

Order Pelecaniformes, Family Phalacrocoracidae,
Genus Hypoleucis.

Hypoleucis varius hypoleucis—Pied Cormorant.

Description—Top of the head, back of neck, back, flanks, tail coverts, deep glossy black; wings, deep greenish black; primaries and tail same colour; all the undersurface pure white; iris, sea green; bare space in front of eye, orange; bare space round eye, blue; lower eyelid, metallic green; gular pouch, flesh colour; bill, black; tip, horn colour; legs, feet and nails, black. Total length in the flesh, 32 inches; wing from body to tip, 22 inches; spread of wings, 49 inches.

Distribution—South and south-west Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.

Habits—Found mostly on the coast line, and frequenting the mangrove creeks and swamps along the coast; yet they are met with at times on rivers and fresh water lakes great distance inland. They form large rookeries when nesting, and place their nests in mangrove trees or on the tops of low bushes.

Flight—Heavy, with rapid motion of the wings.

Food—Consists of fish and crustacea, from research work carried out it has been proved that these birds only feed upon the slow swimming fish such as weed fish (*Odaa*), cat fish (*Cnidoglanus megastomus*), toad fish, and box fish. Upon rivers and lakes the fresh water yabbie forms the greater part of their food, and young turtles are devoured.

Nest.—They nest in colonies, sometimes several thousand pairs together. The nest is substantially built of sticks generally of mangrove or samphire, some of which they break off for themselves; it is placed in the fork of a bush usually a man-

grove, but where such is not available any low bush will suit their purpose, such as tea tree or samphire, often several nests are placed in the same shrub. The lining is seaweed or grass, but this soon becomes caked with excrement, as does the whole nest. The eggs are two or three in number, rarely four. They are quite white when fresh laid, but very quickly become nest stained. The outer coating is soft and chalky, and is easily scraped off, if this be done the true colour of the egg is found to be light blue or greenish blue. Eggs laid late in the season, probably second or third clutches, are often deficient in the outer coating, and show patches of the blue ground colour. Average measurement of 17 eggs, 6.27 x 3.83 c.m.

Largest egg, 6.80 x 3.80 c.m.

Smallest Egg, 6.05 x 3.50 c.m.

They do not normally lay more than one clutch in a season, but if a first clutch be destroyed they will lay another.

In South Australia the breeding season is the Autumn, usually from March to May.
