

XXIX.—*Descriptions of some new Birds'-eggs from Northern Australia.* By D. LE SOUËF, C.M.Z.S.

1. GREAT BOWER-BIRD (*Chlamydodera nuchalis*): Cat. B. vi. p. 391.

Specimens of this bird were obtained at the Katherine River by Mr. E. Olive, who was collecting for Dr. C. Ryan, Dr. W. Snowball, and the writer. He was also fortunate in obtaining their nest and eggs, and saw one of their bowers. He obtained two males. They are easily recognizable from *C. orientalis*, the back being much more mottled, besides their larger size. In one of the specimens the feathers just in front of the nuchal ornament are tipped with white, forming an irregular white band, and several of the lilac-coloured feathers of the ornament are also tipped with white, especially at each end. Mr. Olive states that the females are more shy than the males. Their food consists of fruit and insects.

Their bowers are large, being formed of twigs and arched over at the top, and are from 2 to 3 feet long, the passage through being about 9 inches wide, and the width of the sides of the bower about 6 inches. At both ends were the usual collection of land-shells, pebbles, small bones, seeds, coloured feathers, &c. At one bower of these birds found on the Victoria River, N.W. Australia, and about 100 miles from the coast, were several turtle-bones. The birds were frequently rearranging the position of their collection. Three nests were found; each had a single egg in it, but the full clutch is probably two. The nests were built about 15 feet from the ground, on what is locally called an "ironwood"-tree in the open forest, and were situated near the end of the branch, one being in a bunch of mistletoe. They are open and lightly built of twigs, without any lining, and measure—external depth 5 inches, internal 2 inches; external diameter 8 inches, internal 4 inches. The eggs are very similar in appearance to those of *C. orientalis* and *C. maculata*, but not quite so handsomely marked. The one taken on December 18th, 1898, has the ground-colour of a

very light shade of green, and is well marked all over with short, irregular, wavy lines and blotches of a greenish-brown tint in varying shades ; many of these appear as if beneath the surface of the shell, being of a lilac-colour, and many of them are longer than the surface-markings. The shell is slightly glossy and elongate in form, and a little smaller at one end ; it measures 1.78 by 1.16 inch. The three eggs taken vary in size and markings.

2. CRIMSON-WINGED LORY (*Ptilistes coccineopterus* Gould) : Cat. B. xx. p. 481.

Mr. Olive secured several of these beautiful birds, and also their eggs. They are similar in appearance to *P. erythropterus*, but are considerably smaller in all their measurements ; some specimens of the latter I received from Cooktown average $12\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, but the former $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The green on the breast and the blue on the back of the *P. coccineopterus* is darker than in the *P. erythropterus*, and the amount of crimson on the wing considerably less. Their food consists of seeds and honey.

They nest in the hollow spouts of the eucalyptus-trees, the eggs being laid in the débris at the bottom, in one case 10 feet from the entrance. There were only two eggs in each of the three nests found, but the full complement is probably four ; they are pure white when laid, but soon become stained ; they are oval in form and measure :— (1) A. 1.18 by 1.1 inch, B. 1.21 by 1.1 ; (2) A. 1.14 by 0.96 inch, B. 1.10 by 0.98.

3. RED-COLLARED LORIKEET (*Trichoglossus rubritorquis*) : Cat. B. xx. p. 60.

These birds are very plentiful in the north-western coastal districts and are very noisy, flying generally in flocks, screeching as they go, and feeding on the honey of the various flowering trees and shrubs. They nest in the hollow spouts of the eucalyptus-trees at various distances from the entrance.

The eggs are elongate and slightly smaller at one end, and are of a dull white colour, but soon get stained brown.

December and January seem to be their principal nesting-season, and the two clutches herein described were found respectively on December 29th, 1898, and January 25th, 1899, and they measure:—(1) A. 1·4 by 0·82 inch, B. 1·8 by 0·84; (2) A. 1·6 by 0·82 inch, B. 1·2 by 0·83.

These eggs were exhibited before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria on March 13th, 1899.

4. BANDED HONEY-EATER (*Myzomela pectoralis*): Cat. B. ix. p. 138.

These little birds are fairly plentiful in Northern Australia, extending from the east coast right across to the western side. They are found principally in open forest-country, especially where the timber is small. I noticed a few of them about 30 miles inland from Cooktown, and they were generally seen in pairs and had a pleasing twittering note. Their nest was found on December 24th, 1898, but contained only one egg, which is probably not a full clutch. It was suspended between a fork near the end of a branch of an ironwood-tree, and is composed outwardly of a few vine-tendrils and fine strips of bark, kept together by cobwebs, and the same useful material is used to fasten the nest to the branch. The inside is lightly lined with fine pieces of grass. The structure is thin, and the eggs can easily be seen from below; it measures—internal depth 1 inch, external $1\frac{1}{4}$; internal diameter $1\frac{3}{4}$, external 2. The egg is a light reddish hue and with no gloss. It is darker on the larger end, where it forms an indistinct zone, with markings of a light reddish colour. It measures 0·66 by 0·48 inch.

5. MARBLED FROG-MOUTH (*Podargus marmoratus* Gould): Cat. B. xvi. p. 135.

This bird is the most beautifully marked of the Australian *Podargus* family and also the smallest. It is especially plentiful at Cape York, North Queensland, and I have also had specimens from some distance south of Cooktown. They build the usual flat stick-nest, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, generally on a horizontal bough, and the bird sits close and is very difficult to detect. A nest was found by

Mr. R. Hislop on August 12, 1898, and contained one egg, white in colour, slightly lustrous, the two ends being nearly of a uniform size. It measures 1.44 by 1 inch.

The eggs of all the Australian *Podargi* have now been described.

6. CHESTNUT-BREASTED CUCKOO (*Cacomantis castaneiventris*): Cat. B. xix. p. 274.

This bird I saw on many occasions on the Bloomfield River, near Cooktown, and often heard it uttering its mournful note during the night, and I have also noticed it flying about among the bushes, evidently hunting for nests, but I never saw or heard the Fan-tail Cuckoo (*C. flabelliformis*) in this district. Mr. R. Hislop has sent me a clutch of the eggs of the *Sericormis magnirostris*, in which was deposited the egg of a Cuckoo, which I have little doubt was laid by the *C. castaneiventris*, and which I provisionally describe as such until an opportunity shall occur of seeing the young bird that is hatched from these eggs. The ground-colour is white, with minute freckles of a brownish tint, rather sparsely scattered over the egg, and forming a light zone on the larger end. It is nearly oval in shape, and measures 0.82 by 0.58 inch.

The egg of the *Cacomantis variolosus* (the Square-tailed Cuckoo) has been found on several occasions in the Cooktown district, but always in the dome-shaped nest of the *Glycyphila modesta* (Brown-backed Honey-eater).

XXX.—*On the Trachea of the Freckled Duck of Australia*
(*Stictonetta nævosa*). By A. J. CAMPBELL.

FOLLOWING a hint given me by Professor Newton, I obtained for Mr. J. J. Ed. Degen, of the Melbourne Museum, some specimens of *Stictonetta nævosa* (Cat. B. xxvii. p. 324) for dissection. I send herewith Mr. Degen's observations on the trachea of this remarkable species, of which the exact systematic position is still uncertain, together with a figure of that organ in the male:—



Le Souef, William Henry Dudley. 1899. "XXIX.—Descriptions of some new Birds' Eggs from Northern Australia." *Ibis* 5(3), 359–362.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1474-919x.1899.tb01485.x>.

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