

Order Psittaciformes, Family Loriidae, Genus Trichoglossus.

Trichoglossus novae-hollandiae (Blue-bellied Lorikeet or Bluemountain).

Description—Head, cheeks and throat, deep blue; the centre of the feathers being lighter, giving the appearance of a stripe; at the base of the head a narrow band of greenish yellow; the upper surface green, with many feathers at the base of the neck marked with yellow and scarlet; tail basal half of the feathers, dark green shading into blue on the tips, under side of feathers greenish yellow; marked on the inner webs with yellow; the outer webs of the wing feathers dark green, inner webs dark brown to black, with a large spot of orange on each feather. Chest, rich scarlet, shading into rich orange on the sides. Abdomen, deep blue; the feathers on the sides scarlet, tipped with deep blue; inside the shoulders, bright blood red; under-tail coverts, yellow, tipped with green; bill, coral red, tipped with yellow; iris, orange, shading to red; feet, ashy grey.

Measurements—Total length, 328 m.m.; wing from body to tip, 192 m.m.; spread, 426 m.m.; bill, 16 m.m.; tarsus, 18 m.m.

Distribution—Southern Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, including Kangaroo Island.

Habits—Noisy and gregarious, having a shrill loud call, and when many birds are feeding in the same tree it is difficult to hear oneself speak. They congregate in great flocks at times while at others they are to be met with in twos and threes. They shift about according to food supply, and are to be met with in the big timber country as well as the low mallee. They are confined to the coastal belt as a rule, and they have not been met with in the interior. They are undoubtedly the most gorgeous of our South Australian parrots, and when a number are feeding close together in the bright sunlight they present a wonderful sight in their rainbow colourations.

Nest—The eggs are laid in the dry dust at the bottom of a hollow spout of a gum tree. Usually the biggest tree in the neighbourhood is selected. Though they can hardly be said to nest in colonies it is usual to find several pairs nesting in the same vicinity, often in the same tree if it have enough suitable hollows. The nesting season is from August to December, varying according to locality.

Eggs—The eggs are two in number, of a rounded shape, the texture of the shell dull and lustreless. They are pure white when first laid, but soon become stained a brownish colour by the dust of the nesting hollow. Average measurement of six eggs, 2.74 c.m. x 2.26 c.m. Largest egg, 2.80 c.m. x 2.40 c.m.; smallest egg, 2.65 c.m. x 2.20 c.m.

Flight—Very swift and strong; they fly to a great height at times when moving from one locality to another.

Food—Consists of honey, varied at times with berries and seeds. They are very troublesome in the orchards at times, having a great liking for pears and apples.

Note—Loud and shrill, and when many are feeding in the same tree, quite deafening.

Habitat—Wherever the Eucalypts are flowering whether stunted mallee or the lofty gums. As soon as the trees finish blossoming they shift to another locality at times travelling great distances.
