

grove, but where such is not available any low bush will suit their purpose, such as tea tree or samphire, often several nests are placed in the same shrub. The lining is seaweed or grass, but this soon becomes caked with excrement, as does the whole nest. The eggs are two or three in number, rarely four. They are quite white when fresh laid, but very quickly become nest stained. The outer coating is soft and chalky, and is easily scraped off, if this be done the true colour of the egg is found to be light blue or greenish blue. Eggs laid late in the season, probably second or third clutches, are often deficient in the outer coating, and show patches of the blue ground colour. Average measurement of 17 eggs, 6.27 x 3.83 c.m.

Largest egg, 6.80 x 3.80 c.m.

Smallest Egg, 6.05 x 3.50 c.m.

They do not normally lay more than one clutch in a season, but if a first clutch be destroyed they will lay another.

In South Australia the breeding season is the Autumn, usually from March to May.

Description of a New Subspecies of *Climacteris*.

By J. W. Mellor, R.A.O.U.

Climacteris erythrops parsonsi subsp., nov. Mellor.

Southern White-browed Treecreeper.

Type locality Pungonda, Hundred of Bookpurnong, South Australia.

As might reasonably be expected a *climacteris* inhabiting the pine and mallee country of the River Murray would differ considerably from its ally of the arid districts of Central Australia. When comparing the skins of a pair of the white-browed treecreepers that I procured from Pungonda in the Hundred of Bookpurnong, S.A., in October last, with North's description of the White-browed Treecreeper procured by the Horn Expedition to Central Australia, vide report of Horn Expedition, Aves p. 96 I found the following differences:

The Southern form is altogether more robust, and the coloration differs considerably from the Central Australian bird, being more greyish above; crown of head and forehead being uniform dark grey; no wash of brown on the grey upper tail coverts; subterminal band on tail black; no buffy brown on sides of body and centre of abdomen; and dull white in place of buffy white on under tail coverts, which are "barred" with black spots. The birds were rare,

and very noiseless, being in marked contrast to the Southern Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus australis*) Mathews, with which they were in company. I propose to designate the bird in the vernacular list as the Southern White-browed Treecreeper, and scientifically as *Climacteris erythrops parsonsi*, in honour of Mr. Frank E. Parsons, of Adelaide, whose energy as a young ornithologist I wish to recognise, and through whose valuable information concerning the country I was enabled to secure the specimens described.

The descriptions are:—

Male—General colour above, brownish grey; all the crown of the head, dark grey; upper tail coverts, grey; tail brownish grey, all but the two centre feathers, and the outer web of the outermost feathers crossed by a broad subterminal band of black, being broader and more conspicuous on the outer feathers; wing, blackish brown, crossed in the centre with a broad band of rich buff, this colour gradually dying out towards the outermost primaries; the secondaries tipped with brownish grey; lores, black; a stripe above the eye, and the small feathers on the edge of the lower lid white; ear coverts, brownish grey, with a dull white streak down the centre of each feather; chin, dull white, passing into whitish grey on the throat, and dark grey on the chest; remainder of under surface has a lanceolate appearance, the feathers being black, lessening in intensity towards the abdomen, and each feather having a broad stripe of white down the centre; the centre of abdomen, dark grey, and less conspicuously streaked; under tail coverts, dull white, with spots of brownish black at intervals forming irregular cross-bars, with the shafts of the feathers dull white throughout; iris, brown; bill, black; feet, very dark horn. Dimensions—Total length in inches, 6.00; wing, 3.64; tail, 2.60; bill from forehead, 0.53; bill from gape, 0.70; tarsus, 0.76.

Female—Resembling male, but having the white stripe above the eye margined above with a narrower line of rusty red; the breast is greyish, streaked with dull white down the centre of each feather, giving a more marked lanceolate appearance than in the male, in the centre of the chest a few rusty red markings on the feathers make an indistinct patch of that colour.

Habitat—Belts of pine and mallee country adjacent to the River Murray on the South Australian and Victorian borders, and probably extending into all such country for a considerable distance.



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