

Birds Observed at St. Francis Island.

By C. Pearce.

At 9 p.m. on Friday, 15th April, 1927, a party of five persons left Murat Bay for St. Francis Island. It is the largest of the St. Francis Isles, which form part of Nuyts Archipelago. That archipelago stretches 40 miles south-westward from Denial Bay, and was the eastern portion of Australia (New Holland) discovered on 26th January, 1627, by the commander Pieter Nuijts, member of the Council of India, and Francois Thijssen or Thijzoon, skipper, of the Dutch vessel "Het Gulden Zeepaard" ("The Golden Seahorse"). St. Francis Island is situated about 32 miles south-west of Cape Thevenard, and is upwards of two miles across east and west, and the same north and south. There are a few stunted teatrees on the western side and a plentiful supply of saltbush. The trip across was made in the cutter "Sunbeam," owned by Mr. William Arnold, who is also lessee of the island. He has resided on the island for about 40 years, and is now living there alone, his wife having died and their children having gone to the mainland. Very little of the land is suitable for cultivation, but a small pasture is sown with barley for hay. Near the homestead is a garden patch on which some fine vegetables are grown. There are a few natural springs of fresh water, and Mr. Arnold runs a few hundred sheep and at one time kept some Jersey cattle.

We arrived at a cove in the island at 3.30 a.m. on the 16th, and then transhipped into a small boat, for, although there is deep water close to the shore, the surf renders the landing tricky.

On our arrival we were greeted with the mournful cries of hundreds of Little Penguins. The island is undermined with thousands of burrows of the Short-tailed Shearwaters (Mutton-Birds), and at the time of my visit there were still many young birds occupying the burrows. I noticed the absence of Silver Gulls, but Mr. Arnold said the species occasionally visited the island, as well as the Bustard (*Eupodotis australis*). Many seabirds and waders were also seen, but could not be identified.

The following species were noted on the trip:—Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*), Stubble-Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*), Short-tailed Shearwater or Mutton-Bird (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*), Gannet (*Sula serrator*), Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*), six birds were seen on Bird Rock, near St. Peter's Island; Pacific Gull (*Gabianus pacificus*), Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*), Fairy Tern

(*Sterna nereis*), Pied Oyster-catcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Sooty Oyster-catcher (*H. unicolor*), Spur-winged Plover (*Lobibyx novae-hollandiae*), Hooded Dotterel (*Charadrius cucullatus*), White-faced Heron (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiae*), Cape Barren Goose (*Cereopsis novae-hollandiae*), 54 were counted near a well; White-breasted Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), four birds were seen and two old nests were on the cliffs; Brown Hawk (*Falco berigora*), Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*), Rock-Parrot (*Neophema petrophila*), Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*), Willie - Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), Restless Flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*), White-fronted Chat (*Epthianura albifrons*), Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*), Pipit (*Anthus australis*), Raven (*Corvus coronoides*), and Crow (*C. ceciliae*).
