

—By J. W. Mellor.—

A pleasing observation was made on 16th October, when I noted the Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*). This is the first time I have seen the bird here. It was uttering its continuous wearisome whistle, a plaintive call, indeed, and put one in mind of the notes made by the young of the Harmonious Shrike-Thrush. At the beginning of the month there was quite a number of the Pacific Herons (*Notopteryx pacifica*). Thirty-six of these large birds were seen at one time at Fulham. They were paying attention to the swamps, where they were wading about knee-deep in the muddy water in search of aquatic insects, etc., and when

perched in a row on the tops of the posts of a fence close by they looked like a regiment in uniform in extended order.

Another thing in the feathered world for the month was the invasion of Eastern Black-tailed Water-Hens (*Tribonyx ventralis*). A number came to the Reedbeds, but far less than were recorded in some other parts. I noted them in thousands in the mallee country about Albert Hill, between Cooke's Plains and Lake Albert, where there are some shallow brackish swamps, with samphire growing in and around, but it was surprising to find them also right in the heart of the mallee scrub, and when riding or driving along they would often fly up in scores. My brother, Mr. P. W. Mellor, has his house not far from some of the brackish swamps, and in the morning, upon looking out on the cleared mallee land, the birds were literally in hundreds on all sides. I counted as many as a hundred at once in his fowl-yard, picking at the green grass and any other tit-bits that the barn-door fowls would otherwise have had. No doubt the dry conditions in the far north account for the birds coming down south, where water was in abundance. I could find no trace of their nesting.

On 7th inst., at Kinchina, White-eared Honey-eaters and Shy Ground-Wrens (*Hylacola cauta*), and young Red-capped Robins and Bronzewing Pigeons were observed, and early in the morning I was able to get quite close to several Bell-Birds. One, in particular, I watched for nearly 15 minutes. The bird was sitting on a small dead branch in a mallee tree about five feet high. At the beginning the call is in a low key, and appears to be about 100 yards away. As the bird continues the call gets louder, until it seems to be at one's feet. When the bird is hidden it is very difficult to locate on account of the ventriloquial effect.

On 11th inst., at Kuitpo, Black Cockatoos, Crimson Parrots, Mountain Thrushes, and young Striped Tit-Warblers (*Acanthiza lineata*) were seen.

On 14th inst., on the swamps near Plympton, the following species were noted:—Black-tailed Native Hens, White-necked Herons, White-fronted Herons, Silver Gulls, Whiskered Terns, Little Pied Cormorants, Hoary-headed Grebes, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Spur-winged Plovers, Red-capped and Red-kneed Dottrels, White-headed Stilts, Brown Song-Larks, English Song-Larks, and about 2,000 ducks.

On 21st inst., between Aldgate and Mylor, Black Honey-eaters and young of the Tawny-crowned Honey-eater, and Scarlet-breasted Robins were noticed. Black Cockatoos and White-shouldered Caterpillar-eaters were seen.