

phology of the stapes (Fig. 1) with an expanded bulbous footplate area perforated usually by one (often 1 large and 1 small) fenestra (Feduccia, Auk 91:427-429, 1974). I have recently had the opportunity to examine the stapes in the lyrebird (*Menura superba*) and the New Zealand wren, the Rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris*); both possess the primitive condition for the element. The stapes of *Menura* (Fig. 2) is illustrated next to that of the leafbird, *Irena*, a typical oscine. The stapes of *Acanthisitta* (Fig. 3) is also typically oscine, but with a shaft relatively more robust than those shown in Fig. 1.

Sibley's (1974 op. cit.) biochemical data, along with the evidence from the stapes compel me to conclude that lyrebirds are oscine, and are likely close to the bowerbird-bird-of-paradise assemblage. Additional *new* evidence will be needed to draw conclusions of the relationships of the New Zealand wrens, but at present I suggest that their closest living relatives are to be found among the oscines.

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Additional observations on hover-feeding by North American ardeids.—In a previous note (Rodgers, Wilson Bull. 86:70-71, 1974), I reported observing Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) and Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) hover-feeding in Barataria Bay, Louisiana. Since that time, I have observed Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*), Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*), and a Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) hover-feeding in Barataria Bay with Snowy and Great Egrets, Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*), Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*), Royal Terns (*Thalasseus maximus*), and Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*). These birds were feeding on dead or dying fish on or near the surface of the water. The fish were discarded from boats trawling in the bay. Kushlan (Wilson Bull. 84:199-200, 1972) previously reported observing Louisiana Herons aerial feeding with Snowy Egrets at a fresh-water pond, and Reese (Condor 75:352, 1973) reported Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) and Great Egrets feeding together on dead fish from the surface of Chesapeake Bay.

The behavior of all 5 species of ardeids hover-feeding on Barataria Bay was identical. On approaching the fish, the heron would hover, extend its head downward, and pick up the fish with its mandibles. At this time the legs of the heron usually dangled below its body with the feet often completely submerged.

One to 5 Louisiana and Little Blue herons were observed hover-feeding on 7 and 3 occasions respectively. Hover-feeding by the Black-crowned Night Heron was observed only once about one hour before sunset. The Louisiana Herons, Little Blue Herons, and the Black-crowned Night Heron were observed hover-feeding along with as many as 70 Snowy Egrets and 15 Great Egrets.—JAMES A. RODGERS, JR., *Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge 70803. Present address: Dept. of Biology, Univ. of South Florida, Tampa 33620. Accepted 17 Jan. 1975.*