

Arrivals and Departures

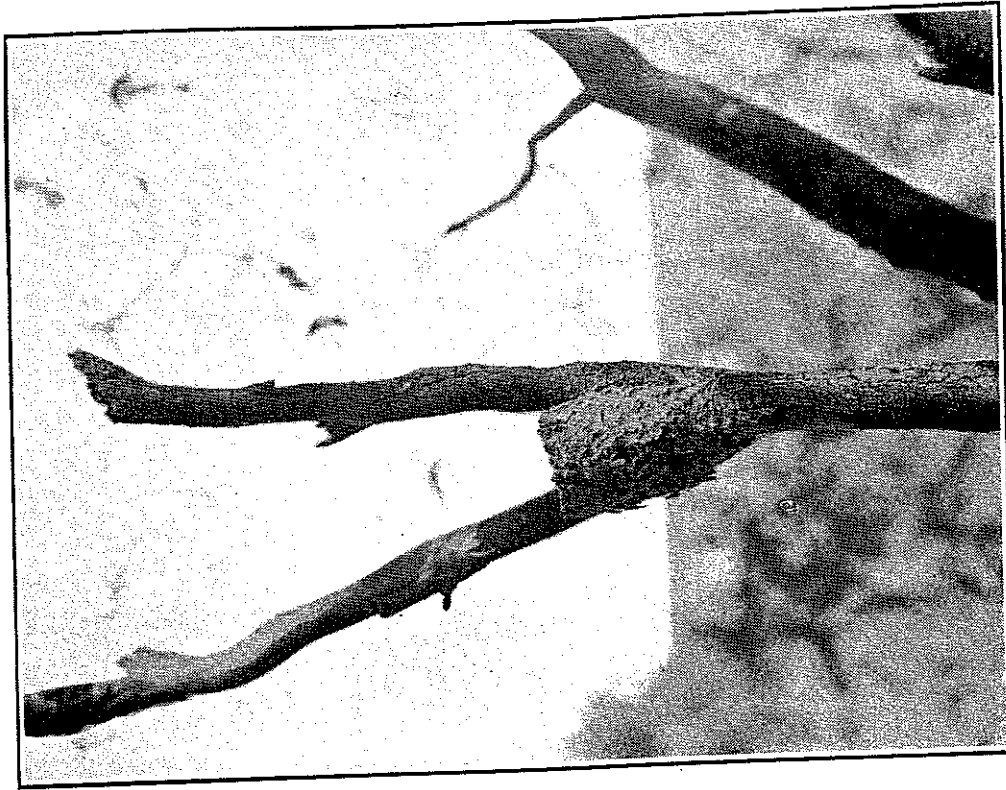
By H. STUART DOVE, R.A.O.U., West Devonport, Tas.

In 1931 the Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) arrived at Devonport on August 27, and on September 4 the first Pipit (*Anthus australis*) in very spruce plumage, was noted in a grass-paddock not far from the beach. On the same day a Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) was heard uttering its trilling call. In the afternoon, which was sunny and warm, one of our resident Magpies (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) was engaged in a "whisper-song" on a low branch of a manna-gum just behind the cottage. We usually look for this class of utterance in the autumn months. The following day (September 5), the call of a Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) was heard at noon; temperature, warm, with a light south-east breeze. From a eucalypt near the cottage, a Striated Pardalote, or Tree-Diamond (*Pardalotus striatus*), was uttering the rapid "Pick-it-up" call. A Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, or Summer-time bird (*Coracina novæ-hollandiæ*) was heard for the first time this spring on October 4; the next day a Golden Bronze-Cuckoo (*Lamprococcyx plagosus*) was uttering its series of eight ventriloquial notes in the scrub near the beach.

This year, 1932, a male Blue-Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) was seen on February 10, half-way through his moult; on February 14 there was still a little pale blue on the top and sides of the head, a single feather only was left in the tail; another male had some faint blue remaining on the cheeks, and four ragged feathers in the tail.

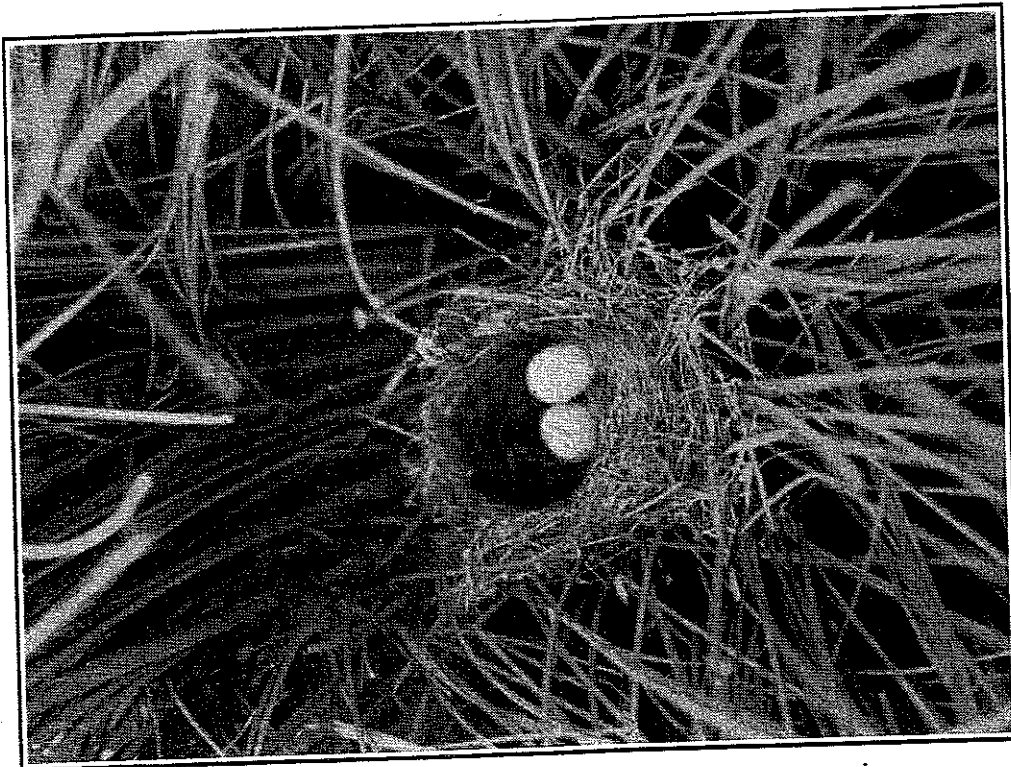
On February 11, a Pallid Cuckoo was on a fence near the house, and uttered a solitary "scream"; this is remarkably late for an adult of this species, which have usually all left by the end of January. The day was mild and showery. On the first evening of March a *Podargus* was uttering the "oom" call very strongly just at the back of the house, and replied when I imitated; he kept calling with a strong vibration in the note for fully half-an-hour. The evening was calm and muggy.

On March 29, when motoring through the Midlands from the south, numbers of Wood Swallows (*Artamus cyanopterus*) were seen about the trees and fences, mustering for migration; they were still seen as we got up towards the north-western part of the island. On the same afternoon a Spine-tailed Swift (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) was noted near Deloraine, flying towards the east at no great height, after a high wind and rain on the previous day. Another observer had recently noted a party of these remarkable



Nest of White-headed Sittella.

Photo. by A. C. Cameron, R.A.O.U.



Nest of White-eared Honeyeater built
in grass tussock.

Photo. by C. H. Jerrard, R.A.O.U.

birds in the same district, when an atmospheric disturbance was pending.

No Welcome Swallows have been seen in Devonport since April 19, when I saw two pairs flitting along by the banks of the Mersey, nor any Pipits in the paddocks, or about the roadsides.

Notes on the White-headed Sittella.—The White-headed Sittella (*Neositta leucocephala*) is by no means uncommon in the Oakey district, Queensland. It is known locally as the "Diamond Woodpecker," a title to which it has no just claim. However, precedent worries the average amateur very little when it comes to naming birds, as A. H. Chisholm, R.A.O.U., once said. It is a friendly little bird, and is seen in flocks of from about four to twelve among the open forest growth, where it obtains its food in the manner characteristic of the family *Sittidæ*. I have frequently watched a flock at work among the branches from a distance of about 8 or 10 feet. The bird will not, however, return to its nest in the presence of an intruder. The neat little nest is made of cobwebs and lined with moss. The outside is covered over with small pieces of bark from the tree, for purposes of concealment. The nest shown in the accompanying photograph was placed in a small upright fork about 55 or 60 feet from the ground. At this height the nest is, of course, very difficult to find, though the average height is about 25 feet.—A. C. CAMERON, R.A.O.U., Biddeston, Oakey, Qld.

Nest of White-eared Honeyeater in unusual situation.—Built in the middle of a huge tussock of giant oat grass in a creek-bed, a nest of the White-eared Honeyeater (*Meliphaga leucotis*), was thickly lined with rock wallaby's fur. I had to bend the grass blades aside in order to photograph the nest. This disturbed the sitting bird, which returned to the eggs as soon as I retired a few yards with my camera. This bird can play the "broken wing trick" very cleverly, tumbling to the ground and fluttering along just ahead of a pursuer. This photograph was taken on July 31, 1928—locality: Blackdown.—C. H. JERRARD, R.A.O.U., Qld.