

*Bird Notes.*

By N. Hiles Pearse, The Gums Station, Florieton.

30/6/1931.—The red tecomas have been flowering lately, and they have been just alive with Honeyeaters—Singing (*Meliphaga virescens*), Yellow-plumed (*M. ornata*), White-plumed (*M. penicillata*), Spiny-cheeked (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*), and Noisy Miners (*Myzantha melanocephala*). Yesterday a dozen Babblers (*Pomatostomus* sp.) put in an appearance, hopping about in the *Durantia plumieri* hedge and turning over the litter with their beaks; what busy little chaps they are, and how they brag about it. Community singing goes on daily in the big gumtrees a couple of hundred yards away, the Galahs (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*) being there in full force, whirling and turning in the air, and doing gymnastics on the branches and telephone wires. At times they take a turn on the antennae of the wireless. I fear, sometimes, that the thin wire will snap, and on the sloping guide wires they often slip from top to bottom, holding the wire in their beaks. They are most amusing. We had a rare visitor lately. It appeared after a heavy blow off the coast. It is usual at times to roast a dead sheep in the coals in the poultry run, to give the fowls meat, and one morning I was very surprised to see a young Silver Gull (*Larus novae-hollandiae*) feeding quite happily with the fowls. It only stayed with us a few days.

30/7/1931.—I have definitely placed another species which I have seen on rare occasions in this locality—the Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*).

This morning I saw a Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*) fly into a corrugated iron tank on a stand which had a cover over it with a manhole. The bird had a feather in its mouth. I climbed to the tank and saw a nearly completed nest under the lid but too far to reach. As I examined it the birds flew around in distress. I have seen the nests of these birds many feet down the side of timbered and rock wells, have seen them leave same, but have not in the past noticed what mode of flight they adopt entering and leaving. I will seize the first opportunity I get to do so.

Willie Wagtails (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) have at times nested in the ivy creeper on the verandah, in the summer-house, and even on the rope of the shower in the shearer's bathroom. On one occasion the young birds (2) in the nest in the ivy became so large that I was afraid they would fall out, so with a long hat-pin I fixed another wagtail's discarded nest alongside. However,

*Bird Notes.*

they did not avail themselves of my kindness and the fledgings went on alright. These birds are not naturally timid, but one pair puzzled me. They had a nest with two eggs on the low branch of a figtree. I examined it one day, with the female bird shrieking "kitty kitty" in my ear and making vicious darts at me. When I went next day the remains of the eggs were on the ground, and a few days later the nest had been pulled to pieces. It may have been done by a natural depredator, but if it were done by the birds themselves it was my first experience of the kind, though I have known other species which destroyed their own nests.

Years ago, when I lived at a house three miles from here, a Singing Honeyeater made a nest in a verandah creeper and reared young ones for two consecutive seasons. It became so tame that it would hop into the kitchen and take crumbs off the table. We named it "Peter the Piper." It eventually disappeared.