

Camera Craft Notes.

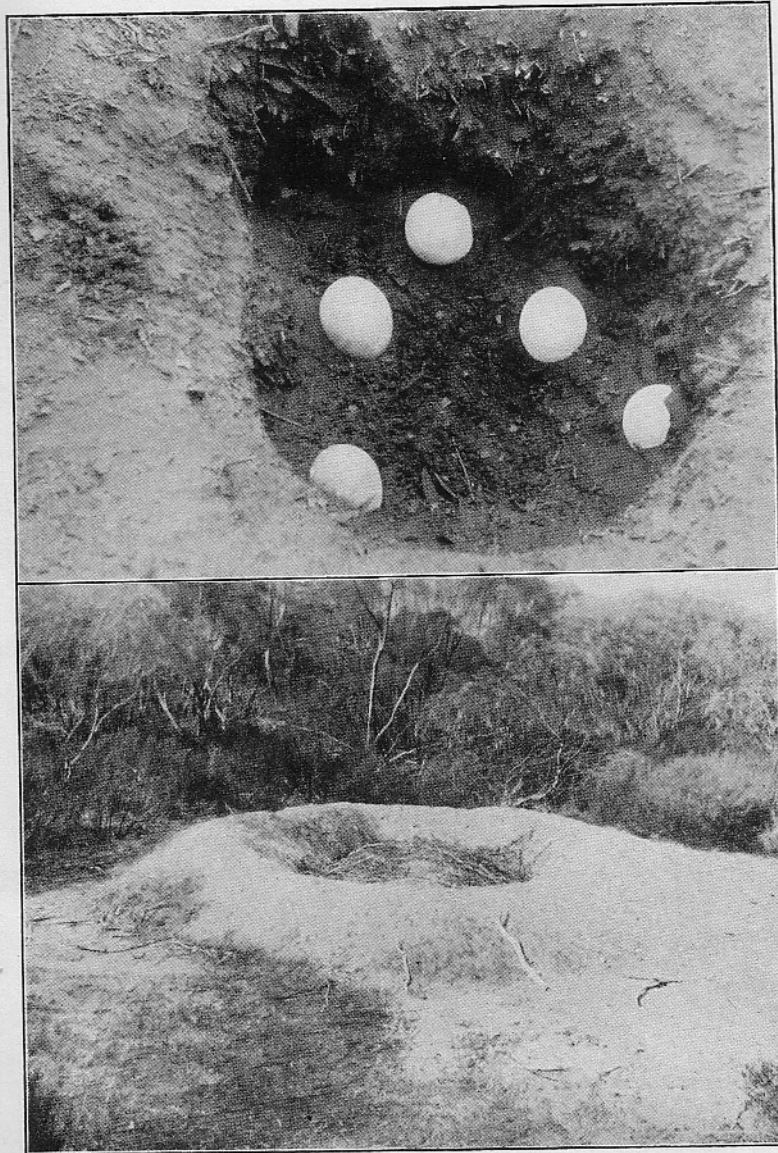
Leipoa ocellata (rosinæ) (Mallee-Fowl).—It was on a trip to the Mallee during September, 1914, that a party of ornithologists was fortunate enough to see nearly a dozen pairs of these most interesting birds. All the birds seemed very tame, or, at least, they did not clear out until disturbed by our approach. Many mounds were located, and in nearly every instance they contained eggs. It was also noted that the earth and leaves on top of the egg-chamber were very fresh, which showed that the birds had been there during the preceding hours. The accompanying photographs show a mound in perfect condition, being well constructed, with sure signs of containing eggs, so it was decided to open up the mound and secure a photograph showing the eggs in their natural position. At first sight it would appear that one or two of the eggs are broken, but this is not the case, for the eggs are partly surrounded by the decaying *débris*, which, everyone knows, assists in the work of incubation. It will also be seen that all the eggs are placed with the larger end uppermost, so that the air-cell is always on top, thereby giving the bird a certain amount of breathing space when on the point of hatching out. The mound was found in a fine belt of mallee just to the north of Boinka, on the Ouyen to Murrayville line.—HERBERT A. PURNELL, R.A.O.U.

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Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon (*Petrophassa rufipennis*).—The Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon is found in North-West Australia, and I obtained the specimen illustrated from Arnhem Land, and not far from the banks of the South Alligator River. (I always think the name of this river most inappropriate, as alligators are not found in Australia, except in zoos—only crocodiles.) These birds are usually found on the rocky sandstone ranges, and are most difficult to detect when they crouch down on the ground among the stones, and it is quite possible that they are far more plentiful than we imagine, as they are so easily passed by unseen, should they not rise. They seem to be nowhere very plentiful.—W. H. D. LE SOUËF. Melbourne.

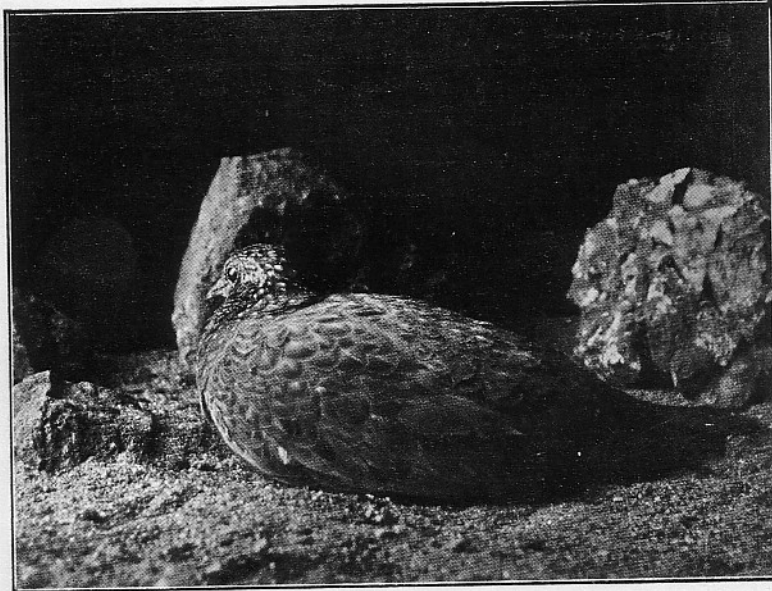
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Photographing Young Birds.—The photography of young wild birds is one of the most difficult branches of bird photography. It is also a most important one, and the student who can spare the time to obtain a daily series of photographs illustrating the growth of the nestling from birth until the wing feathers are well advanced has the opportunity to develop a valuable and almost untouched field for study. The featherless chick presents the greatest difficulties, for the detail must be brilliantly reproduced to be of value as a record. In dense scrub, where a snapshot is impossible under ordinary circumstances, the judicious use of a



Eggs (*in situ*) and Nest of Mallee-Fowl.

PHOTOS. BY H. A. FURNELL, R.A.O.U.



Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon.

PHOTO. BY W. H. D. LE SOUEF, C.M.Z.S.



Young Coachwhip-Bird (*Psophodes crepitans*).

PHOTO. BY L. G. CHANDLER, R.A.O.U.

mirror to reflect the light upon the subject is often a solution to overcome the difficulty. In many cases a snapshot is necessary, for the least breeze will vibrate the down on a nestling, and if a time exposure is attempted a blurred picture is the result. At a later stage in the growth of the young bird it is possible to obtain very pretty and interesting photographs, but it is advisable to enlist the aid of a friend, for very few young birds will remain perched in one position while the photographer is engaged in focussing and adjusting his camera. The best method with a nervous subject is to focus on a matchbox, set the shutter and draw the dark slide, then place the young bird or birds in position, and at a favourable moment release the shutter. Care should be taken not to allow the direct rays of the sun to fall upon a tender nestling. Subdued sunlight is productive of the best photographic results. On a bright, sunny day a fine piece of cloth may be used to advantage, as a medium between sun and subject, to diffuse and soften the light.—L. G. CHANDLER, R.A.O.U. Malvern.

Stray Feathers.

Fish-eating Duck.—On 17th May I shot a pair of White-eyed Ducks (*Nyroca australis*). One had an unusually large neck. Closer investigation disclosed six fish (carp), averaging 2 inches in length, which the bird had evidently just caught.—F. C. MORSE. "Coocalla," Garah (N.S.W.)

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Drought and Birds.—A dry season in various parts of Australia makes a considerable difference in the ordinary movements of our birds, the want of both water and food causing this. For instance, last season was very dry in the inland districts of Queensland and New South Wales, consequently in this district many birds put in an appearance fully a month earlier than usual. Even take the Channelbill Cuckoo (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*). It was first noted on 28th August, 1918, whereas we generally first see it towards the end of September. Another interesting thing is that it almost invariably seems to arrive at night. We have had several strange visitors on account of the dry season further inland.—JOHN HOPSON, JUN. "Dalkeith," Eccleston (N.S.W.)

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Pacific Gulls.—It is interesting to notice that on the canal that runs through Koo-wee-rup, in Victoria, and goes inland for a considerable distance from the sea, Pacific Gulls frequently fly up along its course. Only last week I noticed a company of six of these birds flying to the canal headquarters. We have to remember that it is all fresh water, and is a good many miles from the sea. In the evening they returned; two were carrying