

Bird Notes.

MARCH, 1923.

Reported at the Meetings.

Mr. Parsons said that while in the vicinity of Happy Valley with Mr. W. W. Weidenbach he had noted at least 20 Rosellas (*Platyccercus eximius*), and also a Blue-faced Honey-eater, at the end of February last.

Dr. Morgan had noticed at the end of February a Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) between Teatree Gully and Millbrook. Either this was an escaped bird or the species was working south.

Mr. McGilp said he had seen on 22nd March, during the train journey down from Quorn, many Red-rumped Grass-Parrots (*P. haematonotus*).

Mr. R. Crompton had noted about the same time six of these birds at Stonyfell.

Professor Cleland had noted them at Kuitpo also about the same time.

Professor Cleland said that the Black (Funereal) Cockatoo was destroying the pine-cones of *Pinus maritima* in the Forest at Kuitpo. In a bird secured, the crop contained

180 seeds. There were about 60 in a cone, and it was estimated that a bird would strip one tree in three days, so that 40 (and there were almost that number there) would be a menace. Mr. Corbin is adverse to shooting the birds wholesale, but would like the Association to look into the matter and see what could be done to keep them away. The bird, on skinning, showed a wonderful physical arrangement of the mandibles, to enable it to open hard cones and fruits. It was interesting to note that the seeds were all skinned, but not broken in any way. The skull bones were very porous, no doubt to compensate for the weight of the bill.

—By F. E. Parsons.—

While surveying in the hills near Adelaide on 9th March of this year, a bush had to be cut down in which a New-Holland Honey-eater (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae*) had built its nest, which contained two fresh eggs. The twig which sustained the nest was cut off and tied into a bush close by. When the nest was visited again on 25th March I was agreeably surprised to find that the nest had not been deserted, for it contained two just-hatched chicks. The foregoing, while interesting in regard to the birds not deserting the nest, also shows how late they are nesting this season. Another nest of the same species was noticed just ready for eggs on 8th March, and it also contained two chicks when visited on 25th March.

At Glen Osmond, one still evening in February, just after the sun had set, but before the Magpies had gone to roost, I was watching the erratic flight of a small bat which had evidently just left its roosting hollow, when it passed about 30 or 40 feet from a gum-tree in which a Magpie was just settling down for the night. Suddenly the Magpie made a fast swoop, catching the bat in its bill, and, returning to the same tree, made its supper off the unfortunate early bat.

—By Edwin Ashby, "Wittunga," Blackwood.—

From February until the present time small numbers of Swift Lorikeets (*Lathamus discolor*) have been seen from time to time. They roost in Peppermints, and, although there is unlimited honey about, appear to be feeding on the seeds of that tree, as in other years. This is by several months the earliest we have ever noticed them in this district. All the Lorikeets—*multicolor*, *concinna*, *porphyrocephala*, and *pusilla*—have been numerous. The two former have

been very destructive to the fruit in the district. The last mentioned (*pusilla*) has been only in small numbers.

Early in March a Mountain Thrush (*Oreocincla lunulata*) spent about ten days in my garden, hunting for insects in the soft ground of a well-watered rockery. This is the first time this bird has been noted in my garden, or, in fact, in the immediate neighbourhood of Blackwood.

For the last two months the Honey-eaters have been most numerous, and it is delightful to watch them drinking water out of the "Skinner system nozzles." I have a high overhead spraying pipe, and early in the morning and in the later afternoon this is visited by large numbers, often a dozen being on the bar at once, comprising several different species. The following is a list of the visitors at this temperance bar:—*Meliphaga penicillata*, *Zanthoniza phrygia*, *Meliornis novae-hollandiae*, *Glyciphila melanops*, *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, *Anthochaera carunculata*, *Meliphaga chrysops*. The last mentioned is not common, and is a little difficult of identification. I thought I heard the Spiny-cheeked (*A. rufogularis*), but have not noted it since, so this is a little doubtful, but quite likely.

—By R. C. Beck, Seaton Park.—

On the 1st March and on the three days following a pair of Bee-eaters, with a brood of four, paid us a visit. The young were content to remain on the clothes-line and allow the parent birds to feed them on large flying insects. The appearance of the food was like bees, and the old birds were very careful to avoid any danger from stings, as they frequently rubbed the insects on the wire before giving them to the young. The parents never returned without food—sometimes their flight was only a few yards. This is the first occasion on which I have observed these birds in the district.

—By J. W. Mellor, Lockleys.—

In spite of the parched conditions, Southern Pipits (*Anthus australis*) are still about in the paddocks, where they apparently still find plenty of insects. The drinking-pot and the sprinklers in the garden attract many birds, those most in evidence being Magpies, White-fronted Chats, Greenies, and Miners.

APRIL.

—By J. W. Mellor, Lockleys.—

A number of White-fronted Chats (*Ephthianura albigrons*) have been busy in the lucerne devouring lucerne-fleas and other insects. On 5th and 24th April a Fantailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis rubricatus*) was noted. It was very quiet, and, as usual during the winter months, scarcely noticed by the native birds. Several Southern Pipits (*Anthus australis*) were seen, and Boobook Owls (*Spiloglaur boobook*) were frequently calling in the evening of 5th April.

On 11th April I observed a pair of Magpies making repeated attacks on a large Brown Snake, which was rapidly crossing a paddock, and which eventually made cover. Several Southern Singing Honey-eaters were observed on the 8th, and on the 10th Rosellas (*Platyccreus eximius*) were calling loudly. The following day I picked up the dead body of a Coot (*Fulica atra*) by the roadside, and witnessed forty Galahs (*Botolphus roseicapillus*) flying over in a northerly direction. This is a most unusual record for this district. On 21st April I noted the first Flame-breasted Robin at Lockleys this season. Black-shouldered Kites (*Elanus axillaris*), Little Falcons (*Falco longipennis*), Whistling Eagles (*Haliaster sphenurus*), and White-necked Herons (*Myola pacifica*) were also recorded during the month.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

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