

Some Birds of Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory

By A. J. CAMPBELL, C.M.B.O.U., F.A.O.U.

With Observations from the Diary of WM. McLENNAN,
R.A.O.U.

Notwithstanding the pressing, many-sided demands made on an extremely busy pastoralist's life, Mr. H. L. White, "Bell-trees," N.S.W., has found time for thought to endeavour to link up the avi-fauna of the northern parts of Australia. He is greatly to be commended for his whole-hearted enterprise, not to mention its considerable expense.

He has had in the field at Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria country, Mr. H. G. Barnard; in Arnhem Land, Mr. Wm. McLennan; and in the further North-West, or Kimberley Country, Mr. Gerald Hill. This year (1921) he again equipped Mr. McLennan to explore, in search for "missing links," Groote Eylandt (Great, or Big Island), on the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Groote Eylandt is a large square-shaped island (roughly about 40 miles square) and about 30 miles off the mainland (Arnhem Land), with which it is connected by numerous small islets. For plan of locality, see *Emu*, vol. xvi., p. 118.

Mr. McLennan left Thursday Island with assistants and boat on 20th April for a journey of about 290 miles across the great Gulf. After touching at Batavia River and Duyphen Point, the party, after a voyage of five days, eventually sighted Groote Eylandt on the 25th April. On the 4th July, the island was left, and a return commenced to Thursday Island, which was reached after five days of mostly heavy weather. Therefore, two months were occupied in exploring Groote Eylandt and its vicinity. The amount of bird-life was disappointing; yet, not so, if one considers the season of the year—winter time: "dead low water," so far as birds are concerned; too late for autumn migrants, too early for spring visitors. From the description of the country given by Mr. McLennan (see appendix), the island appeared most favourable for numerous birds at the proper season; say, during October, November and December.

However, Mr. McLennan, notwithstanding a vicious sting in the eye by an ant affecting his sight, onslaught of mosquitoes, and evil eyes of crocodiles and cunning natives, did remarkably well in procuring 70 species of birds—all perfect skins, and mostly in perfect plumage, because newly moulted. These Mr. H. L. White has kindly permitted me to examine before he handed the consignment over to the National Museum, Melbourne, to be incorporated in the ever-increasing and valuable

"H. L. White Collection." Hence the few following critical remarks.

Having dealt with the "Birds from the Gouldian-Gilbert Type-Locality" (Arnhem Land) (see *Emu*, xviii., part 3), I was particularly anxious to see birds from the adjacent large island—Groote Eylandt.

In connection with type localities of several of the "Gouldian-Gilbert" birds, I fell partly into a trap. In turning up Gould's original localities in the *P.Z.S.* (London), I found records, "North-West Australia," and did not recollect that Gould, in his "Handbook," had corrected some of them, or the inference to "Port Essington" (Arnhem Land) until Mr. Gregory Mathews drew attention to the matter as reflecting on his researches. I cannot say more than "I am sorry," and thank him for the correction. No one values more than I the amount of research work Mr. Mathews has done in discovering and correcting references. The species referred to are five, namely:—*Podargus phalaenoides*, *Piezorhynchus nitidus*, *Neositta leucoptera*, *Pardalotus uropygialis*, and *Myzomela erythrocephala*.*

However, Mr. Mathews has not satisfactorily shown that "North-West Australia" is not the type-locality for six of Gould's species, namely—*Turnix castanota*, *Rhipidura isura*, *Myiagra concinna*, *Malurus cruenatus*, *Cracticus argenteus*, and *Tropidorhynchus argenteus*. In the last-mentioned, we have the interesting record by Gould (see "Handbook," i., page 548): "For the first knowledge of this species of *Tropidorhynchus*, science is indebted to the late Mr Bynoe, surgeon of Her Majesty's surveying ship, 'Beagle,' who, on my visiting Sydney, placed his specimens at my disposal; after my return to England, other examples were sent to me by Sir George Grey.

"Bynoe's specimens were obtained during the survey of the *North-West coast*, a portion of Australia the natural productions of which are but little known, and Sir George Grey's during his expedition into the interior, from the same coast."

That does not appear like "Port Essington, Northern Territory!" Then regarding *Cracticus argenteus*, reference to the "Brit. Mus. Cat. Birds," viii., pp. 99-100, indicate that the type came from North-West Australia. Page 100 bears the following record:—

"(a) Juv. sk. N.W. Australia. J. Gould, Esq. (Type of species.)"

Perhaps it matters little ornithologically, because reference to Mr. Gerald Hill's fine photographs in *The Emu*, x., pls. 29 to 34, and to his observations of the country in both the further North-West and Arnhem Land—the physical features are similar, and doubtless their respective avi-fauna varies little.

* Students and others, if sufficiently interested, will accordingly please correct their copies of the above mentioned article.—A.J.C.

Megapodius reinwardt tumulus. Scrub-Fowl.

♂ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 176.

Synoicus australis cervinus. Northern Brown Quail.

♂ ♀ The male is redder above and more finely freckled and barred than the female, as is usually indicated in this species.

Ptilinopus ewingi. Rose-crowned Fruit-Pigeon.

♂ ♂ When in Arnhem Land, 1915, Mr. McLennan saw this beautiful Pigeon but did not procure a specimen. This time he was more fortunate. An examination of a long series in the National Museum, Melbourne indicates that it should be a separate species and not merely a sub-species of *P. regina* (*swainsoni*). It is smaller and the distinctly yellow throat and more yellowish under surface are striking and constant. The great Gould had a good eye for species, and was unlikely to blunder here, much less figure the bird as distinct (see "Birds of Australia," folio v., pl. 55).

Chalcophaps chrysochlora longirostris. Long-billed Green-Pigeon.

♂ ♂ ♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 177.

Phaps chalcoptera consobrina. Northern Bronze-winged Pigeon.

♀ There appears to be a good northern race of the common Bronzewing, which Mr. Gregory Mathews has characterised as *P. c. consobrina*. See "Birds of Australia" (Mathews), i., pl. 35. This specimen agrees with the plate.

Eulabeornis castaneoventris. Chestnut-bellied Rail.

♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 177.

Butorides stagnatilis. Little Mangrove-Bittern.

♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 178.

Tadorna radjah rufitergum. White-headed Sheldrake.

♂ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 178.

Phaethon rubricauda. Red-tailed Tropic-Bird.

♂ ♀ ♀ ♂ ? The unsexed specimen appears to be mature; the others are in more or less immature plumage.

Phaethon lepturus. White-tailed Tropic-Bird.

♀ Almost in mature plumage. This species is the smaller of the two Tropic-Birds.

Mr. McLennan did not actually obtain these birds at Groote Eylandt, but on his return across the Gulf of Carpentaria, when nearing Cape York. The following is from his diary:—

"6/7/21.—Daylight breeze chops round to northward, and we are able to lay on our course again E.N.E. Mid-day a single Red-tailed Tropic-Bird seen. During afternoon wind chops to eastward again, still blowing very strong. This boat is half a submarine—travels more under the water than over it. 6 p.m., wind chops to S.E. and blows stronger than ever. Impossible to sleep.

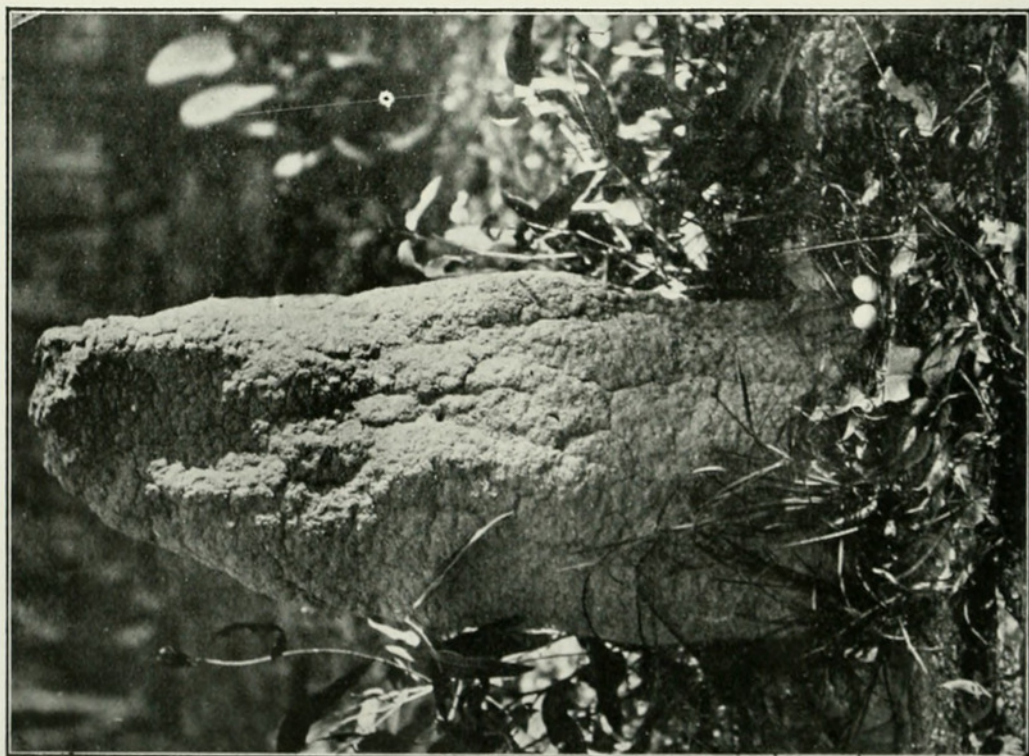
"7/7/21.—3 a.m., wind takes off a good bit and chops round to east; 8 a.m., wind very light and further round to the E. Shake out the reefs in all sails. 10 a.m. Four Red-tailed Tropic-Birds seen. Half an hour later five more appeared. 1 p.m., another Tropic-Bird



(Right) Nest and eggs of Tawny Frogmouth
(*Podargus strigoides*)

(Left) Nest of Partridge-Pigeon (*Geophaps scripta*)

Photos, by W. McLennan, R.A.O.U.



observed. All immature specimens. Small Petrel seen.* Little later another Tropic-Bird circled round, much smaller than the others, and with a very long tail; a fine specimen of the White-tailed. 4 p.m., saw another Petrel, Brown Gannet (*Sula sula*), Crested Tern (*Sterna bergi*); also another Red-tailed Tropic-Bird. Breeze freshens at sunset, and sea very rough again."

Circus assimilis. Spotted Harrier.

♂ A handsome example showing the rich chestnut shoulder patches. It has not been definitely recorded previously for the Gulf of Carpentaria region, although Mr. McLennan believed he saw the species in Torres Strait last year (vide *Emu*, xx., p. 66).

Spiloglaux boobook mixta. Boobook Owl.

♂ ♀ Slightly redder in general colour and whiter about the face than a pair from King River, N.T. Gould states: "I have seen individuals of this Owl from every one of the Australian Colonies, all presenting similar characters, with the exception of those from Port Essington (N.T.), which differ from the others in being a trifle smaller in size and paler in colour." This meets Mathews's *mixta* (Nov. Zool., xviii., p. 255).

Trichoglossus rubritorquis. Red-collared Lorikeet.

♂ The farthest east this Lorikeet has been collected (H. G. Barnard) was at the McArthur River. It would be interesting to learn where it meets *T. septentrionalis*, the northern race of the "Blue Mountain" Parrot (*T. novæ-hollandiæ*).

Cacatua galerita queenslandica. Little White Cockatoo.

♀ Very much smaller than typical birds. Wing 307 mm., as against wing measurement 356 mm. of a female taken at "Bell-trees," New South Wales.

Cacatua sanguinea. Blood-stained Cockatoo.

♂ Typical.

Aprosictus erythropterus coccineopterus. Crimson-winged Parrot.

♂ See former note, *Emu*, xviii., p. 179.

Podargus phalaenoides. Freckled Frogmouth.

♀ ♀ The species of *Podargus* are very puzzling; there appear to be two northern races, a large and a small. These examples are very small for females. We now understand "Port Essington" to be the type locality of *phalaenoides*, which bird Gould states "may be readily distinguished from every other Australian species of *Podargus* by its small size, by the beautiful, delicate and moth-like painting of its plumage, etc." This is the Freckled Frogmouth (*P. phalaenoides*) of Northern Territory. And whoever omits it, as a full species, from any Australian list of birds will have to reckon with future ornithologists.

*The following day, when nearing land, the same species of Petrel was observed in "great numbers." Mr. McLennan suggests it may be the Storm Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*). Considering the latitude, I think this is doubtful. It would have been extremely interesting and important to have settled the identification.—A.J.C.

Alcyone azurea pulchra. Purple Kingfisher.

♂ ♀ Both blackish above, some feathers only tipped with blue; flanks also blackish, not abundantly bluish, as is usual in the species; may be a phase of plumage.

Alycone pusilla. Little Kingfisher.

♀ This is another Gilbertian type-locality bird, which Mr. McLennan did not procure when in Arnhem Land, fortune favouring him on this occasion. The specimen is typical.

Dacelo leachii cervina. Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.

♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 180.

Halcyon macleayi. Forest Kingfisher.

♂ Similar to both N.T. and Cape York examples except for the feathers of the wing coverts, which are tipped with silvery colour of pretty appearance against the blue.

Halcyon sanctus. Sacred Kingfisher.

♂ Immature and slightly smaller than same from New South Wales (type locality).

Halcyon chloris. Mangrove Kingfisher.

♂ ♂ Fine skins, apparently typical.

Merops ornatus. Bee-Eater.

♂ In good plumage. Skin dated 3/7/21. Many of these birds were seen on that date, denoting possibly that all Bee-eaters do not migrate beyond Australia.

Eurostopodus guttatus. Spotted Nightjar.

♂ ♀ Handsome pair; male more spotted on breast, not finely freckled like female. Can hardly distinguish between a bird from Victorian Mallee country and those from Northern Territory. The "H. L. White Collection" possesses a very reddish example from Narromine, N.S.W.

Cacomantis pyrrhophanus dumetorum. Northern Square-tailed Cuckoo.

♂ Typical.

Chalcites basalis. Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo. ♀

Lamprococcyx minutillus. Little Bronze Cuckoo. ♂

Pitta iris. Rainbow Pitta.

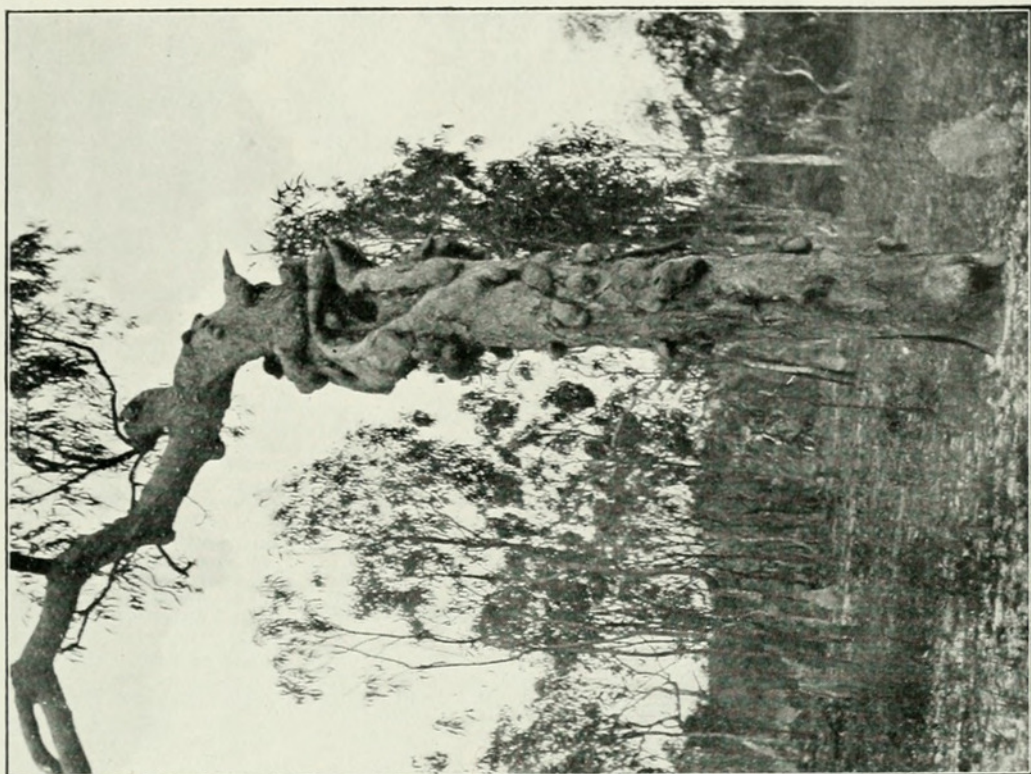
♂ ♀ Examination of a good series in the National Museum shows no difference in this insular pair.

Hylochelidon nigricans. Tree Martin.

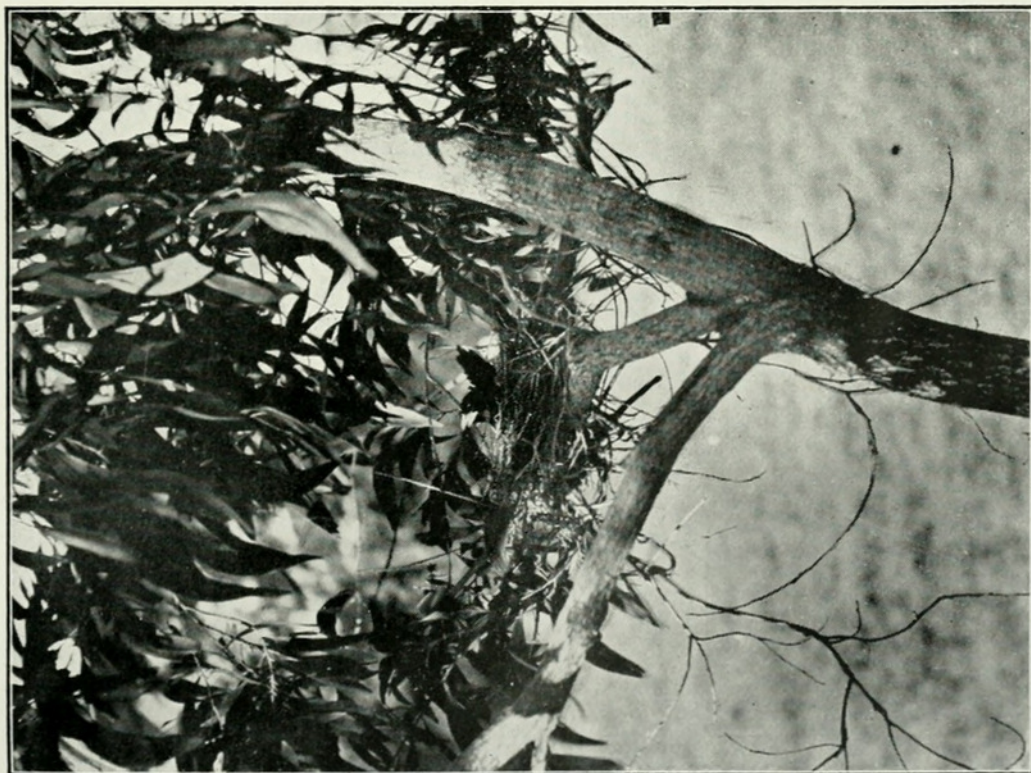
♀ Smaller and paler coloured than typical. See *rogersi*, Mathews, *Austral Avian Record*, i., p. 38.

Microeca flavigaster. Yellow-breasted Flycatcher.

♂ Similar to bird from the type locality (N.T.), which has a buffy olive upper surface, as against brighter coloration (Citrine) of the North Queensland birds. The examination of a larger series has caused me to modify the views expressed in *Emu*, xviii., p. 181.



Nesting site of Fawn-breasted Kingfisher.
(*Dacelo leachii*)



Black-throated Butcher-Bird on nest, Groote Eylandt.

Photos. by W. McLennan, R.A.O.U.

Gerygone magnirostris. Large-billed Fly-eater.

♂ ♀ Typical. See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 181.

Gerygone chloronota. Green-backed Fly-eater.

♂ ♂ ♂ Rare and good examples. See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 182.

Pachycephala melanura. Black-tailed Whistler.

♂ ♀ Same as Northern Territory specimens. The female possesses under parts nearly as bright yellow as in the male. Both sexes are exceedingly handsome.

Pachycephala rufiventris falcata. Northern Whistler. ♂

Pachycephala simplex. Brown Whistler. ♂

Rhipidura dryas. Wood Fantail.

♂ Typical, a good species, and I am of opinion should be separated from *R. rufifrons*, a migratory bird.

Rhipidura setosa isura. Northern Fantail.

♂ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 183.

Myiagra rubecula concinna. Blue Flycatcher.

♂ ♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 183.

Myiagra ruficollis. Broad-billed Flycatcher. ♀

Piezorhynchus alecto nitidus. Shining Flycatcher. ♂

Graucalus novæ-hollandiæ. Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.

♀ Trifle lighter coloured above than typical.

Graucalus hypoleucus. White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike.

♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 183.

Campephaga tricolor. White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater. ♀

Campephaga leucomela. Pied Caterpillar-eater. ♂

Pomatostomus rubeculus. Red-breasted Babbler.

♂ Typical of northern species.

Cisticola exilis lineocapilla. Grass-Warbler.

♀ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 183.

Megalurus galactotes. Tawny Grass-bird.

♂ Typical.

Malurus melanocephalus cruentatus. Red-backed Wren-Warbler.

♂ ♂ See former remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 184.

Artamus leucorhynchus. White-rumped Wood-Swallow.

♀ Slightly smaller than typical.

Artamus minor. Little Wood-Swallow.

♀ ? Slightly lighter coloured than typical.

Colluricincla brunnea. Brown Shrike-Thrush.

♂ ♂ Typical. See further remarks, *Emu*, xviii., p. 184.

Zosterops lutea. Yellow White-eye.

♀ Same as N.T. birds. My former note (*Emu*, xviii., p. 185) may be considered somewhat ambiguous. The thought I intended to convey was that *hecla*, from Kimberley District, and

probably *tribulationis*, because from the same district as *hecla*, were both synonymous with Gould's *lutea*.

Dicaeum hirundinaceum. Mistletoe-Bird.

♂ Slightly smaller than typical.

Pardalotus rubricatus uropygialis. Chestnut-rumped Diamond-Bird.

♂ ♀ ♀ These specimens possess the golden (cadmium yellow) upper tail coverts typical of N.T. birds. For further remarks, see *Emu*, xviii., p. 185.

Myzomela erythrocephala. Red-headed Honey-eater. ♂ ♂

Conopophila albogularis. White-throated Honey-eater. ♀

Stigmatops indistincta. Brown Honey-eater.

♂ Small in size for male of this species.

Stomiopera unicolor. White-gaped Honey-eater.

♀ Typical.

Tropidorhynchus argenticeps. Silvery-crowned Friar-Bird. ♂

Philemon citreogularis sordidus. Little Friar-Bird. ♀

Taniopygia castanotis. Chestnut-eared Finch.

♂ ♀ Almost typical.

Stizoptera annulosa. Black-ringed Finch.

♂ ♀ Typical with *black* rump, not *white* as in *bichenovii*.

Donacola castaneothorax. Chestnut-breasted Finch.

♀ Very pale (pinkish-buff) breast.

Oriolus sagittatus affinis. Northern Oriole.

♀ ♀ Typical of northern race.

Oriolus flavocinctus. Yellow Oriole.

♂ See former remarks, *Emu* xviii., p. 188.

Sphecotheres flaviventris. Yellow-bellied Fig-Bird.

♂ Typical.

Corvus cecilaë. Crow.

♂ It seems a very far cry from Nullarbor Plains, Southern Australia, to Groote Eylandt, in the Northern Territory. Yet Crows respectively collected at these localities by Messrs. F. L. Whitlock and W. McLennan are visually apparently similar.

Cracticus nigrogularis picatus. Pied Butcher-Bird.

♂ ♂ Imm. The immature specimen shows brownish instead of the black portions of plumage, especially on the throat and chest (date when taken, 5/5/21).

Gymnorhina tibicen eylandtensis (H. L. White)*.

♂ ♀ and ♂ ♂ Imm. The old pair is exceedingly handsome and distinctive in their newly moulted plumage. There is a bluish-black sheen about the blacks, especially on the mantle of the male, while the whites are the purest. The two immature males are in mottled brown and blackish plumage, except the white upper tail coverts and white portions of tail.

* Mr. H. L. White has more fully described these specimens on a former page of this issue, p. 163

FIELD NOTES from Diary of W. McLENNAN, R.A.O.U.

1st May, 1921.—Turn out at daylight; breakfast, and go ashore. Pick out a place to camp and get Eric and the boys to rig up old tent and fly. Go inland eastward along edge of swampy country for about a mile to small mangrove-fringed creek. Bird life scarce. Brown Honey-eater, Ground Doves (*Geopelia humeralis* and *placida*), and a White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus hypoleucus*) noted. Follow creek up short distance, then cross it and continue along edge of swampy country for another mile. A single Native Companion (*Antigone rubicunda*) the only bird seen about the swampy country. Head north along a sandy rise, heavily timbered with messmate and bloodwood (*Eucalypts*) and Wattle (*Acacia*), undergrowth of saplings, shrubs and coarse grass—very thick. A pair of Bronzewing Pigeons (*Phaps chalcoptera*) flush from the ground and away out of sight. Continue along this rise for a couple of miles. Bee-eaters numerous, and a single Drongo (*Chibia bracteata*) and a Forest Kingfisher seen. Northern Thickhead (*Pachycephala falcata*), Honey-eaters (*Stigmatops indistincta* and *Conopophila albogularis*), Chestnut-rumped Pardalote also seen occasionally. Head to west through similar country and strike belt of scrub behind the mangrove along the passage into Nor'-west Bay. Several big tamarind trees in this belt. Bower-Bird (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) noted. Search through the scrub. Brown Thickhead fairly numerous. A pair of Rainbow Pittas only other birds seen; found two of their old nests. Return to camp through the strip of fairly open country in from beach; spear-grass very thick here. Few White-gaped Honey-eaters seen in large-leaved bushes near beach. Flock of Blood-stained "Cockies" and a pair of White "Cockies" seen flying past. Reach camp 3.30; clothes a mass of spear-grass seeds. Go on board, have a cup of tea; bring gear ashore and fix up camp for the night.

2/5/21.—Daylight, rain squalls for a couple of hours. Breakfast, and go out S.W. along foot of the Bluff for about 1½ miles. All messmate forest here; very thick undergrowth, mostly *Zamias* and rank grass. Birds fairly numerous. Bower-Bird, Oriole, Drongo, Pied Butcher Bird, Silvery-crowned Friar-Bird, Honey-eaters, Flycatchers (*Rhipidura setosa* and *Myiagra concinna*), Red-backed Wren, Red-Collared Lorikeet, Chestnut-rumped Pardalote noted. Go up spur of Bluff, heavily timbered with messmate, bloodwood, Moreton Bay ash (*Eucalypts*), pine, wattles (*Acacia*), and other trees and shrubs, and to S.E. for about two miles; pretty rough going most of the way. Fewer birds observed. Brown Shrike-Thrush, Pardalote, Northern Thickhead, Barred-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*), Brown Honey-eater, Silvery-crowned Friar-Bird, Pied Butcher-Bird, White Cockatoo seen. Reach to edge of the Bluff; it drops away abruptly to a great forest-clad valley, 200 feet below, which stretches away for miles to the east and south to a series of lower forest-clad bluffs and ridges. No open grass, or open swampy country to be seen. Go down into the valley and through for a couple of miles; no bird-life of any kind here; very poor class of country. Head back to the Bluff, and cross a spur. Can get better view of the country about head of Nor'-west Bay. It appears to be worse than this. No hope of getting into the big central Bluff from there; it appears to be about ten miles inland from the head of the bay. Go down into the forest along the north side of Bluff and head through to the camp. Crow, Crimson-winged Parrot, and Peaceful Ground Doves noted. Saw a single Magpie (*Gymnorhina*) flying ahead and set out after it, but it eventually flew over the Bluff. Old nests of Friar-Birds, Finches, and Pigeons were seen in this stretch of forest. Got back to camp about 2.30 p.m. pretty tired: it is heavy work ploughing through the rank grass and undergrowth. Lunch, and spent rest of the afternoon hunting through the mangroves near camp. Broad-billed and Shining

Flycatchers and a few Barred-shouldered Doves observed. Just at dark a big crocodile swam along and floated on the surface of the water, 20 yards from the beach in front of the camp. Too dark for a sure shot with rifle, so did not disturb it. Twenty minutes later it swam away along the beach.

3/5/21.—Boobook Owl heard calling before daylight and Brown Quail before sunrise. Breakfast, and go up along beach for about a mile and then inland to the swampy country, and work along the edge to north. Bird life fairly plentiful. Silvery-crowned and Little Friar-Birds, Peaceful and Barred-shouldered Doves, Red-winged Parrots, White Cockatoo, Northern Thickheads, Honey-eaters (*S. indistincta* and *C. albogularis*), a Coucal (*Centropus phasianinus*), Yellow Oriole, small flock of Black-ringed Finches and a large flock of Chestnut-breasted Finches (mostly immature specimens), and Red-backed Wrens noted. Spotted Harrier flying past over head; pair of Forest Kingfishers seen. Nearly all cabbage gums growing in and around the swamp here. Circle round through forest country; no bird-life of any kind in it. Go along to belt of scrub noted on the 1st, and work through it thoroughly. Wood Fantails and Flycatcher seen, also Rainbow Pittas; found more old nests of this bird. Brown Thickhead and Pied Caterpillar-eater only other birds seen in the scrub. Go back to swamp and saw only three Finches—the Black-banded and the Chestnut-breasted. Return to camp about 1 p.m. Youngfellow and a dozen more natives were at the camp; they were after tobacco. Gave them enough to make a couple of cigarettes. Have lunch and set to work on the birds. Swarms of flies here now; must have come along with the natives. Took me nearly all the afternoon to fix up specimens. Natives continually pestering me for more tobacco, but wouldn't give them any. Tried to make Youngfellow understand that they were all to keep away from the camp, but it was no go. Just before sunset a couple of them brought a few plates of turtle-shell, and I gave them some tobacco for it; then they all left and camped about half a mile away on the beach. A Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*) was seen circling high over camp during the afternoon. A Little Falcon (*Falco longipennis*), flew swiftly past at sunset. Very hot to-day.

4/5/21.—Take Kosia with me to carry rifle, and go S.W. along the beach and behind the mangroves for a mile and a half. Strike a fairly big stretch of marshy country thickly grown with giant Paperbarks (*Melaleuca*), palms, ferns, and vines, and with a fringe of good scrub (jungle) along the edge. Work through the scrub fringe for half a mile. A single Green-backed Fly-eater seen; Brown Thickheads and Brown Honey-eaters only other birds seen. Old nesting mound of Scrub-Fowl seen. Leave the scrub and go through a big stretch of white sandy country covered with fairly dense growth of low, tangled thicket. A single Fawn-breasted Kingfisher seen here. Strike a stretch of water-logged country half a mile across, covered with small paperbarks. No bird-life seen. Strike a fairly big tidal creek fringed with mangroves and follow this up some distance. A Red-winged Parrot flushed from a hollow 15 feet from the ground in a bloodwood. Start to climb, and a fairly fledged young one flew from the hollow; nothing else in it. A little further on a rock-bar crosses the creek. This is the limit of tidal waters; good stream of fresh water comes in here. Continue along the creek for about a mile; fine large fresh water holes in it. Good forest country on both sides, but no bird-life of any kind to be seen or heard. Head through the forest to the Bluffs, and back to camp along the base of them. Single Little Wood-Swallow procured, and a Brown Thrush. Several old nests of Babblers noted; did not see any of the birds. Party of Red-backed Wrens seen with one bright male. Nearing camp saw a Chestnut-rumped Pardalote. Reach camp about 2 p.m. Afterwards went to see if I could find the Magpie noted on the 2nd; no luck. Saw

a Sacred Kingfisher and a White-gaped Honey-eater. Two more natives came along during the afternoon bringing a pack of mangy dogs. The natives shifted camp to within 100 yards of the tent, so consider it advisable to sleep on board the boat.

5/4/21.—Uneventful.

6/4/21.—Get Eric to take down tent and fly and rig the latter as an awning over the stern of the boat. Will have to do all my work on board: natives and flies too much of a nuisance on shore. Take Kosia and Malaki and go inland N.E. for couple of miles, circle round to S.E. across a stretch of ironstone country heavily timbered. An occasional Northern Thickhead and Brown Honey-eater the only birds seen since leaving the beach. Strike a stretch of poorer country lighter timber with stunted cabbage gums and shrubs. A Black-ringed Finch flushed from a nest containing half-fledged young. A pair of Red-collared Lorikeets the only other birds observed. Strike another stretch of ironstone. A party of Red-breasted Babblers was seen. Magpies were flushed from ground some distance ahead; set out after them, but could not get near enough them. A Goshawk (*Astur approximans*) seen soaring over the tree-tops. Another lot of Magpies heard calling. Send the boys well round to drive the birds towards me, which they did, but the birds were flying high. Strike N.E. end of the Bluff. Heard some more Magpies calling; got within 70 yards of one. Others calling on the top of the Bluff. Set out after them; saw them several times, but could not get near them. Head back to camp; reach there 3.30 p.m., tired out. More natives came along to-day. This lot brought some spears. Thirty nine natives now in camp.

7/5/21.—Uneventful.

8/5/21.—Eric and I got out after the Magpies. Separate on the off chance of driving birds to each other. Saw one. Boobook Owl flushed from bushy top of tall messmate. Disturbed four Magpies, which flew off in Eric's direction. Have a good search for Owl, but cannot locate it again. Heard Magpies calling in towards Bluff. Go along foot of Bluff; four Magpies flush from the ground and fly into trees on the Bluff. Sit and watch them for about an hour; then they flew down into the timber about 200 yards away. Get down on my hands and knees and crawl through the undergrowth to within 50 yards of one of them. Brought it down. It was only slightly wounded. Use it as a decoy, and in about two hours I secured three more birds, two of them immature specimens. Get back to the boat, 2 p.m. Eric came along half an hour afterwards; he had been chasing the Magpies all over the top of the Bluff, but could not get near them.

[The history of the Magpies is interesting because attached to type-specimens. See Mr. H. L. White's descriptions.—A.J.C.]

Eagle and Cockatoo—Two Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were feeding on the seeds of a small vine, when an Eagle swooped down and grabbed one poor "Cockie," flying with it to a large tree, where the Eagle sat on one leg, holding the Cockie in the other, and quietly began pulling it to pieces with its beak, the Cockie shrieking all the time. The lads rode under the tree and threw sticks, and the Eagle flew away, and again perched on a tree, and the last the lads saw of it the Eagle was again holding it in one foot while eating it.—J. BLACK, Mrs. Adam Black, Payingo Station, Charters Towers, Queensland.



Campbell, Archibald James. 1922. "Some Birds of Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 21(3), 188–197. <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu921188>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/35943>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu921188>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/380901>

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>.