

## BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKES

Three Cuckoo-Shrikes have been in regular attendance in a favoured nesting area. These are presumably the owners of that territory, and a young bird of the previous season.

On September 24, 1956, two birds were endeavouring to send the third bird away. Much chasing, in which the three birds participated, took place for some time. The battle call, 'char char char', sounds harmless enough to human ears, but to the battling birds it no doubt sounds very war-like.

The whole event seems quite harmless as no contact between the birds was made—just chasing and occasional passes, one bird at the other, when neither wing nor beak seemed to connect.

## WHITE-FACED HERONS AND CROWS

On October 4, 1956, a pair of Herons had a nest in mistle-toe on a creek blue gum and one bird was brooding. The birds were attacked by a pair of Crows and later I found four empty egg shells on the ground below the nest. The Crows took possession of the ready-made nest and reared a brood of three young ones in it.

While one bird, presumably the female, was brooding, the white-eyed mate with some feathers missing from the right wing, was constantly searching for food for himself and the brooding bird. After the eggs had hatched, both birds were busy gathering any food that was available, including eggs from my fowl run and fruit from the garden.

**A Note on the Plumed Pigeon.**—I have just returned from a trip to Elkedra Station, in the Northern Territory, 300 miles north-west of Alice Springs. The Plumed Pigeon (*Lophophaps plumifera*) was often seen—mostly in the rocky spinifex country, with a preference for dry creek beds, and hilly terrain. The birds are extremely bold, and one can approach within ten feet of them before they fly. Flight is marked by a loud clapping of wings, but the birds rarely fly more than a hundred yards before alighting. Usually they prefer running away to flying, and it is only when an observer comes too close that they take to the wing.

In the field they appear dark brown, and it is only when one approaches closely that their attractive colours can be observed. In many cases they harmonize very well with their surroundings. For some reason the Plumed Pigeon is seen much more around midday than any other time. Birds often visited the fowlyard at Elkedra, when the fowls were being fed, and it was an easy matter to catch them. When a flock of these Pigeons are flushed, only some fly and the others stay concealed.

They lay their eggs on the ground, under some spinifex, or a low bush. In this area they breed after the rains.—REX ELLIS, McLaren Vale, S.A., 19/7/57.