

1913:

BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS

Bell View, Kergunyah

Dear Uncle Jeff, - We have had a lovely downfall of rain. The crops are looking well since then. My father is looking forward to a good harvest. My brother has a very nice vegetable garden. We have a flower garden at our school; every child has a bed to look after. There are very many different kinds of flowers in it.

We kept "bird day" upon Friday; we had a lovely afternoon. Our teacher read to us about birds, and then we went to see birds and their nests. The first nest was a swallow's, and then we saw a curlew's nest, which was the find of the day. We also saw the nest of a swamp hawk, and a few more. We saw a great number of' different kinds of birds.

One of the school boys knew the names of all the birds. When we returned to the school ground, my teacher and I played three sets of tennis, after which I went home. A girl friend and I were down by the river on Sunday, and were nearly eaten by the mosquitoes. I am sending you a piece of poetry. I like reading the poetry in the 'Banner.'— Your fond niece, Venie Bell.

Source: BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS. (1913, November 7). Albury Banner and Wodonga Express (NSW : 1896 - 1938), p. 12. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article101177807>

1907: THE LYRE BIRD *Spring Vale, Kiewa.*

Dear Uncle Jeff,— This is the first time I have written to you, and hope you will accept me as one of your many nephews. Well, dear Uncle, my favourite bird is the Australian, lyre bird, or mocking bird, as some people call it. I like it because it can imitate any sound in the bush, also on account of its beautiful plumage. The tail is shaped like a 'lyre'— a musical instrument, and on this account they received their name. The tail of the male bird, when full grown, is 2ft in length resembling that of a peacock.

The lyre bird is found in New South Wales, and is plentiful in Gippsland. They build their nests in thickly-wooded places, retreating from inhabited parts.

Their nests are made of twigs and sticks. These are woven together with bark, and are lined on the inside with feathers. The egg is smaller than that of a fowl, and is of a light grey colour, with dark specks. Their food consists of worms and grubs. I was at a place called Tawonga, and this is where I heard the bird. It was early in the morning when the bird began to give quite a concert; at first the noise resembled the sharpening of a saw, also the tuning of a violin. They are very timid, any noise startling them. Is it any wonder that some people call them 'The Australian Mocking Bird.' Well, dear Uncle Jeff, this is all I can tell you about my favourite (the lyre bird) and its habits.— I am your would-be nephew.

KINGSLEY- SIMON (9 years 8 mths.) (A hearty welcome to our page, Kingsley. Write often in future.)

Source: "THE LYRE BIRD." Albury Banner and Wodonga Express (NSW : 1896 - 1938) 6 Dec 1907: 12.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article99840545>

1921: An Interesting Locality

With, as I judge, a sympathetic lead from their teacher, it is not surprising that the boys and girls of Kergunyah school should be keen nature students. "Mopoke" says that the children have about 130 species of birds on their bird list, and, to his knowledge, some of the hawks, owls, and smaller birds of the denser scrubs are not yet recorded.

The Kiewa Valley is, he says, a fine place for nature observation. The swamps have such interesting birds as the spoonbill, white egret, herons, and others, while in the hills there are lyrebirds, though the absence of both the coach whip and bell birds is noted.

Amongst wild animals the kangaroo, wallaby, wombat, dingo, and fox are all fairly numerous.

Source: NOTES FOR BOYS. (1921, March 22). *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1741347>