

had built. It seized a thin stick about 6" (15 cm) long in its beak and flew to a branch where one of the other birds was waiting. Having difficulty in holding the stick in its beak, the Butcherbird began juggling it about to try and get a better grip on it but in doing so the Butcherbird dropped the stick altogether. They were about 25 feet (7.6 metres) from the ground and as the stick dropped down, the other Butcherbird flew quickly down and grabbed it gracefully but firmly in its beak in mid-air and then flew back to join its mate on the branch.

### **Black-backed Magpie**

Very common, all areas.

### **White-backed Magpie**

Compared to the Black-backed this bird was rare; only a couple of single birds.

### **Australian Raven**

Rare, only a couple of sightings.

### **Little Raven**

Very common, all areas.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank the Forest's Commission of Victoria and State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria for providing relevant information on the Warby Range/Lake Mokoan area; the Bird Observers Club Young Members for supplying me with additional information from their own records, and Mr. W. Roy Wheeler for providing certain information needed. Mr. Noel Arnold guided the paper into publication and arranged for its refereeing.

### **REFERENCE**

Gould League, Victoria, 1974. *Survival* 3: 67-69; 92-93.

**Fairy Martin and Striated Pardalote — Nesting Notes.** On September 30, 1975, we found a small nesting colony of Fairy Martins *Cecropis aniel* near Bealiba, Victoria (36° 48', S; 143° 33', E). The colony of 22 nests was situated on a steep bank of what is known locally as Sandhill Creek. Despite the fact that the banks are some 3.5 metres high, the lowest nest is only 42 cm above the bed. The creek carries water only after rains. The nests are above the creek bed as follows (height in centimetres) 42, 46, 55, 56, 59, 64, 65, 68, 71, 72, 72, 74, 83, 86, 93, 104, 114, 122, 126, 132, 138, and 151.

At the same locality we found nests of the Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*. Their nesting holes on the steep banks were so close together that they had the character of a nesting colony. In a distance of 120 metres we found 48 occupied nesting holes. The lowest nesting hole was 38 cm, the highest 265 cm above the creek bed. The closest distance between nests was only 24 cm. The Pardalotes were very abundant in the area.

One pair of Striated Pardalotes was nesting in the township of Bealiba in the crevice of a wall of the General Store, 258 cm above the ground.

During our visit to the locality on October 18, 1975, we again observed the activities of Fairy Martins and Striated Pardalotes at their nesting places. On this occasion the Rainbow Bird

*Merops ornatus* was common as the steep banks offer suitable nesting sites and adequate food is available from the bee-farm nearby.

*By Jaroslav Klapste and Peter Klapste,  
6/15 Southey St., Elwood, Victoria. 3184.*

**A Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) at Blackburn, Victoria.** On December 5, 1975 at 08.45 E.D.S.T., I called at Mrs. Mabel Pollock's residence in Wolseley Crescent, Blackburn, at her request, as she had told me of a most unusual bird in the area. We heard the bird calling in the garden next door, but were unable to see it. My identification of the call was that of a Koel. I returned at 12.50 hours and heard it calling, but was still unable to see it.

I returned again at 1700 hours accompanied by Mr. Bryan Mitchell and Mr. & Mrs. Keith Richards. I had a somewhat sketchy tape recording of a Koel's call which I played several times through a loud speaker. Eventually the bird responded vocally to the recorded call, then flew to a tree 20 metres away thus enabling us to have very good views of a male Koel for almost an hour. I taped the bird calling, and played his own call back to him. On hearing the call he flew to various points nearby. Mr. & Mrs. Keith Richards, who know the species very well, confirmed the identification of the Koel.

The following day, December 6, 1975, the late Mr. Roy P. Cooper also had excellent views of the bird, as did Mr. & Mrs. Frank Stephens, each of whom know this species particularly well. On December 7, 1975, numerous members of the Bird Observer's Club visited the area and saw the bird.

The Koel was first noticed by Mrs. Pollock and many of her neighbours on November 29, 1975 and it was last reported on December 9, 1975.

The area is a built-up suburban complex with mixed gardens including pine trees, eucalypts, shrubs, lawns and fruit trees such as plums, prunus, cherry-plums and loquats.

On December 6, 1975, Mrs. Ellen McCulloch, Mrs. Berris Stokes, Mr. Roy Cooper and I watched the bird for some time in the back garden of a house in Wolseley Crescent and saw it eating cherry-plums.

The bird called constantly in the early morning and again in the evening, every day of its stay. It showed a preference for pine trees to perch in, and apparently roosted in one every night on the property of the people upon whose cherry-plums it had been feeding.

The only other Victorian record of a Koel was at Mallacoota in 1917.

I wish to thank Mrs. Mabel Pollock for drawing our attention to this most unusual visitor to suburban Melbourne.

The recording of the Koel calling at Blackburn is now included in the Bird Observer's Club Cassette Library in the study tape of cuckoos.

*By Alma Mitchell, 4 Betula Ave., Nunawading, Vic. 3131.*