

The bird was definitely a frigate-bird. W. B. Alexander (*Birds of the Ocean*, 1928, p. 260) says that "Frigate-birds are perhaps the most easily recognized of all sea-birds."

Some six years ago, when moving about in small ships, I saw numbers of frigate-birds in the New Guinea area; such birds were always at a considerable height and appeared to have entirely black under-parts.

The weather on the day the bird was seen at Bilgola was unsettled, with heavy intermittent showers and an easterly wind, apparently following a severe cyclonic disturbance extending southwards from central coastal Queensland to north-eastern New South Wales.

Bilgola is about 18 miles north of Sydney and almost the same distance south of Terrigal where A. J. Macarthur-Onslow observed a Greater Frigate-bird (*Fregata minor*) on April 8, 1930 (*The Emu*, vol. 30, 1930, p. 143). A frigate-bird (? species) was seen in Sydney Harbour towards the end of December, 1932 (*Proc. R.Z.S., N.S.W.*, 1939-40, 1940, p. 22). Both Greater and Lesser Frigate-birds have been recorded from Port Phillip Bay, Victoria (*The Emu*, vol. 29, 1929, p. 112), likewise from New Zealand, where there are several records for both species (W. R. B. Oliver, *New Zealand Birds*, 1930, pp. 171-2).—GEORGE MARSHALL, Cammeray, Sydney, 4/4/51.

Notes on 'Anting'.—On the afternoon of March 20, 1950, on the corner of Tennyson and Campbell Streets, Sandringham, Victoria, I noticed a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 'anting' itself. Having only seen this performance once before I settled down for some steady observing, but a passer-by disturbed the bird soon after, and although I waited some time the bird did not return. The bird acted in a most deliberate fashion. An ant was picked up in the beak and rubbed inside the wing from the shoulder to the end of the primaries, then the other wing was treated with the same sweeping movement. The ant was then discarded and another picked up and the action repeated. I examined the ant nest and found that the bird was using a small red sugar ant. A few damaged and very inactive ants were noted about the nest, most of which were being removed to the ant burrow by other ants.

The next afternoon I was most fortunate for on the opposite corner I watched a party of five Mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), two Starlings and a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), all anting themselves amongst a swarming mass of sugar ants. The Starlings were going through the same process as I noted on the previous day—the deliberate unhurried pressure of the ant down the full length of the wing, effected with a sweeping motion along first one

wing and then the other, the ant dropped and another taken up and the performance repeated at least a dozen times.

The Mynas had a slightly different action. With them the ant was picked up and, seemingly, pressed under each wing, one after the other, then discarded and the action again repeated. The Mynas were continually on the move, jumping about amongst the ants while continuing the anting. The House Sparrow had a different action again, but whether this was the usual practice I do not know, as the Sparrow only performed on one occasion. The Sparrow picked up an ant and rubbed it down one wing in similar fashion to the Starling but with a very hurried movement. The ant was discarded and another picked up to do the other wing. I had the birds under observation for about fifteen minutes on this occasion and the Starlings and Mynas were anting continually during that time. On my examining the ant mounds, of which there were several, I noted many damaged and many apparently dead ants scattered around. Some of the apparently dead ones immediately 'came to life' on being touched. The ants were not removing the bruised ones as at the nest on the opposite corner on the previous afternoon. I collected some specimens and the ants were identified at the National Museum, Melbourne, as belonging to one of a large group of sugar ants and known as *Camponotus innexus* Forel. The weather on both the afternoons mentioned was warm and sultry.

Mr. Jack Tester, who lives at Box Hill, near Melbourne, has watched Starlings and Mynas anting in similar fashion, at an ant nest near his front gate on evenings about the same time as my observations. I asked him to collect some specimens which he did and they proved to be another species of sugar ant—*Camponotus consobrinus*.—ROY WHEELER, Windsor, Vic., 14/8/50.

News and Notes

ANNUAL CONGRESS AND CAMP-OUT

The Camp-out in connection with the Annual Congress in October, 1951, will be held, according to present intentions, at the Hattah Lakes, Red Cliffs district, Victoria. Details will be supplied to all members, later.

In the meantime a circular with some details has been prepared and copies are available on application to the Hon. General Secretary.

Circulars in connection with the photographic exhibition to be held in Melbourne during the Congress are available, on request, from State Secretaries.