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*Bird Notes.*

Notes from Florieton, S.A. By N. Hiles Pearse. 17th  
November, 1934.

On 20th August, 1934, I saw a small bird running among the shrubs in the garden. It was very quiet, and I could almost catch it. It flew on to a low shrub. I at first thought it was a young Starling, though it had the gait of a water-hen. Found it dead next morning, and sent it on to the Museum, where it was identified as *Porzana pusilla*, Marsh Crake. (Total length, 17.3 cm.; span of wings, 25 cm.; weight, 17.4 grammes). Have several times observed a pair of Herons flying over the house between two dams; they appear to be *Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*, White-faced Heron. I have noted five specimens of *Ninox connivens*, Winking Owl\*, all in the daytime. One on the fowlyard fence, one on a mallee, and three together on the ground under a mallee; they rose clumsily, and flopped into a tree, where they sat with heads reversed solemnly regarding me. I also flushed from hollow trees on two occasions *Aegotheles cristata*, Owllet Nightjar. I flushed an *Artamus superciliosus*, White-browed Wood-Swallow, from a shallow nest in the end of a broken-off mallee branch, which could easily be looked into from the ground, a nice nest of fine twigs and grass with three greyish-green speckled eggs. Also on another occasion I frightened an *Epthianura aurifrons*, Orange Chat, from its neat nest in a bluebush. It contained two eggs and a chick just hatched. I have seen a number of nests of *E. albitrons* White-fronted Chat, but none of *E. tricolor*, Crimson Chat. *Cuculus pallidus*, Pallid Cuckoo, made its appearance early in the spring. One specimen often settled on the fence of the fruit

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\* We think the species would be more probably *N. boobook*, Boobook Owl.—Editors.

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garden and allowed me a close look; a couple was often seen on the poultry-yard fence, and their quaint cries could be heard in the timber. I saw several specimens of *Lalage tricolor*, White-winged Triller, also one *Melanodryas cucullata*, Hooded Robin. I have observed several fine specimens of *Uroaetus audax*, Wedge-tailed Eagle, and quite a number of *Haliastur phenurus*, Whistling Eagle. These latter were very numerous years ago, and their strange whistling could be heard at all times in the big gumtrees, but, probably due to poison-baits, it is rarely that one sees more than one or two nowadays. These birds are no menace to the squatter. I have never actually known one to make a kill of anything; they seem to rely for their food mainly on their scavenging instinct. Our little flock of *Pomatostomus superciliosus*, White-browed Babbler, is still with us in the garden; they nest in a boxthorn hedge. The five *Grallina cyanoleuca*, Magpie-Lark, one of which died recently, have frequented the poultry-run since my last notes were sent in (see Vol. XII, pp. 102-103, 1933). The little family of Wrens, too, one male and two females, are often noted among the shrubs. They answer to the description of *Malurus cyanotus*, Blue-and-White Wren, though that species is not supposed to be indigenous to this part of the country, anyway, I am quite sure that I have seen a white-winged Blue Wren at times hopping amongst the swamps bluebush. The family mentioned has a peculiar habit—they often perch on the outside sash of our dining-room window, and peck at the glass. We have not decided whether the flies on the inside are the attraction or the reflections of the birds themselves†; at all events, I often obtained a close-up view of these shy little birds, which I should say was most unusual. *Coracina novae-hollandiae*, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike. These birds have been very numerous, and have been seen quite close to the gardens and buildings singly, or in pairs, or in small flocks, even up to five or six birds. A *Meliphaga penicillata*, White-plumed Honeyeater, built a nest in a *Tecoma capensis* shrub. The bird flew out just above my head, and I put my hand up and felt in the nest. There was one pink-speckled egg. The bird must have watched me, for it did not return to the nest until days later, and then it removed the nest bit by bit, and probably built elsewhere. It was a perfect specimen of a nest, lined with

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† The male bird is considered by some to take his own reflection as a rival.—Editors.

wool and grass interwoven. Contrary to expectations, the *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Budgerygah, did not arrive this year, although the speargrass was abundant; perhaps they had to cross too much droughty country to get here. I have only observed seven specimens of *Leptolophus hollandicus*, Cockatoo Parrot, and four or five of *Kakatoe sanguinea*, Bare-eyed Cockatoo, and no *K. leadbeateri*, Major Mitchell, at all this season. *K. roseicapilla*, Galah. These birds have nested very freely. I have seen numerous clutches of up to five eggs. I learned a lot about *Psephotus haematogaster*, Blue Bonnet Parrot, during the breeding season. In one hollow low down in a black oak five young birds were seen. I found that most of the hollows used for nesting were near ground-level, or just a few feet up from it, and the opening was often shaped like a keyhole, and so narrow as to only just permit the passage of the grown birds. The entrance in many cases bore the appearance of having been made by the birds themselves, as the bark had grown inwards around the openings, and was quite smooth from many years of use. I have been told that the same pair of birds will nest year after year in the same hollow, as long as they are undisturbed. *Barnardius barnardi*, Ring-neck Parrot, also prefers a small orifice to its nesting hollow, and the birds frequently chew the bark away around the entrance. A glance is sufficient to detect the nesting hollow from another, as years of use give very obvious signs. *Zonifer tricolor*, Banded Plover, has also nested freely this spring. I came upon two very small fledglings recently, and they dropped like stones immediately, and took on the appearance of two pieces of wood. A man tending sheep told me that he watched a nest daily until the young were hatched, and he saw that the chicks left the nest shortly after they came from the egg.