



Lizard attacking Cuckoo nestling.

Photo. by Norman Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

painting its bower. The sides of the bird's bill moved backward and forward along the sticks, but no material could be seen in its mouth. The evidence from these observations lead one to the conclusion that charcoal is the black substance used by the bird in its painting operations.

During one wet drizzly week-end visit the substance was partly washed off; it was easily removed by a touch, and rubbed between the fingers had a gritty feel. Seen under the microscope the reason for this became apparent, as it consisted of irregular fine black particles. The wet material did not dye a piece of paper. That the substance used is charcoal has been confirmed for me by Mr. Welch, of the Sydney Technological Museum, who by the aid of a powerful microscope was able to see and show me the cell structure of the wood which the charcoal still retained. The bark-like material has been microscopically identified by the fibrous bundles which it contains as bark which may be obtained from the inner or outer bark structure of some of our native plants.

Tentative conclusions.—The bark wad appears to be used as a nucleus in the bird's mouth to hold the saliva and charcoal as it is chewed into fine particles, and is applied to the sticks as it oozes from the sides of the bird's bill. I believe that as a rule it is prepared away from the bower, but on occasions the raw material is brought to the bower and there prepared.

Later.—As the season advanced into December the bird's interest in its bower appeared to wane, as its visits became less and less. On January 11, 1930, several fresh flowers were added to the bower, but since that date to the present there is no indication that the bird has returned to it.

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**Lizard Attacking Nestling.**—On December 23, 1929, Mr. Hugh Innes and I focussed our cameras on the nest of a pair of White-browed Scrub-Wrens (*Sericornis frontalis*) containing a Fantail Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) about three-quarters grown. We retired a little distance to await the return of the foster parents with food, but had not been waiting long when we noticed a lizard about eight inches in length approaching the nest. He eyed the young Cuckoo for a while and then commenced viciously to attack it. He would make sudden darts at the young bird, appearing to strike it with some force. The foster parents flew up in a great state of agitation and attacked the lizard. He drew back when the old birds attacked, but did not appear to be much afraid of them. A photograph was taken at this juncture. The excitement of the Scrub-Wrens can be clearly seen by the outspread fan-shaped tails of the two birds and the general attitude. The bird

on the centre right of the picture is on the point of attacking the lizard. The birds are somewhat blurred with movement, as the shutter speed was only set at 1/25 of a second. The lizard made off when I attempted to change the plate. The lizard would, I think, be too small to injure the young Cuckoo, but would in all probability be capable of taking an egg or small nestling. Probably the lizard had no designs on the young Cuckoo, but was merely attacking it in a spirit of sportive playfulness. Mr. Kinghorn, R.A.O.U., of the Australian Museum, identified the lizard as a member of the genus *Hygosoma*, the species probably being *lesueurii*. He stated that the usual food is beetles and other insects.—NORMAN CHAFFER, R.A.O.U., Roseville.

**Migrants in 1929.**—Although not strictly a migrant, the Brush Wattle-bird (*Anthocæra chrysoptera*) is very nomadic. On June 23, 1929, the queer guttural calls of this species were heard in blue gums on the Don Road, Devonport, from which the birds have been absent six months. On the morning of June 26, fine and sunny after a cold night, a pair of "Summer-birds" or Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes (*Coracina novæ-hollandiæ*), in all probability the pair that usually winters in the district, was observed flying across a grass paddock in the town-boundary.

August 19.—The first Pipit (*Anthus australis*) of the season was noticed at the edge of a grass paddock near the beach; fine, calm, sunny morning. This is the first of the species seen since the end of March, when they left.

August 27.—Pair of Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) flying along the bank of the Mersey Estuary; sunny spring morning.

September 8.—The Fantailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) was heard trilling to-day, and on September 11 the Cuckoo-Shrike was uttering its rapid whirring call.

September 24.—Both the Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) and the Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*) were heard to-day, and on September 25 several of the "Satins" were noted at Latrobe, six miles up the river.

October 6.—Several pairs of Grass-Parrots (*Neophema*) by roadside near beach, probably arrived from over the Strait early this morning.

October 27.—The Bronze Cuckoo was heard for the first time to-day.

December 8.—Some pairs of Dusky Wood-Swallows (*Artamus cyanopterus*) were noted among the white gums at Mersey Bluff this morning, but few stay in this locality now, as they get much disturbed by the number of visitors. Some years ago these small gums and the imported pines were much used for nesting by this species.—H. STUART-DOVE, R.A.O.U., Tas.