

In doing so they dislodged or let fall an egg built into the wall, so possibly she was trying to remove this, for sometimes the Cuckoo over-reaches her aim if she lays too soon in an uncompleted nest. The owners, proceeding with operations, build the egg in with a thick layer of material, or raise another structure on the walls of the old one.

Leaden Flycatcher's Low Nest.—Although usually nesting, like the Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*), high above the ground, commonly about sixty feet in height, the Leaden Flycatcher (*M. rubecula*) sometimes descends to a height of between twenty and thirty feet only for its nesting site. Almost invariably the nest is placed on a branch directly under a protecting bough—quite often the branch on which the nest is built is a dead one, and in many cases the branch above is the only immediate protection afforded by the surroundings of the nest.

On December 24, 1929, Mrs. E. S. Hanks, R.A.O.U., discovered a nest of the Leaden Flycatcher at Wandin, Vic., built in a Tea-tree near a creek, and at a height of not more than three feet from the ground. The position was an admirable one for photographic purposes, but unfortunately the weather conditions were not good, and although the major portion of both Christmas day and Boxing day were spent at the nest, the sun did not make an appearance during the whole time; in fact on the latter day showers of rain further militated against successful photography.

The male bird appeared much more domesticated than his mate. Once their diffidence about coming to the nest whilst the camera was in position was overcome, the male showed little hesitation in sitting on the very young birds which the nest contained—these had apparently hatched out on December 24. The female, however, appeared more timid, nevertheless once she had decided to sit on the nest and had settled down, she allowed, like her consort, my approaching very close. The nonchalance of the birds and the position generally were most favourable for a picture, but good results could not be expected with the light so bad. Photos. taken where more than one twenty-fifth of a second was given showed movement.

The call of the Leaden Flycatcher is chiefly two notes, repeated twice or more, and resembling the words "Pretty pretty," the first note or syllable of "pretty" being the longer. A rather harsh squeaking note occasionally varied this call, and was always the signal given to the sitting bird when the other was prepared to take its place on the nest.

The three young birds were rich brown in colour with the finest of white hair-like feathers beginning to appear.

Realising from the size of these young ones that they would not leave the nest for some days, and anticipating that the photos. taken would not be too successful, I intended again visiting the nest the following week-end. On the Friday afternoon, however, a vagrant Kookaburra, I am informed by Mr. Hanks, discovered the nest, and before anything could be done to prevent him, dined on the young Leaden Flycatchers. The parent birds have now built again in an inaccessible position nearby.—C. E. BRYANT, R.A.O.U., 21/1/30.

Notes on Swifts.—One warm morning, February 6, 1930, chancing to look up, I observed an unusual flight of Swifts. There were hundreds of them, far overhead, in a dense party, each bird circling in and out of the flock like gnats playing in the sunshine. But the whole mass kept moving steadily southward as well.

For about a month past a party of Spine-tailed Swifts (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) has come each afternoon to feed in the vicinity of Mt. Dandenong. I have not noted such regularity before. Flying "white ants" and other winged forms have been plentiful since the early rains. On one occasion, from a large sugar ants' nest in the ground, thousands of mature insects streamed out, ascended an adjacent stump, and took wing. Circling above, so low that the swish of wings could be heard, the Swifts accounted for them all.

One bird struck a telephone wire and was found clinging to a tree. Beyond a small mark it was uninjured, but made no attempt to fly. It was in plump condition and good feather. The bird ran upwards with great agility, progressing, not by hopping as a tree-creeper does, but by rapid steps. The feet are very powerful, the claws strongly recurved and sharp enough to make tiny punctures when the bird clasps the hand. The bird seemed to prefer resting under some projection like a piece of bark, a knot, or against an overhanging branch. It ascended a clean dry pole with the greatest of ease. Placed in a cardboard box, however, it was not comfortable, and scuttled about continuously. But in a kerosene case it clung to the smooth side for hours and appeared to rest all night without changing position.

In a clinging position the tail is spread fanwise for support. The natural adaptation of the extraordinary spine point for this purpose is obvious. When handled the Swift called frequently, a querulous note something like that of the Little Tern. In calm weather I have heard this call from birds on the wing.—A. G. CAMPBELL, Kilsyth, March 15, 1930.