Desert Chat.—A nest with a clutch of four eggs of the Desert Chat (*Ashbyia lovensis*) was discovered on 14/12/20; locality, Muligan paddock, about 20 miles north



1921. "The Gracemere Bird Reserve." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(4), 242–243.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu920239k>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/35247>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu920239k>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/380830>

Holding Institution

American Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

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>.