

title (*Superbus*—proud), and remains in brilliant colour through May, June, July, August, through spring and early summer, until nesting is over, and the moulting season comes round once more. The time may vary somewhat in individuals; certain ones, for instance, may not complete the moult until towards the end of May; but this is only to be expected, as there is no hard and fast line in Nature. Some observers have spoken of a moult towards the end of June; this has never been observed by me in the adult, but the idea probably originated in seeing the first coloured feathers of the immature male coming through the neutral-tinted plumage.

The summer-change described above is a true moult, not merely a loss of colour by abrasion, as I have frequently found the blue-tipped feathers in the bathing-tin which is put out for the refreshment of the small birds during the exceedingly arid months of February and March. While the moult is taking place, the male is very shy, "skulks" a lot behind shrubs or bushy plants, and makes a dash for his bath when he thinks no one is looking, while his wife and family come out quite boldly and chase each other in and out of the tin with prodigious splashing.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., R.A.O.U., W. Devenport, Tasmania.

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The Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren as a mimic.—Among Australian birds there are many that imitate the call notes of species other than their own. The male Lyre Bird (*Menura nova-hollandiæ*) is pre-eminent as an imitator, and may be justly called the king of mimics, his mimetic ability going beyond the notes of his own class. The bird, however, that is to be specially mentioned now is the Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis lathamii*). The male of this species is a charmingly sweet warbler, but he, too, is also an exact mimicker. A few years ago, at Ourimbah, N.S.W., the writer was first attracted by his melodious notes. A nest with young had been found, and, while waiting to make observations, to listen more intently to his song, the notes of other birds were discerned. When moving about damp gullies overgrown with dense and luxuriant subtropical trees, or proceeding along the banks of creeks fringed with Lillipilly, Callicoma, Coachwood, and the like, the call notes may be usually heard trilling from beneath their sombre shade. "Pit-pit-pit" the male and female call to one another, as they hop along side by side, or within easy distance of each other. Ever and anon he will pause to give his varied and tremulous song, while his companion joins in with a subdued warble. If they are nesting, or if they are about to commence that operation, and a pedestrian is approaching their appointed site, the male changes his usual song, interpolating it with notes of other birds. The song of the Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) is one he regards with favour, then he will change to the notes of the Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*)

with perfection; very often a few notes of the Golden-breasted Whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) are inserted, while sometimes the call of the Brown Warbler (*Gerygone fusca*) is easily recognisable. These are birds with which he is associated throughout the year. After the intruder has withdrawn from the precincts of the nesting site, the male resumes his customary song, with renewed vigour. Since the mimetic capability of the Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren was first noticed, it has been amply detected in other parts. Investigation may reveal that quite a number of our scrub birds interpolate their song with the notes of other birds with which they associate.—P. A. GILBERT, R.A.O.U., Lakemba, N.S.W.

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White-shouldered Caterpillar-eaters—I was watching the other day, the stages in the construction of the White-shouldered Caterpillar-Eater's nest. The first nest I found was robbed by some boys, but immediately the birds started another nest in the next tree. All the material of the first nest was used on the second, and sometimes the male, after placing some material in position, would rest for half-an-hour or so on the nest. This, however, was not so with the female. She rarely appeared, and if she had some material she would give it to the male to place in position. She did the greater part of the sitting, however, and was fed by the male while on the nest. Both birds would fly swiftly past any intruder, snapping their beaks; but although they came very close they never hit one.—Master C. AUSTIN.

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Cockatoo Hybrids.—Two hybrids of a Galah and Pink Cockatoo (Major Mitchell) were noted by me this year, and some years ago a Little Corella (*C. gymnopsis*, or rather *C. sanguinea*) and Galah (*C. roseicapilla*) hybrid. These all happened in a state of nature, and in good seasons, when food was abundant and all available nesting holes occupied. The Galah (*C. sanguinea*) was in a Galah's Nest with two young Galahs. The other two were trapped birds.—W. MACGILLIVRAY, R.A.O.U., Broken Hill.

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Note on the Frogmouth and Apostle Bird.—I acquired a Podargus recently; he is becoming quite sociable already, and makes no bones about gulping down a whole mouse, dead or alive; he does not wait to kill it, like the Kookaburra. This is about the fifth that I have kept, and none of them ever "mopoked" their note, and the note of all the other species of Podargus in my experience is totally unlike that of the "Boobook Owl." My Apostle Birds (*Struthidea*) are nest building; the female does all the graft, and the male is clerk of works.—Dr. W. MACGILLIVRAY, R.A.O.U., Broken Hill.



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