

The Camp-out at Moree, N.S.W. and the Birds Observed

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Nankeen Night-Heron. Note the plume along the back.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

The Camp-out at Moree, N.S.W. and the Birds Observed

By C. E. BRYANT, Hon. Editor, Melbourne.

It is to be recorded that the Camp-out in October-November, 1933, was considered by all who attended as admirably organized and carried out, and that those who could speak from experience of earlier camps believed it to be, in the above aspects, at least the equal of the best-arranged of prior trips. For this, a note of appreciation is due first to Mr. Neville W. Cayley, formerly State Secretary of the R.A.O.U. for New South Wales, for his efforts at the Sydney end, and his co-operation with Moree members of the Union; and next, amongst such Moree members, to Messrs. Basil Morse and R. F. Bailey. The bulk of the task of arranging the erection of the camp, with its attendant work of dealing with supplies and their transport, as well as the conveyance of delegates to the site chosen, and other labours, fell upon those two members. Valuable assistance is also acknowledged from Messrs. Wm. Brennan, T. C. Hinder, and Ken Kirkby, whilst Mr. Arthur Mawhinney's services as guide through the intricate swamps of the Watercourse was an incident that enabled the party to see much more of the country around the camp than would otherwise have been the case. The placing at the disposal of the members of their cars by various delegates and friends was also a valuable aid.

The following constituted the personnel of the camp:—From New South Wales—Messrs. R. F. Bailey, E. J. Bryce, Master Charlie Brennan, Messrs. L. D. Cameron, Neville Cayley, Norman Chaffler, A. J. Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Gwynne, Dr. and Mrs. Garnet Halloran, Misses Berice and June Hinder, Miss D. Hordern, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Kirkby, Mr. J. Roy Kinghorn, Miss Florence Irby, Mr. Tom Iredale, Miss L. Lodge, Mr. B. S. Morse and Master Ian Morse, Messrs. Anthony Musgrave, Arthur Mawhinney, and H. G. Paul, Dr. Eric Pockley, Messrs. J. Ramsay, C. A. Rhodes, Peter Roberts, and Master Andrew Thomas. Queensland was represented by Mr. A. C. Cameron, Dr. W. Hurworth, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Mayo, and Dr. Spencer Roberts; whilst Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Bryant and Miss M. L. Wigan attended from Victoria.

The site at first selected was near Ned's Hole, several miles south-west of "Bullerana" homestead; but on account of fairly heavy rains just prior to the date fixed for commencement of the camp, as a result of which it was expected much of the country in the vicinity would be flooded, it was decided to stay at the "Bullerana" woolshed, and consequently the camp was erected there—20

tents and a dining tent. The cooking quarters attached to the shearers' huts were made available, wherein the cooks engaged for the trip produced excellent meals. Other facilities resultant upon the camp being held at "Bullerana" included an unlimited supply of bore water and a plentiful quantity of tank water.

Two principal roads lead into "Bullerana" from Moree—it is about 25 miles between the two places—the northern one, that travelled by most of the party, running through "Midkiff" and "Colmlea" stations, and the other traversing the "Willowlee" holdings. From this latter road another track leads to "Boree," situated near the eastern branch of the Gwydir River, and a visit, through "Boree," to portion of the Watercourse nearby, to see rookeries of the Plumed Egret (*Egretta intermedia*) and the Nank'een Night-Heron (*Nycticorax calidarius*) was a feature of the Camp-out. A few Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea regia*) were also nesting in this locality.

Other trips from the camp included one to Ned's Hole, mentioned above, and one or two excursions towards the Big Leather Watercourse in a southerly direction—to rookeries of the Australian Egret (*Egretta alba*) and of the Little Pied Cormorant (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*). There a few Darters (*Audinga nova-hollandia*) were breeding, and also Grey Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) and Grey Teal (*Querquedula gibberifrons*) in fact, these three species, represented by three or four pairs of each, were to be found breeding in the vicinity also of all rookeries of other forms that were visited. Two visits were made to Talmoi Lagoon, where the first party was fortunate enough to see Pink-eared Ducks (*Mareca marmorata*). Brolgas (*Megalornis rubicundus*) were nesting near Talmoi, and a Spotted Bower-bird (*Chlamydera maculata*) had a bower within half a mile of the Talmoi station.

The country around Moree and the site of the camp is watered by the Gwydir River, an affluent of the Barwon-Darling. A few miles to the west of Moree the Gwydir breaks up into several channels. These anabranches rejoin the stream about sixty miles downstream, and they are, in places, twenty miles away from the Gwydir. The country between the channels is generally marshy and intersected by subsidiary channels. There is in this area (the Watercourse) something like 1,000 square miles of country subject to flooding, country that is ideal for harbouring all kinds of water birds. In *The Emu*, Vol. XXII., pp. 25-36, Mr. F. C. Morse records 210 birds seen by him in the Moree district, whilst in Volume XXXI, at page 124, Dr. C. Sullivan records that about 240 species of birds have been recently recorded therefrom. It is quite likely that from



Brolga's Nest and Eggs.

Photo. by C. E. Bryant, R.A.O.U.



Nests of White Ibis.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

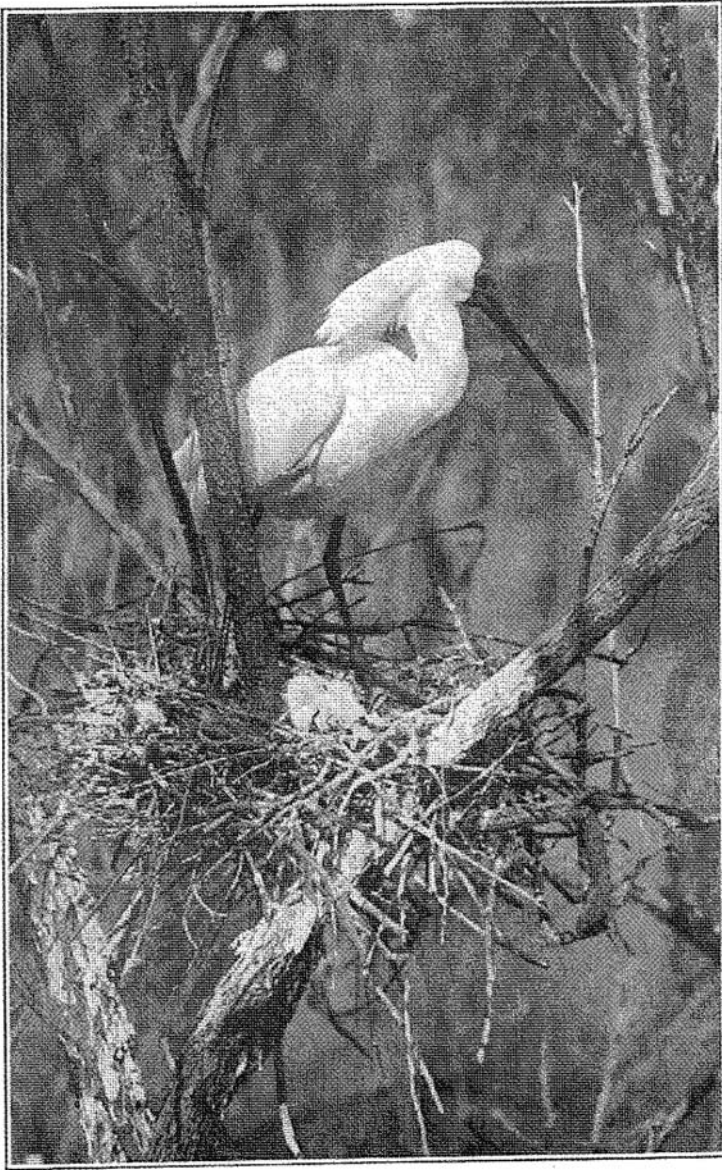
time to time more will be added to the list as sporadic records are likely to occur in such a locality. Mr. R. F. Bailey has heard several reports of a white-headed Duck being seen on the Watercourse—a feature that suggests the Burdekin Duck (*Tadorna radjah*).

West of Moree the country is flat, and, when the Gwydir River and the Watercourse channels flood, the waters spread out over a very extensive area of country. Flooding is usually slow, the great extent of the floods governing the rapidity with which the country is inundated. The country near the camp was gradually being flooded whilst the camp was in progress, the waters rising and gradually creeping to within 300 yards of the camp site. The country consists partly of plains clothed chiefly with roly poly (*Aniscantha muricata*) and sweet-scented prickly wattle (*Acacia jarnesiana*), burrs of several kinds also being common—and obnoxious. In between the plains are belts of timber, known locally as "ridges," although not higher than the surrounding country. Considerable areas of well-grassed park-like land occurs also.

Around the camp numbers of the bimbil box or poplar box (*Eucalyptus populifolia*) were growing—these were the common tree of the area. Black box (*E. bicolor*) was also common. These trees were in some places interspersed with belah (*Casuarina lepidophloia*) and wilga (*Geijera parviflora*). Other trees and plants found in practically every locality visited were white or cypress pine (*Callitris robusta*), sandalwood (*Erri-nophila mitchellii*), gidgee (*Acacia cambagei*), and grewi or emu apple (*Owenia acidula*), the fruit of which resembles a plum. Out towards the swamps were coolibahs (*E. microtheca*), red gums (*E. rostrata*), boree or weeping myall (*Acacia pendula*), and swamp wattle or yarran (*A. hamatophylla*).

The plains were fringed with leopard-trees (*Flindersia maculosa*), so named after the spots on the bark, bumble-tree, also called wild orange (*Capparis mitchellii*), and warrior-bush or emu-bush (*Apaphyllum anatum*). This last is the favourite bush of the white butterfly, which also feeds on *Capparis lasiantha* (Muderimbah), a prickly climber with many white blossoms; many of these were seen near the camp and other places.

The pink and yellow Darling or Swainson pea (*Swainsonia phucoides*) was common on the plains, and pretty native blue-bells (*Wahlenbergia gracilis*) grew in profusion in the open forest country. On the plains also grew small saltbush (*Atriplex canopulatum*) and some old man saltbush (*A. nammeleria*), blue bush (*Kochia sedifolia*), and nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*), a food plant



Royal Spoonbill, showing breeding Plumes.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

of the aboriginals, who used the seeds—this plant grows in the swamps also. *Cymbidium canaliculatum*, a parasite, was in flower—many of these were seen on dead trees.

The native yam (*Dioscorea sativa*), once a staple food of the aboriginals, was noted amongst the pines, and it was remarkable how deep one had to dig in order to get the tubers. The wild pigs which frequent the Watercourse are partial to them, as are also bandicoots. Needle-trees (*Hakea leucopetra*), the largest of the hakeas, were seen in the forest, and lignum (*Muhlenbeckia cunninghamii*) grew in the swamps. Other plants noted were the quinine or bitter-bark (*Astonia constrictor*), native lime (*Eremocitrus glauca*), and occasional carbeens or hill red gums (*Eucalyptus tetricornis*).

In closing these remarks dealing with the locality and commencing on the list of the birds seen, it is to be remarked that as individual parties worked the country in different directions, and as far less opportunity occurred for comparing notes than was desirable, it is difficult to make the list of birds as comprehensive as it might be. Several members whose notes are referred to in the following account co-operated in making the list as complete as it actually is, and Mr. E. J. Bryce forwarded notes on the flora.

The following birds were seen:—

Dromaius novaehollandiae. Emu.—Several small groups of two to eight birds were seen on the plains and lightly-timbered areas. En route to camp five birds were noted between "Midkin" and "Colmlea." Another party was observed near "Talmoi." Some of the birds were quite close to flooded country. C. A. Rhodes reporting two birds running which were seen by him whilst up a tree in one of the swamps—a tree in which Little Pied Cormorants and Yellow-billed Spoonbills were nesting. Some young birds were noted.

Turnix velox. Little Quail.—A few birds flushed near the camp were considered by the party that saw them as referable to this species.

Coturnix pectoralis. Stubble-Quail.—Flushed occasionally along the edges of the plains.

Geopelia cuneata. Diamond Dove. A pair of Diamond Doves was usually to be seen around the last gate before the camp on the track from Moree. C. A. Rhodes reports four birds, which appeared to be parents and two young, near Moree.

G. humeralis. Bar-shouldered Dove.—Reported by Dr. Spencer Roberts—"a pair seen in the belah," and by C. A. Rhodes, who found a bird sitting in a newly-built, empty nest in a small coolibah. The sitting bird's mate was also about the nest.

Ocyphaps lophotes. Crested Pigeon.—Common in all localities, and breeding freely. Most nests found contained young birds, the majority of which were fully fledged, and which left the nests if disturbed. One or two nests still had eggs, however. A. C. Cameron found one of these—a nest with two eggs in a sandalwood tree about half a mile east of the camp. The tree was covered by a prickly climbing vine. As is usual with the species, the bird did not flush until an observer approached to within about five feet of the nest. The note of this species is a rather metallic, rattling one.

Hypotenidia philipensis. Banded Landrail. A. C. Cameron found a rather mutilated, but freshly-killed bird of this species in the nest of a Little Eagle near Ned's Hole. P. Roberts found a nest with four eggs not far away. Several old nests were noted in the reeds. This and the four next species did not appear to be nesting to any extent—possibly on account of the liability of the channels to flood at the time.

Tribonyx ventralis. Black-tailed Native-Hen.—The first of the two parties to visit Talmoi Lagoon reported a great number of these birds. Occasional odd birds were seen, but generally, on account of flooded conditions, a quiet approach to the sags frequented by the birds could not be made, and these birds and other *Ralliformes* were well under cover before the parties could get close to them.

Gallinula tenebrosa. Dusky Moorhen.—These birds were numerous and in flocks—probably waiting for the water to go down before commencing to breed in numbers. Two nests were discovered at "Boree," one with four and the other with two eggs—all fresh. A few birds were found building. N. Chaffer found a nest with nine eggs.

Porphyrio melanotus. Eastern Swamphen.—A few birds seen in most parts of the Watercourse visited. Heard calling.

Fulica atra. Coot. Mixed with the three foregoing species. Many at Ned's Hole, but they all took to the reeds at the party's approach.

Podiceps sp. Grebe. A. C. Cameron reported three Grebes swimming in the open water near the colony of White Egrets. The exact identity could not be discovered.

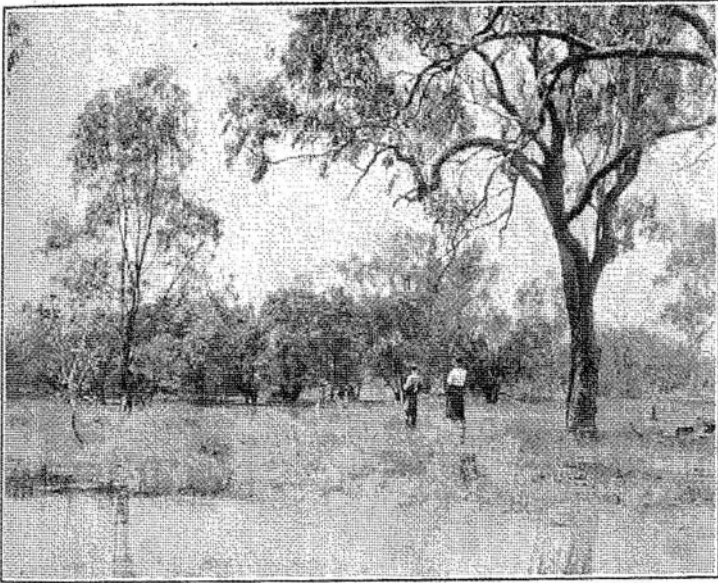
Phalacrocorax carbo. Black Cormorant. Several birds at the Egret rookery mentioned in the foregoing, and occasional single birds or pairs seen flying over the swamps.

P. ater. Little Black Cormorant.—Nesting in company with Nankeen Night-Herons, Little Pied Cormorants, Plumed Egrets, and White Egrets (that is a few birds were to be found in each of the colonies of the other species mentioned that were visited. Some nests contained eggs (in some cases merely one fresh egg was in the nests), whilst others contained young in all stages, many large enough to jump from the nests when disturbed. Where eggs were found, the usual clutch appeared to be five eggs. These Cormorants were in nearly all cases nesting in the tops of trees, and as so many nests contained advanced young, the Cormorants had probably been first on the scene, and had chosen the most inaccessible sites.

Microcarbo melanoleucus. Little Pied Cormorant. Most nests contained eggs—from three to six (usually five). One nest with young was found within three feet of a nest of a Whistling Eagle. Like the foregoing, this species was nesting in company with Egrets and other forms. A case was reported of a young Cormorant in an Egret's nest, into which it had probably fallen from its own cradle above.

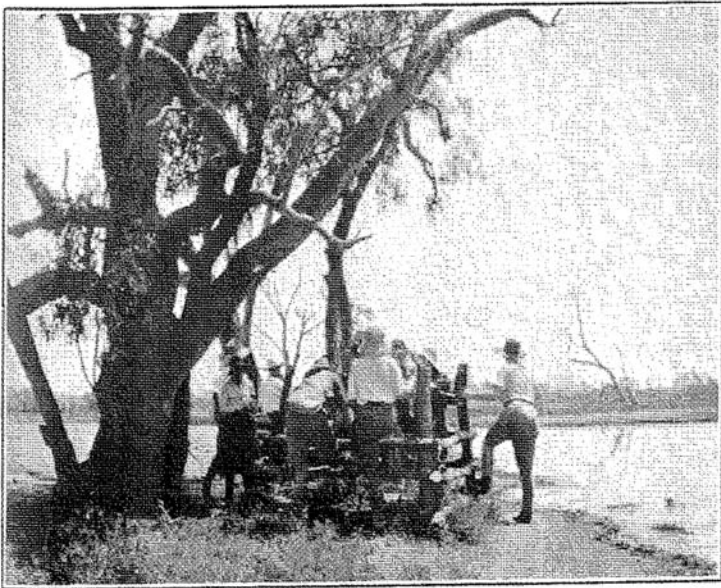
Anhinga nova-hollandiæ. Darter.—A few nests were found in each colony of other breeding birds visited—Ned's Hole, "Boree," etc. Practically no birds, except those of which the nests were located, were seen. The nests were usually in small dead trees growing in the deeper water just clear of the green timber in which Egrets were nesting. They were situated, generally, about 12 feet above the water, and contained from three to five eggs.

Pelecanus conspicillatus. Pelican. Seen, from a distance, at "Boree," and, on Talmoi Lagoon, about a dozen birds were in evidence.



Partly-flooded Country near the camp.

Photo. by M. L. Wigan, R.A.O.U.



Investigating a Wagtail's nest near Budgerree Swamp.

Photo. by W. Hurworth, R.A.O.U.



Plumed Egret approaching eggs.

Photo. by J. S. Ramsay, R.A.O.U.

Chlidonias leucopareia. Marsh Tern. On the morning that we "broke camp" about 20 Marsh Terns congregated on a small (about 50 feet square) dam, the extent of which was rapidly growing, however, by flooding, near the camp.

Erythronyctes alpinus. Red-kneed Dotterel. A single bird was to be seen at any time during the camp at the dam mentioned in the foregoing. Dr. Roberts reported seeing young birds.

Charadrius melanops. Black-fronted Dotterel. N. Chaffer reports "Noted at waterhole on 'Bullerana.'" Seen also on the plains near "Midkin."

Lobibyx nova-hollandiae. Spur-winged Plover. Seen in several localities, especially in the flooded country not usually under water.

Zonifer tricolor. Banded Plover. Few birds noted. N. Chaffer photographed the species near Talmoi Lagoon. He states: "Bushes were placed in two positions, the first 6 feet and the second about 60 feet from the nest. On the following day Mr. Elliott and I built a rough hide of hessian, and covered it with the bushes in No. 2 position. The cameras were hidden in the other bushes near the nest. Our car was then moved some distance away, and we entered the hide. The bird, however, would not approach. Finally one person only entered the hide, and the second drove the car away. The bird soon came to the nest, and by repeating the procedure several photos were secured. In fact the bird would begin the approach to the nest as soon as the car was driven off."

Himantopus leucocephalus. White-headed Stilt. Common. Parties of up to 100 birds were seen. Smaller flocks were usually quite close to the camp on the small dam near the "Bullerana" homestead, and, as the flood waters crept nearer to the camp, within 150 yards of the camp on the south.

Erolia acuminata. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. A flock of about 30 was seen by B. S. Morse, K. Kirkby, and A. C. Cameron on a swamp towards "Midkin" and about six miles east of the camp. They were feeding around the margin of the water in company with Stilts and Spur-winged Plover.

Gallinago hardwicki. Australian Snipe. Several birds (all singles) were flushed one from around the dam near "Bullerana," but usually from the long grass around the edges of the swamps. The sometimes comparatively leisurely flight of the species, contrasted with its great speed when flushed, was noted on one occasion when a bird came slowly flying towards some observers that it had not been - then veering off at a greatly-increased speed when it did see them.

Burhinus magnirostris. Southern Stone-Curlew. It is believed that no bird of this species was actually seen, but they were heard calling on several occasions.

Megalornis rubicundus. Brolga.—A pair of birds was noted on the plain north-east of the camp, and only about a quarter of a mile from "Bullerana," one morning by three of the party, and another pair was found breeding about three miles beyond Talmoi Lagoon at a small lagoon known as Budgerce Swamp. C. A. Rhodes reported three pairs seen near "Boree."

Plegadis falcinellus. Glossy Ibis.—Some members of the party that visited Ned's Hole reported that whilst in the sags they had seen several small lots of this bird flying overhead. On the second last day, when the majority of the party had resigned themselves to leaving the Watercourse without seeing this comparatively rare form, about 30 alighted about 150 yards away from the camp. Since the camp, R. F. Bailey has reported that many hundreds of Glossy Ibis were nesting during the camp at "Wayholme," near "Talmoi."

Threskiornis molucca. White Ibis.—Nesting in the sags at Ned's Hole and other localities, and, in addition, often seen flying overhead, or in small groups in the swamps, high on dead trees. Eggs usually three, occasionally four. Some nests had young birds which varied a great deal in size in the same nest. Some young birds had a patch of white down on the top of the head.

T. spinicollis. Straw-necked Ibis. —Common large flocks (in the air chiefly) always to be seen.

Platalea regia. Royal Spoonbill. About 20 pairs were found breeding at "Boree," and odd birds (not nesting) were seen in other localities. The magnificent nuptial plumes of this bird were a surprise to many. C. A. Rhodes, who thoroughly investigated the small rookery at "Boree," supplied the following notes:—"While I was climbing a big gum Mr. Tom Iredale picked up a Royal Spoonbill with his glasses. After waiting a considerable time, the bird showed no sign of moving. Another was seen further on; this one circled near one corner of the Boree Egret rookery. We waded about 500 yards, and 100 yards from where the Egrets and other birds could be seen sitting. Then in the largest tree on the biggest nest a bird stood up. It was the Royal Spoonbill. From there we went carefully. Managed to get in the rookery without disturbing the sitting birds. We 'perched' on a suitable log and were able to pick out ten or more nests all with a bird sitting. The nests were considerably larger than those of the Egrets, Herons, and Night-Herons, and were usually the highest nests in the trees. They were almost flat structures of sticks of the trees in which they were built. Lined with green grass like *paspalum*. First tree climbed had a nest with five fresh eggs—two eggs quite clean, the rest more or less stained. Second tree had two nests, one with five eggs, the other with three. The next two trees with Royal Spoonbills nesting both had four eggs fresh, the last-laid egg being clean. The total was four nests with five eggs, five with four, and three with three. One nest had four eggs, one of them being chipped by a young one. They all seemed about to hatch, for I could hear the young in the other three eggs. This was the only nest with incubated eggs. Some more nests were further on, but I had climbed all I felt like in wet trousers. Only one tree had two nests of the Royal Spoonbill in it."

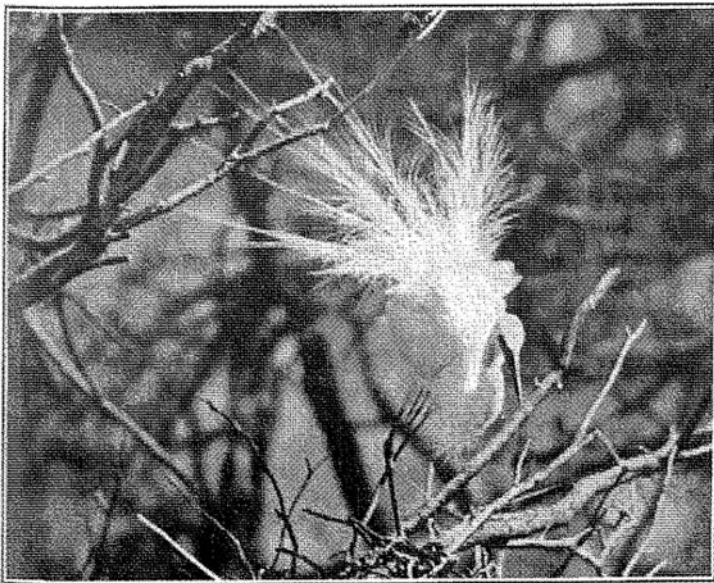
Platalea flavipes. Yellow-billed Spoonbill.—Concerning the nesting of this species also, C. A. Rhodes's notes were made available. He says: "Seven nests in big swamp gum on 'Bullerana.' A Whistling Eagle had a nest at the top with a young one ready to leave. Little Pied Cormorants were nesting on every limb (with eggs and young). A White-necked Heron had a nest with three eggs on the lowest limb. Had to use a 'prop' to get to the second limb. The Spoonbills' nest contents were as follows:—One nest four eggs, four with three eggs—the others one and two clean eggs. One nest had the three eggs all differently shaped. Another nest had one Spoonbill's egg and one Cormorant's egg, the latter having probably been laid there, as there were no Cormorants' nests on the branches above the Spoonbill nest."

Egretta intermedia. Plumed Egret.—A few birds had been noted in the rookery of White Egrets, referred to later, breeding south of the camp, but at "Boree" some hundreds of birds were found nesting, in company with Nankeen Night-Herons. Many of the nests, which were in dead trees, were quite low. The nests contained eggs that in nearly all cases were apparently very fresh, no young birds were seen. The plumes were much in evidence. Dr. Roberts records "has tip only of the bill yellow, the rest is a beautiful dark orange red. The face colouration is a beautiful apple green, quite uniform, and not just a wash of green. The tibia and fibula region has a splash of yellow through it."



Plumed Egrets at nests.

Photo. by C. E. Bryant, R.A.O.U.



Plumed Egret alighting.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

E. alba. White Egret. All birds of this species seen and there were many hundreds in the rookeries visited—had very dark horn-coloured or black bills, a fact that called forth a great deal of comment. The White Egret is considered to have a yellow bill in the non-breeding season, with black at the tip, but Mr. Mawhinney maintained that, in this district, birds have the bill black all the year through.

The bird figured by Mathews, vol. III, facing page 431, shows the bill to be considerably more yellow than black, and his description reads, "Bill yellow, tomium and tip black." On page 432 Mr. Mathews includes notes, made on birds collected by A. H. Mattingley, to the effect that certain birds in full breeding plumage had the bills black. "It seems possible," he says, "that when the plumes are first in their full glory the bill is black, but that it soon changes to yellow, the black on the tip being the last to disappear." Included also (p. 432) are notes from C. F. Cole, "mature male, bill nearly all black; female same [as bird described], but has the bill all black. Generally this bird becomes full-plumed, and the bill changes from yellow to black, before the breeding season starts." Mr. Mathews proceeds that the above notes "make it absolutely certain that the Australian bird has the bill black at some time in its career, and also indicates that the period during which the bill is black is comparatively fleeting, and is not extensive as in the European form."

In view of the foregoing, Mr. Mawhinney's note is of interest, at least suggesting that the black bill stage is not "comparatively fleeting."

The face colour is a much darker green than in the foregoing species, projecting back to a point below the eye.

The nests were all situated in coolibahs.

Notophoxyx novæ-hollandiæ. White-faced Heron. Fairly common. Nesting.

N. pacifica. White-necked Heron.—Odd pairs were breeding interspersed throughout the colonies of breeding Egrets, etc., or, as was more often the case, in dead trees in the deeper open water channels near such colonies. The nests were in all stages from the fresh egg to half-fledged young. Usually 3 eggs, sometimes 4 or 5.

Nycticorax caledonicus. Nankeen Night-Heron. A large colony (perhaps 300 pairs) was found mixed with Plumed Egrets at "Boree". Generally their nests (all in dead trees) were higher and more inaccessible than the Egret nests. The majority of them had not commenced laying, although some nests with heavily-incubated eggs were found. Evidently, from the accompanying photograph by Mr. Chaffer, taken after the main party left, some birds had advanced a step further.

Ixobrychus minutus. Little Bittern.—Reported by A. J. Elliott.

Botaurus poicileptilus. Brown Bittern. Repeatedly heard in the tall sags at Ned's Hole.

Anseranas semipalmata. Pied Goose.—Several small flocks flying overhead were observed by parties in the swamps.

Chenopsis atrata. Black Swan.—Noted at Budgeroe Swamp beyond Talmoi Lagoon, at "Boree", and occasionally in small parties passing over the camp.

Chenonetta jubata. Manded Goose. Reported by N. Chaffer as noted on three occasions at "Bullerana", away from the swamp. A group of four seen at a waterhole on two occasions, and pairs flushed from the ground away from water.

Dendrocygna cytoni. Plumed Tree-Duck.—K. Kirkby identified a few ducks of this species. Dr. Roberts reported a pair. They swim high in the water, and show the plumes plainly.

Querquedula gibberifrons. Grey Teal. Common, usually in small flocks. On several occasions this and the next species were both nesting in spouts of the same dead tree. The usual number of eggs was 8 to 11.

Anas superciliosa. Grey Duck.—Common, but not often in flocks of considerable numbers. Nesting.

Malacorhynchus membranaceus. Pink-eared Duck.—One pair noted on Tubnor Lagoon.

Stictonetta neovosa. Fleckled Duck. Reported by one member of the party—it is believed by K. Kirkby.

Nyroca australis. White-eyed Duck (Hardhead).—Large numbers seen on the wing, in company with other Ducks, at one of the rookeries visited. Single birds seen on other occasions. N. Chaffer reports "considerable numbers of what I took to be this Duck seen."

Biziura lobata. Musk-Duck.—A few birds noted. Young birds also seen.

Circus approximans. Swamp-Harrier.—Near "Boree".

Circus *audax*. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—Several birds noted.

Hieracetus morphnoides. Little Eagle. Two nests, each with one egg, were found in tall swamp gums—Diamond Firetails (*Zonagenithas goddardsi*) had nests built into each of them.

Haliastur sphenurus. Whistling Eagle.—Known locally as the "Rabbit Hawk". A nest with 2 eggs was found, and 3 nests with young. The Diamond Firetails had nests in the bottom sticks of these nests also. A. C. Cameron reported birds from near "Midkin" Station as often flying up from dead rabbits on the ground; it was not possible to ascertain whether or not they had killed the rabbits.

Lophoictinia isura. Square-tailed Kite. Reported by several members. A dead bird, partly missing, was found on the plain north-east of the camp. A. C. Cameron states that they were common towards Mt. Grattai.

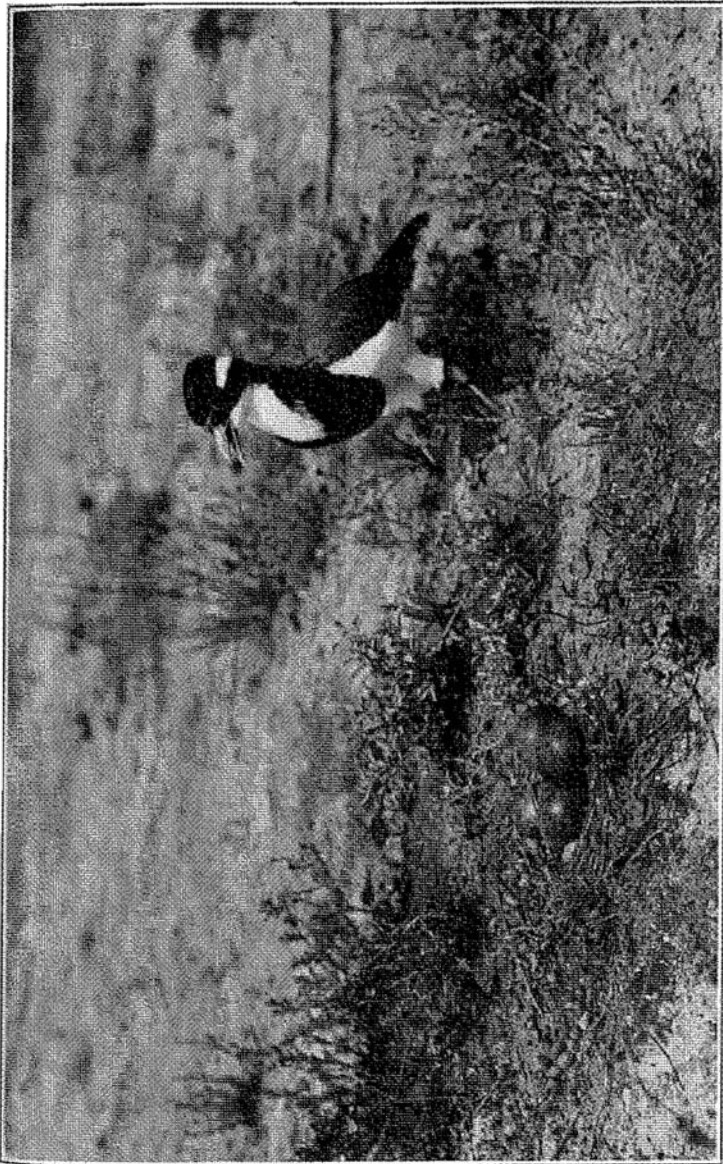
Falco longipennis. Little Falcon. Mr. F. C. Morse, in his article on the birds of Moree (*The Emu*, vol. XXII) stated that this bird was "thinly distributed all over the district". Neither he nor Mr. Arthur Mawhinney, both of whom spent many years in the district, ever took an egg of the bird, although they saw one nest. C. A. Rhodes reported that Tom Iredale, whilst waiting while he (Rhodes) was investigating a Whistling Eagle's nest, saw what appeared to be a Little Falcon with a mouse soar through a belt of coolibah, then call, and immediately another bird met it, took the mouse, chattered, and went back to a tree with four or five nests situated in the thickest part of the timber. When he (Rhodes) got back to the water they went to the tree, and the bird was sitting on the newest nest. He climbed up, the bird staying on the nest till he was on the branch. Generally all the Hawk family leave the nest on anyone's going near. The old nests were all like the new nest. They suggested one nest a year for five years. The new nest was flat on top, and lined with coolibah leaves, some quite fresh. It had three fresh eggs in it, but as they were creamy white, they were obviously not Falcon's eggs.

F. berigora. Brown Hawk. Fairly common on the plains. Half a dozen nests found had young; one nest contained 2 fresh eggs.

F. cenchrroides. Kestrel. Occasionally seen.

Ninox boobook. Boobook Owl.—Heard calling.

Tyto longimembris. Eastern Grass-Owl. One bird observed by Dr. Roberts on a dry "ridge" in one of the swamps. He says that it "conveniently showed the bare shanks, and was larger than *Tyto alba*."



Banded Plover at Nest.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

Kakatoë galerita. White Cockatoo. A pair had a nest in the principal White Egret rookery visited. They circled overhead in the manner of their kind, amongst the other white birds, screeching loudly. The nest, in a hollow in a green coolibah, about 30 feet high, contained one egg.

K. roseicapilla. Galah.—Common. Nesting holes examined were empty, but the birds were apparently beginning to nest, because, as is usual with this species, many holes had been "prepared" by the birds' biting a band around the entrances.

Leptolophus hollandicus. Cockatiel. Common, and usually in small flocks, although some were nesting. Nest found containing three feathered young. Nest discovered by noting a pair of birds flying to it. The female walked along a limb to a knot hole, and backed into it tail first. The bird kept up a twittering chatter when the tree was climbed, and did not leave the nest until removed. It returned to the nest immediately the climber left.

Aprasmictus erythropterus. Red-winged Parrot. A few birds noted, although not common, and a nesting pair (with young birds) was reported from near the house at "Midkin".

Platycercus adscitus. Pale-Headed Rosella. *P. eximius*. Eastern Rosella.—Both these birds were infrequently seen the former on only one or two occasions.

Barnardius barnardi. Mallee Ringneck. The "Bullen-bullen", as it is locally called, from the native name—in southern Australia the same name is that of the Lyrebird—was common in the lightly-timbered areas. Usually in pairs.

Psephotus haematonotus. Red-backed Parrot. Small flocks and single birds and pairs around the "Bullerana" homestead and other well-grassed areas. Often in the timber. Breeding. Seen at hollows in trees in the Egret rookeries.

P. hematogaster. Blue Bonnet.—One of the commonest of the Parrots. Mostly in small groups up to six—chiefly in pairs. Nesting.

Melopsittacus undulatus. Budgerygah.—Several flocks were noted passing over. Large numbers were breeding at Budgeroe Swamp—a name that suggests the native name of the bird.

Pedargus strigoides. Tawny Frogmouth.—A bird was noted on the way to the White Egret rookery—in a small creeper-covered sapling on a dry "ridge".

Ægotheles cristata. Owllet Nightjar. Several birds disturbed from hollows.

Eurytenus orientalis. Dollar-bird.—Reported by one member of the party, but no notes given.

Dacelo gigas. Kookaburra.—A pair was nesting in a leaning dead tree in a swampy area about 3-mile south-east from the camp. This nest probably had eggs as the sitting bird was frequently flushed. Another nest containing three young was located in a termites' mound.

Haleyon macleari. Forest Kingfisher. *H. sanctus*. Sacred Kingfisher.—Both these birds were seen in and around dead trees growing in the water at Ned's Hole—one particular bird caused considerable discussion on account of its being generally more blue than *H. sanctus*, yet not having the wing patches of *H. macleari*. Both species were, however, recorded elsewhere. Nests of *H. sanctus* with 4 eggs.

Merops ornatus. Rainbow-bird.—Comparatively common, especially around the different homesteads. Breeding.

Cuculus pallidus. Pallid Cuckoo.—A few seen and heard. Eggs found in several nests.

Owenavis osculans. Black-eared Cuckoo.—Seen near Talmoi Lagoon.

Chalcites basalis. Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo.—Several Bronze Cuckoos were seen—and heard. Near "Boree" a Blue Wren (*Melanurus cyaneus*) was flushed from a nest on the edge of a swamp. The nest contained two eggs of the Wren and an egg of this Cuckoo.

Hirundo neoxena. Welcome Swallow.—Common around the woolshed at "Bullerana", where it was nesting, and other homesteads.

Hylochelidon nigricans. Tree-Martin.—A colony at Ned's Hole nesting in hollows in dead trees.

H. ariel. Fairy Martin. Nesting in the woolshed at "Bullerana" and other localities. Plentiful in Moree, nesting in buildings, and out from the town under culverts. Other nests found under a leaning tree near a swamp.

Rhipidura flabellifera. Grey Fantail.—A few birds in the timber along the fence at the back of the camp.

R. leucophrys. Willie Wagtail.—Near Budgerce Swamp a pair of birds had built in the dead sticks thrown across a fly-trap (a contraption that suggested a tree-guard). The nest was very exposed. It contained three almost fully-grown young.

Myiagra rubecula. Leaden Flycatcher.—A female seen by T. Iredale and C. A. Rhodes.

Seisura inquieta. Restless Flycatcher.—Odd birds seen. Nesting.

Micreeca fascians. Jacky Winter.—Common in the timber at the back of the camp, and in other mixed grassed and timbered areas. Nesting. Young (heavily striped) also seen.

Petroica multicolor. Scarlet Robin.—A few birds observed.

P. goodenovii. Red-capped Robin.—A few birds seen near "Bullerana", but did not appear to be nesting. A nest with three young birds, almost feathered, was found near "Talmoi".

Melanodryas cucullata. Hooded Robin.—Young birds out of the nest were noted near Talmoi. Occasional adult birds seen.

Pachycephala rufiventris. Rufous Whistler.—A nest containing three eggs was found in a bloodwood just north of the camp. Plentiful in the forest areas.

Colluricincla harmonica. Grey Thrush. Nesting. Not common.

Gallinula cyanoleuca. Magpie-Lark.—Nesting around the camp and seen at all small areas of water.

Pteropodocys maxima. Ground Cuckoo-Shrike.—A nest containing young was placed about 25 feet high in an isolated dead tree near "Boree". Nest composed of wool and Cockatoo feathers—chiefly Galah. N. Chaffer reports that the birds were very tame at the nest, and that the young were fed largely on grasshoppers. The food was obtained entirely from the ground. The open situation of the nest was compensated by the remarkably-protective colouration of the young, which were hardly distinguishable from the grey, dead branches from even a small distance.

A nest in a bloodwood, which shadowed the camp, had just been vacated by young birds, which, in company with the parents, and possibly other Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes, visited it a good deal, chiefly in the afternoons. As many as six birds were noted at a time.

Ceracina novae-hollandiae. Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.—Nesting above the tents.

C. robusta. Little Cuckoo-Shrike.—Reported, but no notes available.

Lalage tricolor. White-winged Triller.—Common, especially in the timber north of the camp. Two pairs were nesting in the bloodwood, near the camp, visited by the Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes. Many nests found, mostly high, but one, containing 2 eggs, about 12 feet high, in a wilga-tree.

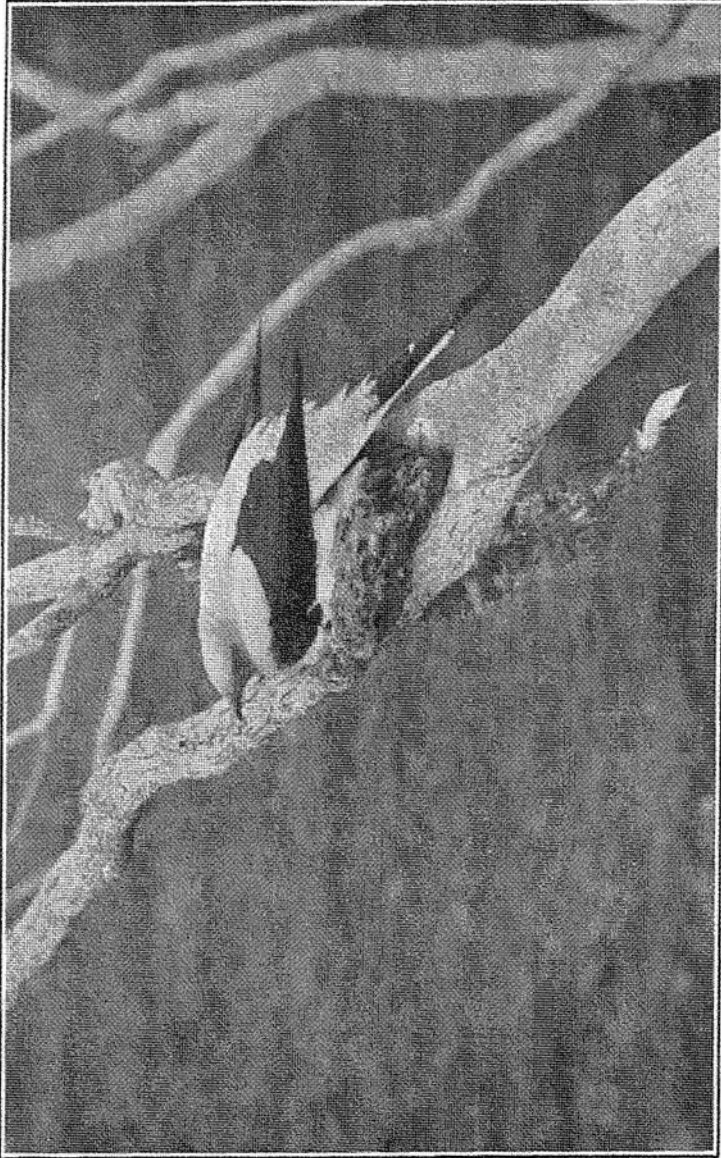


In the Plumbed Egret rookery near "Boree".



Bower of Spotted Bower-bird.

Photos by A. J. Gwynne, R.A.O.U.



Ground Cuckoo-Shrike on nest.

Photo. by J. S. Ramsay, R.A.O.U.

Pomatostomus temporalis. Grey-crowned Babbler.—Several large parties. Breeding. N. W. Cayley commented upon the general richer colour of these birds than is usual.

Epthianura albifrons. White-fronted Chat.—Common amongst the roly-poly and the *Acacia farnesiana* bushes on the plains, and in the rush-grown areas along swamps. Nesting near the camp.

E. tricolor. Crimson Chat.—Several small groups seen—usually 1 to 6 birds—one near "Colmlea", others amongst the *Acacia farnesiana* north-west of the camp, and at Budgerree Swamp. Often in fairly wet localities. Dr. Roberts reported that birds were building.

E. aurifrons. Orange Chat. I believe I am the only member of the party that saw this Chat at the camp, although the plains near the camp were systematically worked searching for it. A male was noted one morning perched on roly-poly bushes. It had been with White-fronted Chats (about half-a-dozen) which all flew, leaving it behind. Possibly a female Orange Chat accompanied them. Local members said that it was the rarer of the two coloured Chats found in the district, being irregular in its appearances. A. C. Cameron reported a doubtful record, a bird seen from a moving vehicle, near "Midkin".

Gerygone fusca. Western Warbler.—Fairly numerous around the camp—in the small timber. Two nests investigated contained two eggs, almost hatched, and three eggs respectively. The latter was about 3 feet high in an *Acacia farnesiana*. The nests are smaller than those of *G. olivacea*. The song of this form is similar to that of the White-throated species, but not so loud.

Smicronis brevirostris. Brown Weebill. Breeding in the trees above the camp. Not very common, but they were not calling much and probably passed unnoticed in many cases.

Aphelocephala leucopsis. Eastern Whiteface.—Nesting around the camp, being quite numerous on the grassy areas near the "Bullerana" homestead. A nest with two eggs was found in a post, others in a dead stump (entrance about 8 feet) and in a thick prickly bush. The last mentioned contained three young, which left the nest before the camp terminated.

Acanthiza nana. Little Thornbill.—A few birds seen, but not common. The birds appeared to be more pallid than usual. A nest with young was found in the topmost twigs of a poplar-box north of the camp. Another nest was being built in a strip of timber bordering the plain at the rear of the camp. The nest is supported by several upright twigs around the sides.

A. pusilla. Brown Thornbill.—A few birds seen in lightly-timbered patches.

A. uropygialis. Chestnut-tailed Thornbill.—First noted at "Colmlea". Nesting in fence posts, cracks in trees, and in holes in dead trees.

A. chrysorrhoa. Yellow-tailed Thornbill.—Several small parties. Nesting.

Cincloramphus cruralis. Brown Skylark.—Common on the plains. Found building.

C. mathewsi. Rufous Songlark.—A few birds only seen. Three adults in attendance on young in a nest.

Megalurus gramineus. Little Grassbird.—Breeding in most of the patches of sags visited. Most nests were either being built or held 1 or 2 eggs. Birds plentiful and frequently calling. A nest that appeared to have one egg had another imbedded in the lining. One nest, built in the sags over moving water, held three young.

Acrocephalus australis. Reed-Warbler.—Very common in the sags. About a dozen nests found ready for eggs. Two nests had 3 eggs, others 1 and 2. In Moree a Reed-Warbler was nesting in a clump of bamboos in a garden.

Malurus cyaneus. Blue Wren. Not common. A nest found near "Boree".

M. cyanotus. Blue-and-white Wren.—Common. Several nests found, three with young. Many young birds out of the nest and attended by parents, were found. Old nests also found. This Wren breeds chiefly in the poly-poly and *Acacia farnesiana*. Many instances of males breeding in immature plumage were noted—in fact very few fully plumaged males were seen. The female has a blue-tinged tail, and it was noted that young birds had a slight indication of colour there. The young are very grey in general appearance. Young were often being attended to by several adult birds.

Artamus leucorhynchus. White-breasted Wood-Swallow.—Noted in two or three localities. Nesting in spouts of dead trees at Ned's Hole, at the White Egret rookery, and at "Boree"—about half a dozen birds in each group. Nests composed entirely of soft, dry grass blades. In some cases nearest dry land was half-a-mile away.

A. personatus. Masked Wood-Swallow. *A. superciliosus*. White-browed Wood-Swallow.—Both noted near Talmoi Lagoon.

A. melanops. Black-faced Wood-Swallow.—N. Chaffer and party recorded this species after the main party left camp. There were six birds at "Boree" in open country. A nest with three large young, 5 feet from the ground, was discovered. It was built up in the fork for about 9 inches with grass stems, and a few rootlets. The food was chiefly secured from the ground—the birds hovering a good deal when catching it.

A. cyanepterus. Dusky Wood-Swallow. A few birds. Not recorded as nesting.

Neositta (?) chrysoptera. *Sittella (?)* Orange-winged. Seen in timber at "Boree".

Climacteris picumnus. Brown Tree-creeper. Birds seen with grown young. Several nests found with birds taking food in frequently.

Hicium hirundinaceum. Mistletoe-bird. *Pardalotus punctatus*. Spotted Pardalote.—One or two records. Heard occasionally.

P. ornatus. Red-tipped Pardalote.—A nest of this species was found in a hole in a stump just north of the camp. Occasionally three adult birds descended from the timber to this stump.

Meliphreptus gularis. Black-chinned Honeyeater.—Noted by N. Chaffer on one occasion at "Boree".

Plecterhyncha lanceolata. Striped Honeyeater. Nesting. A nest in a drooping branch of a poplar-box near the White Egret colony contained 3 chipped eggs and 1 young bird. Another nest contained 3 young. Both nests were about 12 feet high.

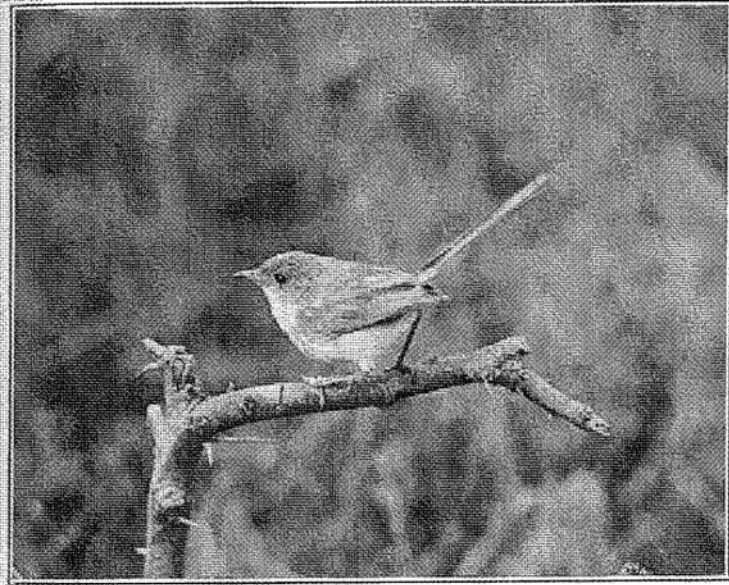
Meliphaga penicillata. White-plumed Honeyeater.—A few birds, chiefly in the poplar-box trees. Nesting.

Myzantha melanoccephala. Noisy Miner.—Many nests found, some with eggs, others with young birds. Numbers of nestlings out of the nests.

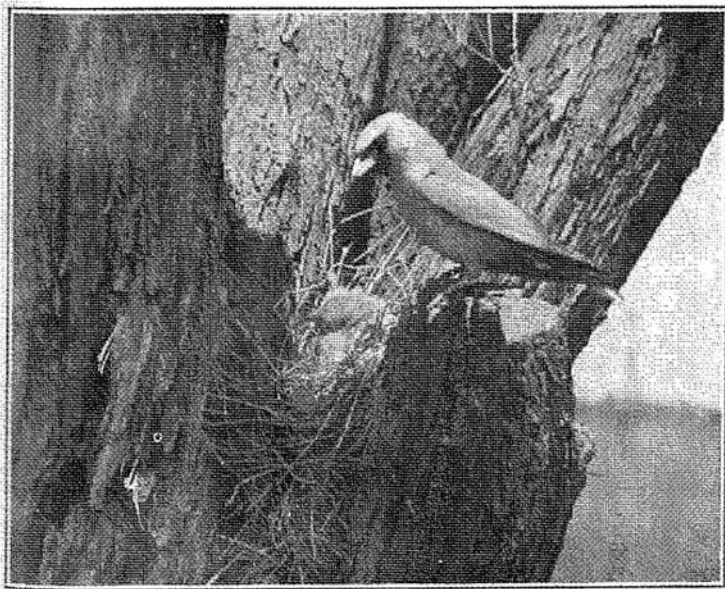
M. flavigula. Yellow-throated Miner.—Few birds only. See Dr. C. Sullivan's remarks as to the distinct areas occupied by this and the preceding species (*The Eneo*, vol. XXXI, p. 134). Nesting. Usually 3 eggs.

Acanthagenys rufogularis. Spiny-checked Honeyeater.—A nest was found in a low sapling. It contained three eggs.

Entomyzon cyanotis. Blue-faced Honeyeater.—A few birds seen. Building near Moree.

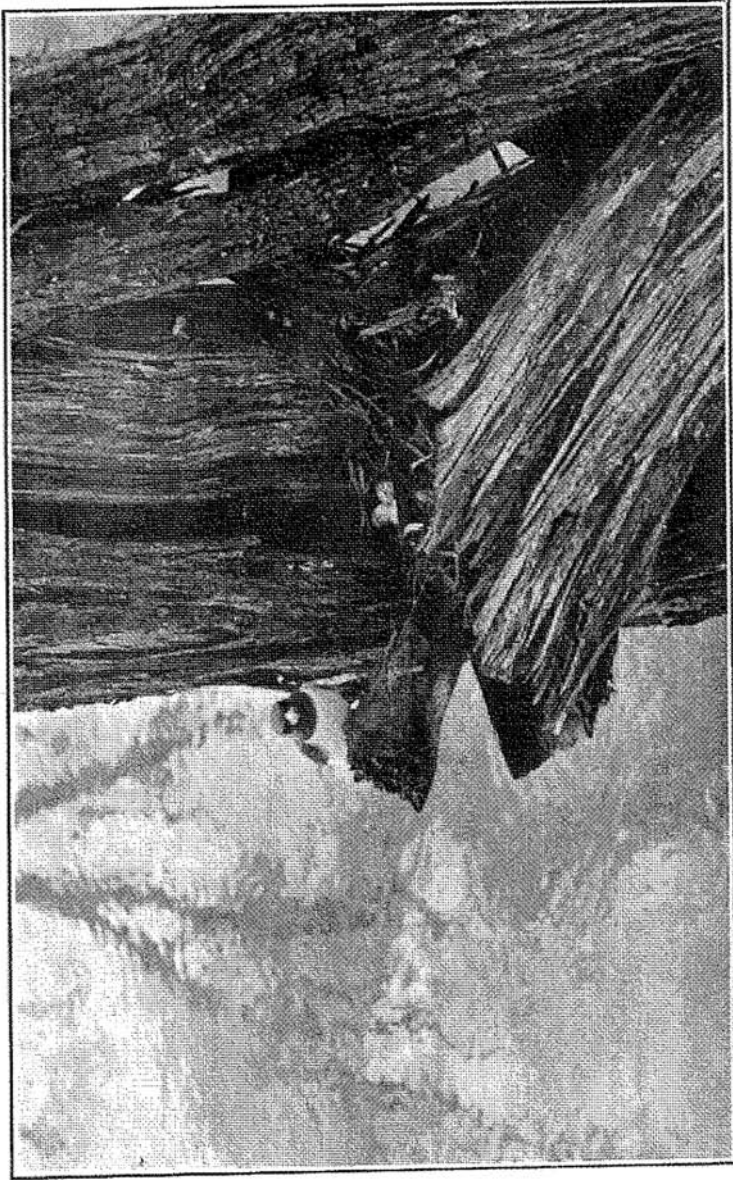


Female White-winged Wren.



Black-faced Wood-Swallow at nest.

Photos. by N. Chaffer. R.A.O.U.



White-breasted Wood-Swallow near nest.

Photo. by J. S. Ramsay. R.A.O.U.

Philemon corniculatus. Noisy Friar-bird.—Occasionally seen and heard. Nesting—fresh eggs.

P. citreogularis. Little Friar-bird.—Sparingly distributed in places visited. Nesting—eggs half-hatched.

Anthus australis. Pipit.—A few birds on the plains and in the grass patches.

Zonæginthus guttatus. Diamond Firetail.—Nesting—often in the bases of Hawks' and Eagles' nests. One tree (a poplar-box) on the flat north of the camp had six nests of this species. Some nests contained eggs.

Steganopleura bichenovii. Double-banded Finch.—Nesting near the camp in a prickly bush—five eggs. Other nests contained young and six eggs respectively. Several small parties also noted.

Taeniopygia castanotis. Zebra Finch.—A few birds seen, chiefly just north of the camp. Nesting.

Aidemosyne modesta. Plum-headed Finch.—N. Chaffer saw this bird on one occasion at "Boree."

Oriolus sagittatus. Olive-backed Oriole.—Several birds seen. A nest with three eggs was found about half a mile from "Bullerana." It was about 15 feet high in a belah.

Struthidea cinerea. Grey Jumper.—Eight birds appeared to be in attendance at a nest containing three large young near the camp. Several of the group fed the young. This noisy bird was one of the commonest birds near the camp.

Chlamydera maculata. Spotted Bower-bird.—A bird was said to have visited the "Bullerana" homestead garden almost daily. Near Talmoi Lagoon a bower was found. Numerous sheep vertebrae were gathered near the front of the bower, then a heap of "white" glass, chiefly glass stoppers and bottle necks, and one or two pieces of blue glass. Two cup handles, one caught on a stick of the bower, and one or two other pieces of china, were in the collection. In the bower itself there were also a few pieces of glass and china and one or two green berries. The bird was seen sneaking through the bushes at the rear of its bower.

Corvus sp.—These birds were probably Ravens.

Corcorax melanorhamphus. White-winged Chough.—Two or three small groups seen.

Cracticus nigrogularis. Pied Butcher-bird. **C. torquatus.** Grey Butcher-bird.—Both fairly common, the former the more common. Both nesting.

Gymnorhina tibicen. Black-backed Magpie.—Common.

Sturnus vulgaris. Starling.—Several times seen, but not common.

Around Moree a few birds were seen that were not noted at the camp. The Red-backed Kingfisher (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*) was seen there, and just south of Morce (Tycannah) the Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabella*) was observed. A few Bustards (*Eupodotis australis*) were noticed also at Tycannah.

The Mr. Battarbee referred to in *The Emu*, vol. XXXIII, page 155, is Mr. Rex Battarbee, the well-known water-colour artist. His, and others' reports of news of the Night Parrot, suggest that an intensive search for the bird in the areas indicated should result in its being again found.