

eye, *Zosterops lateralis*, can confuse the listener as to the identity of the caller.

On May 19, 1973, a mutant Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, *Meliphaga melanops*, a species which is a common visitor, was observed. Its plumage was almost entirely yellow except for the wing primaries and part of the crown which were green, giving at first sight the impression of an aviary-escapee canary. The yellow head tufts however completely identified the bird.

It appeared very pugnacious and seemed to be top of the peck order among the ordinary Yellow-tufts and very aggressive towards the White-plumed Honeyeaters, *M. penicillata*, Fuscous Honeyeaters, *M. fusca*, Red Wattlebirds, *Anthochaera carunculata*, and others. It was observed in the garden frequently for several months, often at close range in garden shrubs.

During the following spring the bird left and was seen several miles to the north. It became only a note in a bird file until May 4, 1975, when, to our surprise, the mutant again appeared in our Yellow Gum, with all its former pugnacity to its kind. The re-appearance suggests that perhaps a north/south migration of Yellow Tufts may take place, although the bird was not noted at all in 1974. We wait hopefully as May, 1976 approaches.

Another somewhat similar mutation was seen in this district 14 km north-east of Maryborough in 1975. A Southern Yellow Robin, *Eopsaltria australis*, conformed to its name entirely by being pale yellow in all its body feathers and with all the wing feathers white. This bird did not appear to be an albino as the eye colour was the usual dark-pigmented, large eye of the Robin.

A striking thing about this bird was its bright colour among the dark green and grey of the Box and Gum forest with the dense understorey of *Cassinia arcuata*.

The mutant kept close company with a pair of normal Yellow Robins which were busy nest building. It continually brought nesting material and frequently sat on the unfinished nest. This activity was not welcomed by the normal pair and the mutant was repeatedly driven from the nest. This nest was destroyed by some other bird and the mutant persisted in the area even after a second nest was attempted and destroyed in the same manner. After several days the mutant was not seen and despite many visits to the area we failed to locate again this very outstanding bird. *Yvonne and Ron Bishop, Maryborough, Victoria 1/4/76.*

Some records for Flinders Island, Tasmania. The Furneaux Group is in south-eastern Bass Strait and Flinders Island, about 200,000 ha. in area, is its largest island. It is usual to see many Cape Barren Geese, *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*, White-faced Herons, *Ardea novaehollandiae*, and Spur-winged Plovers, *Vanellus novaehollandiae*, feeding in the pasture areas. Less common here is the Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, of which there is yet no published record for the Furneaux Group. Last year the White-necked Heron, *Ardea pacifica*, the White Ibis, *Threskiornis molucca*, and the Straw-necked Ibis, *Threskiornis spinicollis*, were seen here

for the first time and none of them had been recorded previously in the Furneaux Group.

The sightings given below include records by two other Flinders Island observers, Mr. Ludo Mineur of Fairhaven and Mr. D. G. F. Smith of Whitemark.

White Ibis. My first sighting was on May 15, when seven were feeding in swampy pasture about 1.2 km east of Whitemark and there were eight at the same place on the next two days. On May 25, Smith saw three in pasture on The Bootjack about 4.8 km north-west of Lady Barron and twenty-five in pasture about 2.4 km east of The Dutchman. My next sighting was of eleven flying north-west over Whitemark swamp, about 400 m north-east of Whitemark, on May 26. On the same day Smith saw ten in swampy pasture on Happy Valley at Lacotta. Next day I saw six feeding at the locality 2.4 km east of The Dutchman. Both my next sightings were at the Whitemark swamp locality. On August 21, there were two flying to the north-west and on September 30, there was one flying in the same direction. My last record was on October 24, when there were seventeen feeding in Whitemark swamp at the usual spot and they flew to the north-west when disturbed.

Straw-necked Ibis. Smith saw one in pasture about 2.4 km east of The Dutchman with White Ibis and Cape Barren Geese on May 25.

Cattle Egret. My first sighting was of one in pasture beside South Pats River about 4.8 km north of Whitemark in autumn, 1965. Then I saw eight in pasture about 600 m north-east of Whitemark on April 17, 1973. My next sightings were all in 1975. Between April 25, and June 5, I saw one, and sometimes two, in pasture about 2.4 km north of Whitemark on eight occasions. The largest number I saw was four which were roosting in trees with many White-faced Herons and hundreds of Little Pied Cormorants, *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*, beside Pats River near the Flinders Island aerodrome on May 31. My sole record away from that general area was of one bird in pasture about 2.4 km south-east of Whitemark on May 26.

White-necked Heron. Mineur made the first local record when he saw a single bird on a grazing property at Fairhaven on June 25. My only record was a single bird in swampy pasture on The Bootjack about 3.2 km north-north-west of Lady Barron on August 28.

Another unusual bird here last year was the White Egret, *Egretta alba*. The only previous Furneaux Group record was of one bird at Camerons Inlet on the eastern coast of Flinders Island in September, 1967 (Green, 1969). On August 9 I flushed a large heron-like bird from the Long Point salting and it landed on the adjacent mudflat. It had a yellow bill, all white plumage, black legs and was considerably larger than the nearby White-faced Herons. Because of its size and appearance I concluded that it was a White Egret.

This year Cattle Egrets should return to the island but some of the other species might not be seen again for many years. *J. S. Whinray, Flinders Island, Tasmania, 28/3/76.*

REFERENCE

Green, R. H., 1969. "The Birds of Flinders Island." *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum*, 34.

Red Wattlebird bathing in dew-laden foliage. On the morning of April 10, 1976, at approximately 08.30 hours, a Red Wattlebird, *Anthochaera carunculata*, was observed bathing in an unusual manner in the back garden of my home at Camberwell, Victoria.

The morning was fine, but cool with a nip in the air, and a heavy dew had fallen through the night. The air was calm as I sat over a breakfast coffee. A sudden rustling directly above my head drew my attention to the Wattlebird in the nearby trees. It dived amongst the upper area of two densely foliated trees which were heavily coated in moisture, Lillypilly, *Syzygium crebrinerve*, and Spotted Gum, *Eucalyptus maculata*.

The bird flew back and forth between the two trees and with each contact with the leaves it shook its body in a typical bathing motion. After 4-5 trips to each source of moisture the Wattlebird flew to a more open-foliaged tree and perched on a horizontal branch. It then shook off the excess water from its feathers and began to preen. *F. T. Morris, Camberwell, Victoria, 11/4/76.*

How rare is the Grey Falcon? The frequency with which I have sighted the Grey Falcon, *Falco hypoleucos*, on field trips between May, 1973, and October, 1975, (although not conducting a planned search for the species) seems indication that this falcon is not as rare as is supposed.

Grey Falcons were sighted on eight occasions, in three instances as pairs, giving a total of eleven birds. The localities and dates of the sightings were as appearing in the following list. The sexes and state of maturity, with the times of day to the nearest half-hour when sighted, and the behaviour of the birds is given, with detailed descriptions which follow.

SIGHTINGS

May 10, 1973: adult male; Quambone, northern NSW; 1830 hrs — flying.

May 27, 1973: adult pair; Ivanhoe, west-central NSW; 1230 hrs — perched.

October 27, 1973: juvenile female; Clare, west-central NSW; 1000 hrs — flying.

July 12, 1974: adult male; Woocalla; south-eastern SA; 1500 hrs — perched.

July 14, 1974: adult pair; Wauchope, central NT; 1530 hrs — perched.

July 15, 1974: adult female; Daly Waters, north-central NT; 0900 hrs — flying.

March 18, 1975: adult male, Logan River, south-eastern Q; 0800 hrs — flying.