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[Part 4.

Nesting, etc., in the Bool Lagoon District, S.E., S.A., During the 1934 Season.

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The season was an abnormally dry one with regard to the water-level in the swamps, therefore it was not a good one for the water-birds, especially the Ducks. A few restricted clutches were noted and many nests were deserted.

Dromaius novae-hollandiae, Emu.—Four separate birds with ten, eight, seven, and four young respectively were noted. Four nests with eggs were reported by men mustering in scrub country.

Coturnix pectoralis, Stubble Quail.—Several nests with broken eggs were found in an oat-crop after it had been cut for hay. A few young birds were also seen. Many nests of the Stubble Quail, Golden-headed Fantail-Warbler, and Horsfield Bushlark were destroyed by mowing machines.

Geopelia placida, Peaceful Dove, 3/12/1934.—A bird flushed from a nest which was placed six feet from the ground on a limb of a stringybark gumtree. The nest contained two eggs which appeared to be heavily incubated.

Ptilinopus chalcoptera, Common Bronzewing, 12/10/1934.—A nest containing two eggs was built nine feet from the ground in a teatree. 7/11/1934.—A nest in a silver-wattle contained two chicks.

Rallus pectoralis, Lewin Water-Rail, 8/11/1934.—A nest was found containing broken egg shells. 9/12/1934.—A nest placed in a cutting-grass tussock 32 inches from the mud contained six eggs. The bird was seen to leave the nest when the tussock was opened out.

Porzana fluminea, Spotted Crake, 1/12/1934.—Old nests were seen in rushes.

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Gallinula tenebrosa, Dusky Moorhen, 24/12/1934.—A nest was built at the base of a clump of bulrushes and contained two eggs. There were no trees in the small swamp. 29/12/1934.—A bird flushed from a nest, containing four eggs, situated in a similar position.

Porphyrio melanotus, Eastern Swampphen.—Many nests, containing either eggs or young, were noted in the reeds. The young, when small, are often to be found hiding beneath the nest.

Podiceps ruficollis, Little Grebe, 7/11/1934.—A floating nest of water-weeds moored to the stems of a bulrush contained four eggs. A young bird was seen on a parent bird's back.

Microcarbo melanoleucus, Little Pied Cormorant.—Several colonies of their nests were found. They surrounded, in small groups, several nests each of the Royal Spoonbill, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, and White-necked Heron. It is thought that the Cormorants by placing their nests in proximity to those of the Spoonbills and Heron, find that those birds when protecting their own eggs and young also stay marauding species of birds from the Cormorants' nests.

Lobibyx novae-hollandiae, Spur-winged Plover.—This species nested mainly in September and October, when seven nests were observed—one with an egg, another with two eggs, two with three eggs each, and three with four eggs each. Several young birds were also noted.

Zonifer tricolor, Banded Plover.—Two young birds were seen with the parents close at hand.

Charadrius ruficapillus, Red-capped Dotterel, 18/10/1934.—A bird flushed from two eggs which were in a scrape amidst small stones.

Charadrius melanops, Black-fronted Dotterel.—Two pairs of birds were noted at scrapes. Heavy rain, however, caused them to desert their intended nesting sites.

Himantopus leucocephalus, White-headed Stilt.—One young bird only was seen at a place where these birds were reported to be nesting.

Burhinus magnirostris, Southern Stone-Curlew.—Two eggs were seen by a local resident.

Grus rubicundus, Brolga (Native Companion).—A pair partly constructed a nest, but deserted it owing to men working nearby.

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Threskiornis molucca, White Ibis.—A few pairs nested in the teatrees. Many nests containing young were seen amongst those of the Straw-necked Ibis. This is unusual here, as these birds generally nest in colonies of their own species.

Threskiornis spinicollis, Straw-necked Ibis.—This species nested as usual in large colonies.

Platalea regia, Royal Spoonbill.—A few pairs nested. 9/12/1934.—Nests examined contained—(a) two young; (b) three young, one of which was dead; (c and d) three young each; (e) two eggs and a chick just hatched; (f) four young; (g) one egg, nest probably deserted.

Platalea flavipes, Yellow-billed Spoonbill.—Many pairs nested in the teatrees, and a few pairs were seen at nests in redgum trees growing in three swamps.

Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae, White-faced Heron, 1/12/1934.—A nest containing five eggs was built on a limb of a redgum tree growing in water. Two nests were seen with large young therein.

Notophoxyx pacifica, White-necked Heron, 1/12/1934.—Two nests were found, one with four eggs, the other with four young. Both nests were in the same tree, which also contained nests of Little Pied Cormorants and two of the Yellow-billed Spoonbill. Four White-necked Herons left the tree and remained flying whilst we were at the nests.

Ixobrychus minutus, Little Bittern.—The only evidence of breeding was an immature bird which was obtained on 4th January, 1935. Cattle destroyed the bulrushes growing amongst the teatrees, where two nests were located during the previous season. When amongst the stems of reeds these birds are difficult to pick out, as they assume a protective attitude, and are also protectively coloured. Description of bird:—Sex, ?; iris, greenish yellow; bare skin round eye, yellow; bill, legs, and feet, pale greenish yellow; crown of head, brownish black; upper throat, white with a narrow perpendicular line of pale chestnut feathers down the centre; front of neck, pale chestnut with a blackish line down the centre of each feather; back of neck, chestnut; scapulars, black edged with chestnut; back and rump, dark grey with a suggestion of chestnut; tail, black; breast and under surface, light buff with broad blackish central lines to the feathers, a small patch of black feathers with chestnut edgings at base of neck on each side; abdomen and under tail-feathers, white; front edging of wings, white; primaries,

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upper side black with chestnut edging at distal ends, under side slate grey with paler chestnut outer edgings; secondaries, upper side, chestnut with darkish centres, under side similar to under side of primaries; greater wing-coverts, chestnut; lesser wing-coverts, buff; there was much down on crown of head, but little on the body.

--- *Botaurus - poiciloptilus*, Brown-Bittern.—Owing to the shortage of water in the small, rushy, isolated swamps about the Boal Lagoon these birds did not breed as usual. Many, however, may have nested in the Boal Lagoon, as there are about 3,000 acres of reeds which would be suitable for their nests and food-supply. The Brown Bittern generally leaves the nest by a "runway" over the reeds. It is rare to flush a bird directly from the nest. Nests are generally found near those of the Swamp Harrier, possibly for protection against marauding species of birds.

Chenonetta jubata, Maned Goose.—Two pairs of birds with young were noted on Mosquito Creek.

Chenopsis atrata, Black Swan.—The nesting of this species was unusually restricted. The lower water-level possibly caused the restriction and would also have enabled foxes to reach the nests easily. Many pairs of birds nest here in a normal season. Two clutches of young only were noted.

Casarca tadornoides, Mountain Duck.—Neither nests with eggs nor adults with young were noted. Two pairs of birds were observed flying from tree to tree searching for suitable nesting hollows. Many such places were inspected, and some were visited a second time.

Anas superciliosa, Black Duck.—Several nests and clutches of young of this species were noticed. Nests with eggs were found in cutting-grass tussocks, lignum bushes, hollow limbs of trees, and beneath thistles.

Querquedula gibberifrons, Grey Teal.—One nest only was reported. A bird flushed from a hollow, which probably contained eggs.

Biziura lobata, Musk Duck.—Two nests were found—one with an egg was placed at the base of bulrush-stems, the other with three eggs was situated at the base of a teatree. Two small chicks were noticed on a bough lying in the water.

Circus approximans, Swamp Harrier.—Nests were found being constructed in several swamps and one in an oat-crop. A

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nest in the rushes contained three young and two in crops with three young in each. By watching the birds in the morning it is an easy matter to locate a nest being built. An empty nest was found placed three feet above the ground on the top of a tussock; no reeds were available in the locality, but the nest was surrounded by several acres of tussocks.

Haliastur sphenurus, Whistling Eagle.—Nearly all of the old nests were occupied during the season. These were re-lined, mostly with leaves, but on two occasions strips of teatree bark were used. A new nest is very seldom constructed, and only one such nest was found. This is one of the first species to begin nesting.

Falco peregrinus, Peregrine Falcon, 7/11/1934.—A pair was observed feeding young, which were in a hollow spout high up in an old dry redgum tree. This species is an occasional visitor and is feared by many species of birds. They have been seen to kill Ducks on the wing, and many a rapid chase by these birds after flocks of Lorikeets has been watched with interest. They use some cunning methods for capturing Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). A bird has been noticed to fly leisurely past a flock of Starlings into the wind until it was at a suitable height and distance from the flock, then the return is made with tremendous speed and a capture is certain. (The Little Falcons, *Falco longipennis*, also capture Starlings, but they usually dash amidst the flock and seize a bird.)

Falco berigora, Brown Hawk, 29/8/1934.—Nest with two eggs and a chick. 1/9/1934.—Birds feeding young in a nest. 17/10/1934.—Birds feeding young in a nest. 18/12/1934.—Birds feeding young in the paddocks. Three old nests of the Raven and one of the Whistling Eagle were used by these birds.

Falco cenchroides, Nankeen Kestrel, 4/11/1934.—A bird was flushed from a hollow spout in a decaying tree, two eggs. Birds were also seen at hollows, which were not examined. Attention is sometimes drawn to the nest by pieces of down adhering to the sides of the entrance.

Ninox boobook, Boobook Owl.—A hollow contained three fully-fledged young.

Glossopsitta concinna, Musk Lorikeet.—This species nested when the redgums were flowering. 28/10/1934.—Two nests examined, one with a fully-fledged young bird, the other with two chicks just out of the shells.

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Glossopsitta porphyrocephala, Purple-crowned Lorikeet.—These birds also nested when the redgums were flowering. Many pairs were seen at hollows.

Calyptrorhynchus funereus, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 25/11/1934.—A nesting hollow, 65 feet from the ground, contained one egg. Seven nests, probably all containing young, were reported. The parent birds were often seen feeding the young. All nests were in very high redgum trees.

Kakatoe galerita, White Cockatoo.—Many pairs of birds nest in the redgum trees. The sitting birds are very wary and always leave the hollows without uttering the cry that is used when they are leaving a resting place. 27/10/1934.—Six nests were examined, one with three young, one with an infertile egg, one with one young, and three each with two young. Many hollows in use were also noted, but were not examined. A bird-trapper obtained forty young birds in a short period in the district.

Kakatoe tenuirostris, Corella (Long-billed Cockatoo).—The trapper above-mentioned obtained a pair of this species. This species is often noticed, usually in small flocks and sometimes in company with the White Cockatoo. They nest in the district, and one pair nested yearly in a hollow high up in an old decaying redgum tree. I did not visit the locality in 1934, so I do not know whether the birds returned to their usual nesting site.

Platycercus elegans, Crimson Rosella.—Several nesting sites were found, one contained seven eggs, another four eggs, a third six fully-fledged young, and three had four young each. Many young birds were taken by persons having aviaries.

Platycercus eximius, Eastern Rosella.—Birds were flushed from three hollows in the upper limbs of decaying trees. One was examined and it contained four young and an infertile egg. Two of the hollows were used in the previous season. Pairs of birds were also seen cleaning out hollows.

Psephotus haematonotus, Red-backed Parrot.—A very common bird in the district, and it is not unusual to find several hollows in a tree occupied by different pairs. Five eggs were placed on wood-dust nine feet down in the trunk of a tree. They were very near the level of the ground. It must have been a difficult problem for the parents when removing the young.

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Podargus strigoides, Tawny Frogmouth, 10/9/1934.—Two nests were found, one with two eggs and the other with one egg. One of the nests was visited a second time, and on this occasion the sitting bird had to be lifted slightly in order to see the contents of the nest—two newly-hatched chicks. 14/11/1934.—A nest with two young was observed.

Aegotheles cristata, Owlet Nightjar, 3/10/1934.—A nest containing an egg was found. 18/11/1934.—Nest with three eggs. 4/12/1934.—Nest with three eggs. 10/12/1934.—Two nests, each with two eggs. The bird usually appears at the entrance of the hollow when the tree trunk has been tapped. Several of the nesting sites had been used in previous seasons. Starlings drive many birds from their nesting hollows, but Nightjars have been noted to take possession of the hollows again after the Starlings had left them.

Dacelo gigas, Laughing Kookaburra.—The same nesting sites have been used for several years by a few pairs of these birds. When a section of a hollow limb was fixed at a suitable height on the trunk of a gumtree in a plantation a pair of these birds took possession and one young bird was successfully reared. Several young snakes were included in the food brought to this bird.

Halcyon sanctus, Sacred Kingfisher, 30/11/1934.—A bird was noticed leaving a hollow at the end of a limb on a redgum tree. It was fed several times by its mate, which also drove away any species of birds which attempted to intrude in their territory. 30/11/1934.—A nest with five eggs. The nesting site had been drilled in the trunk of a decaying tree.

Hirundo neoxena, Welcome Swallow.—Nests are very common, and such places as the bases of hollow trees, under bridges, verandahs, sheds, and down wells are used to place nests.

Hylchelidon nigricans, Tree-Martin.—Nests of this species are also common. The birds are interesting to observe at nests, which are difficult to examine, and are usually destroyed if the hollows are opened. Several nests are sometimes seen in the same tree.

Rhipidura leucophrys, Willie Wagtail.—On three occasions during the season this and the following species were found nesting in the same tree as the Magpie-Lark.

Seisura inquieta, Restless Flycatcher.—Four nests found, one with three eggs and three each with three young.

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Microeca fascinans, Jacky Winter, 19/10/1934.—A pair of birds was building on the fork of a dry branch 25 feet from the ground. 19/10/1934.—A nest with two eggs. This was in an unusual position, as it was only seven feet from the ground and was in a honeysuckle.

Melanodryas cucullata, Hooded Robin, 23/10/1934.—A pair of birds was building a well-concealed nest 15 feet from the ground in a stringybark gumtree.

Colluricincla harmonica, Grey Shrike Thrush, 7/10/1934.—A nest containing three eggs was placed in a hollow spout.

Grallina cyanoleuca, Magpie-Lark.—Nests were often located. One contained the unusual clutch of five eggs.

Coracina novae-hollandiae, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, 3/10/1934.—A pair of birds was building a nest on a dry fork 20 feet from the ground. A few days later the nest contained two eggs. A nest of the Tawny Frogmouth was in the same tree.

Pomatostomus temporalis, Grey-crowned Babbler, 1/9/1934.—A nest with two young and an egg. 10/12/1934.—A flock of seven birds was building in a redgum tree. The base of a tree which contained a Babbler's nest was tapped at night when a flock of Babblers left the nest. It seems as though old nests are used as a community roosting-place.

Pomatostomus superciliosus, White-browed Babbler, 7/9/1934.—Birds were at nests in honeysuckles. 18/11/1934.—A nest in a honeysuckle with two fully-fledged young which left when the nest was disturbed.

Epthianura albifrons, White-fronted Chat.—Nests were common and nesting commenced early. The sitting bird after flushing usually performs the "wounded bird trick."

Aphelocephala leucopsis, Eastern Whiteface, 22/8/1934.—A nest with three eggs built into the forked limbs of a small paperbark-teatree. 24/8/1934.—A nest placed in a hollow spout contained three eggs. 12/10/1934.—A nest with three young was built in a dense overhanging bough of a teatree. 14/10/1934.—A nest with three young was placed 11 inches down in the hollow of a limb lying on the ground.

Acanthiza lineata, Striated Thornbill, 7/10/1934.—Nest with three eggs. It was a neatly built structure suspended from a bough of a sapling.

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Acanthiza pusilla, Brown Thornbill.—Nests with three eggs and others with young are often located in shrubs and on teatree boughs.

Acanthiza reguloides, Buff-tailed Thornbill, 18/10/1934.—A nest in course of construction and another ready for eggs were found.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa, Yellow-tailed Thornbill.—Nests are very common. The overhanging branches of teatrees are favourite nesting sites.

Calamanthus fuliginosus, Striated Field-Wren.—This species nests early. The nests are usually placed in the dead dry centre of cutting-grass tussocks. An unusual nest was in a cavity scratched out by the birds. The nest was similar to that of the *Hylacola cauta*, Shy Ground-Wren. It contained two eggs.

Cinclorhamphus cruralis, Brown Songlark, 27/11/1934.—A bird flushed from a well-concealed nest which contained three chicks.

Cinclorhamphus mathewsi, Rufous Songlark.—No nests were found, but the birds were thought to be nesting at Joanna.

Megalurus gramineus, Little Grassbird.—Nests were plentiful. Tussocks, teatrees boughs and dense reeds are used for nesting sites. Sometimes the birds, if one is near their nests or young, perform a very agitated type of the "wounded bird trick": when this occurs where the nests are in teatrees standing in water it is more interesting, as the birds are limited to using the limbs and sticks that are lying in the water.

Acrocephalus australis, Reed-Warbler.—Their pannier-shaped nests were plentiful in the bulrushes. A few nests were also placed in the overhanging boughs of teatrees.

Cisticola exilis, Golden-headed Fantail-Warbler.—Cereal crops are suitable nesting sites, and many nests are destroyed during harvest. Cutting-grass tussocks are also favourite positions. An easy method of locating a nest when a bird is flushed near it, is to wait nearby, as the bird usually returns with nesting material in its bill. The building of the inner part of the nest usually proceeds after incubation commences. The nest is approached by the birds, after they have made a very steep descent from the altitude where they had previously been singing, by a rapid up and down flight over the tops of the

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tussocks or crops.* This is difficult to follow with the naked eye. They settle near the nest which is then reached by a short flight.

Stipiturus malachurus, Southern Emu-Wren, 1/9/1934.—A nest was found containing broken eggshells. The eggs had only recently been destroyed, but the birds were still in the locality. A Yellow-winged Honeyeater's nest was being constructed in the same tussock, so it may have been possible that these birds were the cause of the destruction.

Malurus cyaneus, Superb Blue-Wren.—Two nests were found—22/9/1934, one with three eggs, and, 6/10/1934, the other being built.

Artamus cyanopterus, Dusky Wood-Swallow.—Nests noted containing either eggs or young. Many other nests were seen in course of construction, but several of them were deserted later.

Climacteris picumnus, Brown Tree-creeper, 19/11/1934.—A pair noticed feeding two young.

Climacteris leucophaea, White-throated Tree-creeper, 26/11/1934.—A pair was seen in company with a young bird which had evidently left the nest only a short period before.

Pardalotus xanthopygus, Yellow-tailed Pardalote.—A burrow which had been drilled into the side of a disused gravel-quarry was examined. It was not complete.

Pardalotus ornatus, Red-tipped Pardalote, 8/8/1934.—A pair of birds was working rapidly, carrying material into a small hole in a redgum tree. 23/9/1934.—A bird was seen to enter a small hole in a large limb of a redgum tree and it remained there. 29/9/1934.—A nest with three eggs. 2/11/1934.—A nest with four young.

Zosterops halmaturina, Grey-backed Silvereye.—Several nests were noted. These were suspended from overhanging branchlets of teatrees.

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris, Eastern Spinebill, 30/9/1934.—A nest was situated six feet from the ground and contained two eggs. The female was heard to call from the nest.

Gliciphila melanops, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, 1/9/1934.—Two young birds were in a nest in a small hakea. They

* These actions are stated to be made by the male bird only.—Editors.

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squeaked when handled, and both parents appeared and fluttered along the ground in a very agitated manner. 4/12/1934.—A fully-fledged young bird was captured. When it squeaked one parent appeared, but disappeared on the release of the young one.

Meliphaga leucotis, White-eared Honeyeater, 26/11/1934.—A nest with two young.

Meliphaga penicillata, White-plumed Honeyeater, 12/10/1934.—A nest with three eggs. 14/10/1934.—A nest being constructed in a mistletoe. 14/11/1934.—A pair with a young bird. 26/11/1934.—Two nests each containing young were built in silver wattles.

Meliornis novae-hollandiae, Yellow-winged Honeyeater.—This species nested in July, August, and September, when some of the gumtrees were flowering. Numbers of nests, some containing either eggs or young, were noted in native shrubs in the scrub country.

Myzantha melanocephala, Noisy Miner, 27/9/1934.—A nest with three eggs in a mistletoe. Several nests with young were also noted during the season.

Anthochaera chrysoptera, Little Wattle-Bird, 22/9/1934.—A nest 15 feet from the ground in a stringybark gumtree contained two eggs. 6/10/1934.—A nest with one egg was nine feet up in a honeysuckle.

Anthochaera carunculata, Red Wattle-Bird, 17/10/1934.—A nest ready for eggs.

Entomyzon cyanotis, Blue-faced Honeyeater.—On 28th May, 1935, I heard strange calls and three of these birds came flying through the trees towards me. When close all three perched on the uppermost branches of a ring-barked gum.

Anthus australis, Pipit.—A very common bird in the district, and many nests were found. The sitting bird usually flutters off the nest and performs the "wounded bird trick." A favourite nesting site is a few feet from the roadside.

Mirafra javanica, Horsfield Bushlark, 10/12/1934.—Two young birds which had recently left the nest were seen with the two adults.

Zonaeginthus guttatus, Diamond Firetail, 18/11/1934.—A nest which contained six eggs was built in the inside of an old nest of the White-browed Babbler. 25/11/1934.—Two nests, one with four young and an egg, the other with four young.

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Aegintha temporalis, Red-browed Finch.—Several nests of the season were found, but the young had left them.

Struthidea cinerea, Apostle Bird.—Only one flock to my knowledge inhabits the district. The birds were nesting in pine trees a few miles from Naracoorte two years ago. The last report I had of this flock was that the birds were dying off and that only a few were left, but as this information came from a person who does not reside in their habitat, I hope that it is incorrect. I have been told of another flock which was seen here years ago, but I cannot say whether they are still to be found in the locality where they were noted.

Corvus coronoides, Raven.—The first nest was noted on 27/7/1934.—Nearly every plantation of gumtrees on the plains has a pair of birds with a nest. The nests are placed in the topmost branches of the trees and the nestlings are often shaken from the nests by the winds. The birds usually construct a new nest each season. One of the many nests found was unusual, as it was placed neatly in the centre of an old nest of the Whistling Eagle. Four or five eggs are usually the clutch to be found in a nest.

Corcorax melanorhamphus, White-winged Chough.—Many of their mud nests were noted, and several flocks containing young birds were seen.

Cracticus torquatus, Grey Butcher Bird, 6/10/1934. — A nest was found containing three young.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca, White-backed Magpie.—These birds begin nesting early. Nests are placed in many different positions: telephone poles are sometimes used: tussocks are also common nesting sites: occasionally a nest is found on the ground. Two young were reared in a nest which was on the ground, and only four feet from the edge of a metalled road.

On 20th September, 1935, I visited a swamp here, and many species of water-birds were seen. Black Swans, Grey Teal, and Mountain Ducks had young. Black Ducks, White-eyed Ducks, and a Musk Duck were also noted. Shortly after entering the swamp a White-faced Heron was flushed from a nest high up in a huge redgum tree. A short distance further on a tree contained two nests of the White-necked Heron; one with four eggs and the other with three young and two eggs which were chipping. There were also six nests of the Little

Pied Cormorant, two of these were not completed, and the other four contained five, four, two, and one egg each. Two nests of the Yellow-billed Spoonbill were also being constructed in this same tree, and it also had a nest with young of the White-backed Magpie in the topmost branches. A White-necked Heron was flushed from a nest containing four eggs in a nearby tree. The following species were seen at nests:—Black Duck, Eastern Rosella, Red-backed Parrot, Welcome Swallows, Tree Martin, Magpie-Lark, Eastern Whiteface, and Raven. In the vicinity of this swamp were noted:—Spur-winged Plover, Straw-necked Ibis, Whistling Eagle, Brown Hawk, Long-billed Corella, Crimson Rosella, Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*), Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chalcites basilis*), Willie Wagtail, Restless Flycatcher, Jacky Winter, and White-plumed Honey-eater. Birdlife seems very abundant, and this season should be very satisfactory for their breeding.
