

were evidently very young, it might be possible to rear them in captivity, and that it was worth while to make this attempt, so that, if successful, I might present my specimens later to some zoo or aviary. Accordingly, but not without some compunction, I left the parent-bird in his distress and carried the young ones home in my pocket. I placed them in a box, with some soaked bread crumbs round them; but they would not touch the food and appeared very discontented in their prison.

Next morning they looked more than half dead. Lacking the warmth of their parent's body, they were benumbed with cold, though it was a mild November night and their box was indoors. When placed in the warm sunshine they recovered sufficiently to pose for the photograph, but I gave up the thought of rearing them, and decided to restore them to their natural guardian. So, after fixing one of Mr. Cohn's rings loosely on a leg of each, I carried all three back to the scrub and placed them exactly on the spot where I had found them.

The vivacity they immediately displayed surprised me. A moment before they had been semi-torpid; now they became brisk and animated. They set up a vigorous and penetrating chirp in chorus, ran about together, and even scratched and pecked for food. They did not, however, leave the place where their parent had left them the day before. I did not see him when I restored the young ones, but if he were about the spot he must soon have been attracted by their calls.

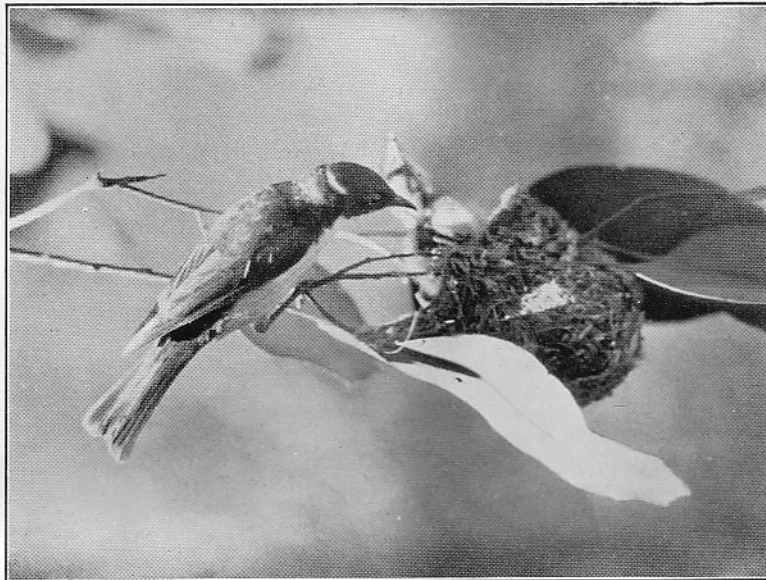
I hope he recovered his babies before they fell victims to some other foe from whom a second deliverance was not to be expected. Perhaps having found them, he was wise enough to lead them away from so unsafe a spot, for I have not seen parent or young since.

Nesting of the White-naped Honeyeater.

BY (REV.) CLARENCE L. LANG, R.A.O.U., Doncaster, Victoria.

"BLACK-CAP," the dainty little White-naped Honeyeater (*Melithreptus lunatus*) is found at most of the creek-sides of southern Australia, where its pleasing note of "Joe-Joe-Joe," or the harsh note, "Churr-churr," may often be heard. Although fairly common, the species is not always easily observed, as it seems to like to feed in the upper foliage of the taller trees or in dense scrub. The sexes are alike in plumage—crown and sides of the head jet-black, a narrow white band on nape, wings and upper-parts yellowish-olive, and under-parts white. There is a bare space of beautiful orange-scarlet near the eye.

I had often observed these birds in the Doncaster district, about 12 miles east of Melbourne, but it was not until November, 1926, that I located a nest. In scrub bordering the Deep Creek at Doncaster East I found these birds in large numbers, and on 22nd November I located a nest about 40 ft. from the ground in a stringy-bark tree. The parent birds were busily engaged in feeding young. I visited this locality a fortnight later and the Black-caps' young proved to be a Pallid Cuckoo. The youngster kept up a continual



WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER AT NEST, SHOWING FRONT AND BACK.

Photos. by (Rev.) C. L. Lang.

cry for food, and the energy of the foster-parents was taxed to the utmost to supply the wants of the hungry parasite.

On 11th December, 1926, another nest was located in a very slender sapling, very cleverly concealed by the leaves, about nine feet from the ground. The location of this nest afforded better opportunities for observation. The nest was a wonderful piece of architecture, constructed principally of stringy bark, interwoven with fine grass, held together and attached to the stems of the gum leaves with spider webs. Three delicately-coloured pink eggs, sparsely covered with reddish spots, which were in the nest, looked quite fresh, but the female had no hesitation in coming to the nest while I was standing close by. I visited the nest again on Christmas morning, and found two young birds, recently hatched, and one egg, which was infertile. The parent birds were very tame; they visited the nest at frequent intervals, paying no heed to the camera two feet away. I again went to the nest on Tuesday, 28th December, but the young had disappeared—there was not the slightest trace of them. The nest was slightly disarranged, but there was nothing to indicate the fate of the nestlings.

While walking along the bank of the creek a fortnight earlier I had observed a Black-cap gathering food from a Christmas bush, which was in full bloom. Watching closely, I saw this bird fly to the top of a slender sapling some distance away. I carefully made my way to this spot and soon located the nest, which was about 25ft. from the ground. The nest contained young ones, which apparently had just been hatched. The day was cool and as the parent bird fed the young it would nestle down on them and remain until its mate appeared with food. Then it would leave the nest. This process was repeated, one of the parent birds always being on the nest to keep the nestlings warm. After watching this interesting procedure for some time, I very gently pulled the sapling over until I could view the interior of the nest. It contained two tiny, helpless young ones, and, fearing that harm might come to them, I quickly replaced the tree.

On 23rd December I again visited the nest. Ten days had made a wonderful difference in the size of the young ones, and as the adult birds showed confidence, I made preparations for taking photographs. I again pulled the sapling over, made it fast, and set up my camera about two feet from the nest. One of the birds, which I took to be the male, paid absolutely no heed to the camera; he visited the nest with food at frequent intervals while I was standing beside the camera. But his mate was not so confident; she kept up a continual "Churr, churr," and could only be induced to come to the nest occasionally.

On 28th December the young, which were then 15 days old, left the nest. After a good deal of stretching on the part of the young and considerable coaxing from the parents, one of the fledglings ventured to a nearby twig. Presently the other nestling, finding itself alone, climbed out of the nest and up the slender suspended twigs, and firmly established itself on a branch above.

The young at this stage do not have the black cap of the adult bird, but they present a beautiful picture in their livery of yellowish-olive above and white beneath.