

**Field Notes in the Blue Mountains.**

BY EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U., R.A.O.U.

It was my privilege to spend the week-end June 12th last at Woodford, in the Blue Mountains, N.S.W. The altitude is

2,013 feet. The township is on a ridge, with steep gullies falling away on either side. The smaller gully bottoms were dense with shrubs, undergrowth, and ferns, though very few tree ferns were seen, and no typical tree fern gullies.

*Origima solitaria* (Lewin)—Rock Warbler.—Was seen running over the rocks early in the morning almost in the township, and also again later in the day one was disturbed in a small cave near the creek in the main gully. This bird we watched for some time within a few yards of us, exhibiting no signs of fear. It then flew on to the top of the rock beneath which was the cave, and settled quite close to another of our party.

*Mehura novaehollandiae* (Latham)—Lyre Bird.—In a branch gully, not far from the cave before mentioned, a freshly made lyre bird's nest was found. It was made of sticks and fine twigs, and lined with still finer twigs and roots. It appeared completed and ready for eggs. The hole was the shape of a half circle, the straight line at the top, the top overhung making a sort of eaves, no doubt to shoot the rain.

The nest was in the centre of a low grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea*), which was growing close to the edge of a small cliff. From the nest quite an extensive view down the gully could be obtained.

I sat for half an hour near the nest next day, hoping to get a sight of or to hear a sound of the birds, but neither heard nor saw them.

In some dense scrub on the rising ground above the locality of the nest were a number of open spots that had been used by the birds as performing grounds. Some were old ones, but one or two evidently quite recent.

I saw no *sericornis*, although the country seemed so suitable.

*Pycnoptilus floccosus* (Gld.)—Pilot Bird.—Two specimens of this interesting bird were obtained. They were both in the gully bottoms, and were creeping about under the fern in the silent mouse-like manner of a *sericornis*. I heard one early in the morning much higher up the gully, but evidently the birds were not calling, as that was the only time that I heard its cry, "a guinea a week."

*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* (Latham)—Spinebill.—These lovely little birds were exceedingly numerous and very tame,

also they were in full song, which was not the case with any other birds. Several times one would settle within a yard or so of me and pour out its sweet little song.

*Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera* (Latham)—Crescent Honey-eater.—This bird was everywhere.

*Lophoptilotus melanops* (Latham)—Yellow-tufted Honey-eater.—One of this lovely species of honey-eaters came and sat within a couple of yards of me, and I got a good opportunity of watching it.

*Nesoptilotis leucotis* (Latham)—White-eared Honey-eater.—These were very numerous. Its well-known "bull frog" note was one of the commonest sounds in the bush in the latter part of the afternoon.

*Strepera graculina*—White Pied Crow-shrike.—A flock of these birds were busy picking up fallen apples in a small orchard in the township. Their loud, not unmusical, cries were common sounds in the morning and evening. They are most destructive in the apple orchards.

*Platycercus elegans* (Gmelin)—Crimson Parrot.—Were in small flocks.

*Calyptorhynchus* (sp.).—Several Black Cockatoos were both seen and heard, but was unable to identify the species.

*Callocephalon galeatum* (Latham)—Gang-gang Cockatoo.—Several small flocks seen.

*Pachycephala pectoralis* (Latham)—White-throated Thick-head.—No males seen, and not once were their notes heard, but a female was shot. One wondered whether this species had gone nearer the plains for the winter, as one would have expected to find it one of the commonest species.

*Acanthiza lineata goulburni* (Mathews)—Striated Tit, and *Acanthiza pusilla*—White Brown-tit.—Were both common.

*Eopsaltria australis*—White Yellow-breasted Shrike-robin.—These charming birds were very numerous round the house on the top of the ridge, and seemed to frequent the more open spaces on the top of the hill rather than the denser gullies.