

litter, evidently to turn aside the water, which would percolate to the egg-chamber and interfere with the proper rate and progress of the fermentation, whilst the sticks would help materially to detract from the prominence of the sharp cone, and so make detection more difficult, as well as preventing the loose sand from being scattered by the wind. (See illustration.) Thus sticks on the mound are nearly always a sign that the birds have started to lay. On warm and sunny days the apex of the mound is removed and a concave opening made, so that the warmth of the sun's rays may penetrate and assist in the incubation.

## Descriptions of New or Rare Australian Birds' Eggs.

By D. LE SOUEF, C.M.Z.S., &c., MELBOURNE.

### NINOX PENINSULARIS (Cape York Owl).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 290.)

This fine bird seems to be principally found in the Cape York district. A set of two eggs was found on 4th January, 1907, in a hollow of a eucalyptus tree, the egg being deposited on the decomposed wood at the bottom, mixed with the small bone remains of birds and small mammals, probably mice. The hollow had evidently been used for some time. The eggs are the usual round type of Owls', and are glossy, smooth, and measure—(a) 1.82 x 1.48, (b) 1.81 x 1.56 inches. The locality was not far from Somerset, Cape York, Northern Australia.

### ÆGOTHELES RUFA (Rufous Owlet Nightjar).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 380.)

A clutch of three of the eggs of this bird was found in a hollow of a eucalyptus tree near Derby on 15th November, 1906. They are pure white, with a roughened surface, and are indistinguishable from those of *Ægotheles novæ-hollandiæ*. They measure—(a) 1.12 x .90, (b) 1.11 x .87, (c) 1.14 x .88 inches.

### COLLYRIOCINCLA WOODWARDI (Woodward Shrike-Thrush).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 641.)

A clutch of three eggs of this bird was found near Port Darwin, 22nd January, 1907. They are white, well freckled with small markings of umber, the markings being most plentiful at the larger end; but, as in the other members of this family, there is much variation in the markings of different clutches. They measure—(a) 1.02 x .78, (b) 1.04 x .76, (c) 1.03 x .77 inches. The nest, composed of light twigs and leaves, was built in an open cavity in the trunk of a dead tree.

### PINAROLESTES BOWERI (Bower Shrike-Thrush).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 645.)

The eggs of this species are a very pale cream colour, irregularly blotched with dark reddish-brown markings, more plentiful on the

larger end. They measure—(a) .92 x .72, (b) .96 x .73 inch. The compact nest, composed of fine rootlets and tendrils, was built in a pandanus palm, near the crown, about 8 feet from the ground, and was found on 2nd December, 1906, near Cairns, Queensland.

COLLYRIOCINCLA CERVINIVENTRIS\* (Fawn-breasted Shrike-Thrush).  
(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 642.)

The nest of this Shrike-Thrush was found in the top of a broken sapling, and was composed of twigs and leaves, being lined with rootlets. The two eggs are white, thickly freckled with light brownish-red, the smaller markings being more numerous than the larger ones. They measure—(a) 1.06 x .76, (b) 1.02 x .76 inches. The nest was found near Springsure, in Queensland, on 28th October, 1904.

CRATICUS ARGENTEUS (Silver-backed Butcher-Bird).  
(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 657.)

The nest of this Butcher-Bird, containing three eggs, was found on 25th February, 1906, in a small tree a few miles to the east of Pine Creek railway station, Northern Territory. The bird was flushed from the nest, which was situated in a forked branch about 20 feet from the ground, and was composed of twigs and lined with fine rootlets. The eggs are pale greyish-green, with spots of burnt sienna, slightly more numerous at the larger end, and they measure—(a) 1.22 x .78, (b) 1.28 x .84, (c) 1.24 x .86 inches.

CRATICUS SPALDINGI (Spalding Butcher-Bird).  
(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 652.)

The open nest of this bird was found near Port Darwin on 23rd November, 1905; it was rather loosely built of twigs and rootlets, and situated about 20 feet from the ground. The three eggs in the nest were fresh, and are of a greyish-green, with a few markings on the larger end of a dark brown, some markings under the surface being of brownish-purple. They are very similar to some specimens of the eggs of *Cracticus rufescens*, but smaller. They measure—(a) 1.27 x .98, (b) 1.21 x .95, (c) 1.28 x .95 inches.

GYMNORHINA LONGIROSTRIS (Long-billed Magpie).  
(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 648.)

This variety is found in North-Western Australia. A nest containing five eggs was found on 3rd December, 1906, near Derby. The nest was built in a eucalyptus tree, composed of sticks, and constructed after the usual style of the *Gymnorhinæ*. The eggs are light greenish-grey, thickly marked with faint greenish irregular, smudgy lines, and with a few large blotches of dark brown. They measure—(a) 1.55 x 1.02, (b) 1.54 x 1.01, (c) 1.61 x 1.05, (d) 1.51 x 1.01, (e) 1.53 x 1.06 inches.

\* The author of this species (A. J. North) now regards it as only a "climatic form" of *C. rufigaster*.—Vide "Nests and Eggs of Birds," &c., p. 100.—EDS.

**MALURUS CORONATUS** (Purple-crowned Wren).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 606.)

The dome-shaped nest of this beautiful little bird was found near Port Darwin \* on 25th January, 1905; it was situated in some thick vegetation, about 2 feet from the ground. It contained three eggs, which are white, with small reddish-brown markings, those on the thicker end being larger and more numerous. The eggs measure—(a) .59 x .42, (b) .58 x .43, (c) .56 x .41 inch.

**CINCLOSOMA CASTANOTHORAX** (Chestnut-breasted Ground-Bird).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 518.)

A nest of this bird was found by Mr. Herman Lau on 3rd November, 1879, in the Darling Downs district in Queensland. He flushed the bird from its nest, which was on the ground, but did not secure it. He states that the open nest was loosely built of leaves, twigs, and coarse grass, and situated alongside a fallen log by a tussock of grass, and the bird sat very close. The eggs are slightly glossy, and white, freckled with purplish-black and brownish markings, especially on the larger end; the under purple markings are larger than the surface ones, and are also more numerous at the larger end. The eggs measure—(a) 1.18 x .92, (b) 1.14 x .90 inches.

[These specimens were overlooked until recently, when I was rearranging my cabinets.—D. LE S.]

**HALCYON WESTRALASIANUS** (Western Sacred Kingfisher).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 392.)

This bird is easily recognized from *H. sanctus*. It also has a slightly different note. A clutch of three eggs was found in a hole in a decayed hole of a eucalyptus tree on 5th December, 1898; they are pure white, slightly glossy, and measure—(a) .96 x .85, (b) .98 x .86, (c) .98 x .85 inch.

**HALCYON SORDIDUS** (Mangrove Kingfisher).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 394.)

These birds are fairly plentiful in Northern Australia. A clutch of five eggs was found in a hole drilled into a termites' mound, situated in the fork of a tree about 30 feet from the ground, 12th December, 1906. The eggs are pure white, glossy, and measure—(a) 1.04 x .87, (b) 1.02 x .85, (c) .98 x .84, (d) 1.04 x .87, (e) 1.04 x .88 inches.

**PLATYCERCUS NIGRESCENS** (Campbell Parrakeet).

(Mathews, Handl. Bds. of Austr., No. 335.)

A clutch of three eggs of this species of Parrakeet was found near Cairns on the 24th of November, 1907, in a hollow in a large tree in a patch of open forest country. The eggs were fresh, and therefore not nest-stained, and the clutch was probably incomplete. They are pure white, slightly glossy, and measure—(a) 1.11 x .91, (b) 1.10 x .89, (c) 1.10 x .86 inches.

\* Northern Territory has not been previously recorded for this species.—EDS.



Le Souef, William Henry Dudley. 1908. "Descriptions of New or Rare Australian Birds' Eggs." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 8(2), 61–63. <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu908061>.

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