

NOTES ON JUVENILE LITTLE CROWS

(CORVUS BENNETTI)

By ERHARD F. BOEHM,

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All the information given by North (8) regarding the young of the Little Crow was that they "have the iris brown." Stresemann (9) and Meinertzhagen (7) stated that the bases of the nape-feathers in "immature" birds are not quite so white as in the adult. Hartert (5), although working on the same material as that examined by Stresemann and Meinertzhagen, wrote:—"Of *bennetti* we have no birds young enough to show this change." Campbell (4) describes the bases of the juvenile feathers as grey.

Nestlings of the Little Crow which I have seen had bluish-grey irides. The base of the lower mandible was pinkish-white and the joints of the legs were white in colour. Young out of the nest have the bases of the feathers on the nape dirty white or pale grey.

The dusky or smoky-grey colouration noted by McGilp (6) is due to the immaturity of the nestling feathers, the extreme bases being either still in sheath or the barbs and barbules are not yet unfurled and bleached. In this stage the colouration resembles that of the bases in the juvenile Australian Raven (*C. coronoides*), but the full-grown feathers of juvenile Little Crows have noticeably paler bases than in that species.

Changes of colour in the iris, base of lower mandible, and joints of the legs, which occur as the birds become older are similar to those I have described (3) for the Raven.

Size cannot be wholly relied upon for the identification of juveniles of the Little Crow because of the occurrence of dwarfism (2) in the Raven, but a small-sized specimen of *Corvus* possessing dirty white or pale grey bases on the nape-feathers in the juvenile phase (1) will most likely prove to be a Little Crow.

References to Literature.

- (1) Boehm, E. F., *S.A. Orn.*, XV: p. 94; 1940.
- (2) — *Ibid.* XVI: p. 18; 1942.
- (3) — *Ibid.* XVI: p. 33; 1942.
- (4) Campbell, A. G., *Emu*, XXIX: pp. 108-9; 1929.
- (5) Hartert, Dr. E., *Novitates Zoologicae*, XXXV: p. 49; 1929.
- (6) McGilp, J. N., *Emu*, XXIII: p. 68; 1923.
- (7) Meinertzhagen, R., *Novitates Zoologicae*, XXXIII: p. 86; 1926.
- (8) North, A. J., "Nests and Eggs of Birds Found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania," I: p. 4; 1901.
- (9) Stresemann, Dr. E., *Verhandl. Ornith. Gesell. Bayern*, XII: p. 292; 1916.