



Photo. by L. G. Chandler.

Pink Cockatoo at nest hollow.

the species. The Stubble Quail breeds from September to March in good seasons, laying three or four clutches of from seven to twelve or thirteen eggs, so that a very large number of young may be reared in one year. If, then, some dozen pairs occupy a good breeding paddock, with good rains during the period from October to March, it is easy to see why some hundreds of birds are present at the opening of the shooting season. Exactly similar remarks apply to the breeding of the Brown Quail.

The remaining Victorian species of Quail are of little importance either from the economic or sporting viewpoint, on account of their small size and scarcity.

The vanishing Plain Wanderer is fully protected, although many shot specimens find their way to the Museum, Fisheries and Game Department, etc., with enquiries as to the name of the species. Full protection has recently been bestowed upon the Painted Quail. This bird was possibly in no definite need of protection since organized shooting of the species never takes place. A species more worthy of full protection is the King Quail. This is a comparatively rare bird which is seen less and less as time goes on. It occupies a similar type of country to that which the Brown Quail favours and although too small to be of much importance as a table bird, shooters in search of the larger bird do not despise the little King Quail if flushed. It was formerly a common bird in Victoria, but it might be interesting to find how many Union members have seen this species in the last ten or twenty years in this State.

Camera Notes on Parrots and Pink Cockatoo

By L. G. CHANDLER, Red Cliffs, Victoria

Before the soldier settlement of Red Cliffs, Victoria, was opened in 1921, and for a few years after that event, Parrots and Cockatoos were plentiful. Gradually the birds became scarce, until to-day, with the exception of a few pairs in the small timber reserves, they are rarely seen. Shot-gun and pea-rifle accounted for large numbers, but the absence of nesting facilities was undoubtedly one of the factors that forced survivors to retreat to timbered areas farther back. Even in this type of country within a radius of ten miles of Red Cliffs, and of the many towns in the wheat areas of the north-west Mallee, the Parrot tribe is not plentiful to-day. The protection given to the Mallee or Ringneck Parrot and the Regent Parrot has assisted in preserving those species to some extent, but, as with many species of birds peculiar to the mallee country only a large National Park in north-west Victoria will save some of the rarer forms from extinction.

I have in my mind a large area that appears particularly suitable for this purpose, and hope this season to make a survey of the avi-fauna there. Apart from its apparent suitability for this purpose, it possesses botanical advantages that make it a valuable asset in the prevention of soil erosion, which if not checked by the preservation of large timber reserves, will eventually be a menace to the irrigation settlements along the Murray River.

In taking photographs of wild birds I have always noticed the different reaction to the presence of the camera in certain species in different localities. In the unsettled areas the birds, with a few exceptions, are tame and trustful. I attempted to take photographs of a pair of Blue-bonnet Parrots (*Psephotus hæmatogaster*) that had a nest less than fifty yards from a house, and anticipated no difficulties. After two attempts covering ten hours, I had to accept defeat, as I was unable to return to the area. Later, after a wait of six hours, I obtained the photograph of the bird in the illustration. This nest also was about one hundred yards from a dwelling. The camera was well camouflaged in both cases, and a dummy camera had been in position.

Some birds are habitually wary. My biggest fight to obtain photographs was with a pair of Pink Cockatoos (*Kakatoë leadbeateri*). I used every method of dealing with wild birds that I could invent to outwit them. However, the alert Cockatoos were aware of danger, and fighting adverse weather conditions in addition to the nervous birds I retired practically beaten after seven or eight trips to the nest and over forty hours spent in a hide. As circumstances prevented my return I was compelled to leave the victorious Cockatoos in peace with their young, and took away four or five indifferent photographs. Yet the time spent in watching those tantalizing and interesting birds near their nests was well worth the discomfort. Most of the photographs were taken at one three-hundredth part of a second, but the eye of the bird saw the opening of the shutter, and the crest in every photograph was slightly blurred.

When one of the Cockatoos, during the absence of its mate, descended to feed its young, it came to the top of the hollow every ten to twenty seconds to gaze suspiciously at the camera and the surrounding country. Unlike most birds Cockatoos and Parrots can be safely kept away from their young for long periods, as the chicks are not fed frequently. The Pink Cockatoo in flight reminds me of a huge, white moth. This bird is extremely rare in this neighbourhood, and although protected by law in Victoria, numbers must be taken for cage-birds.

I have had no difficulty in taking photographs of the Mulga and Ringneck Parrots. Both species are tame, and indeed it is difficult to flush the Mulga Parrot once it has entered its nesting-hollow.