



Tawny-crowned Honeyeater at nest.

Photo by K. A. Hindwood, R.A.O.U.

of the district and adjoining areas—congregating on the foliage, and bearing it down, especially the reeds, by their weight. The bushes were absolutely black with birds, and when I shouted and clapped my hands they arose in a vast flock which blackened the sky, as do the incoming Mutton Birds (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) at evening. Never before had I seen so many of this ubiquitous species gathered together. Several times I succeeded in putting them up, but after that they refused to move when I shouted. By this time it was quite dark and I made up my mind to see them leave in their thousands next morning. The birds were astir earlier than I was, however, and not one remained when I went to the water's edge next day. Evidently the centre of the lagoon afforded a perfectly safe roosting place that the hosts of Starlings had come to know well.—C. E. BRYANT, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

The Tawny-crowned Honeyeater.—Among the several species of *Meliphagidæ* inhabiting the extensive heaths near Sydney, the Tawny-crowned Honeyeater (*Gliciphila melanops*) is undoubtedly the most captivating. Long before dawn on a Spring morning I have strolled along a bush track and listened, entranced, to the tinkling notes of many of these birds, and not a songster could I see in the dim light. Standing awhile to enjoy the fantasy, it seemed that their voices were wistful, even melancholy, and lacking the joyfulness so evident during the sunlit hours.

In early Spring they congregate in flocks of a dozen or more, and it is an experience rarely to be surpassed to hear them singing, not in unison, but haphazardly, their rich, almost bell-like, notes reminding of a small boy playfully toying with a flute. A peculiarity of the species is its habit of flying a hundred feet or so in the air; with beating wings it will utter a few joyful notes and then descend in a fluttering manner. Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters nest in open, grassy heathlands, covered with a scattered and stunted vegetation, and generally build within a few inches of the ground. An average nest measures, externally, about four inches across; the actual nesting cavity is two inches in diameter and of a like depth. The cup-shaped structure is composed of strips of old bark, blades of old grass and finer grass stalks, giving even a new nest an appearance of age. Often it is lined with a white downy substance covering the seed cases of a shrub common on the heath, *Petrophila pulchella*. The two eggs are a lustreless white, blotched with pink or darker spots mostly towards the larger end. An immature bird differs somewhat from the adult inasmuch as it has a striped crown, throat and breast, otherwise it is soberly coloured in grey.—K. A. HINDWOOD, R.A.O.U., Willoughby, N.S.W.