

going on at quite half the nests while we were watching. Sometimes two birds entered the same nest almost simultaneously. It has been stated that Fairy Martins normally only work in the early morning and evening. On this occasion, however, they were busy at noon on a warm sunny day.

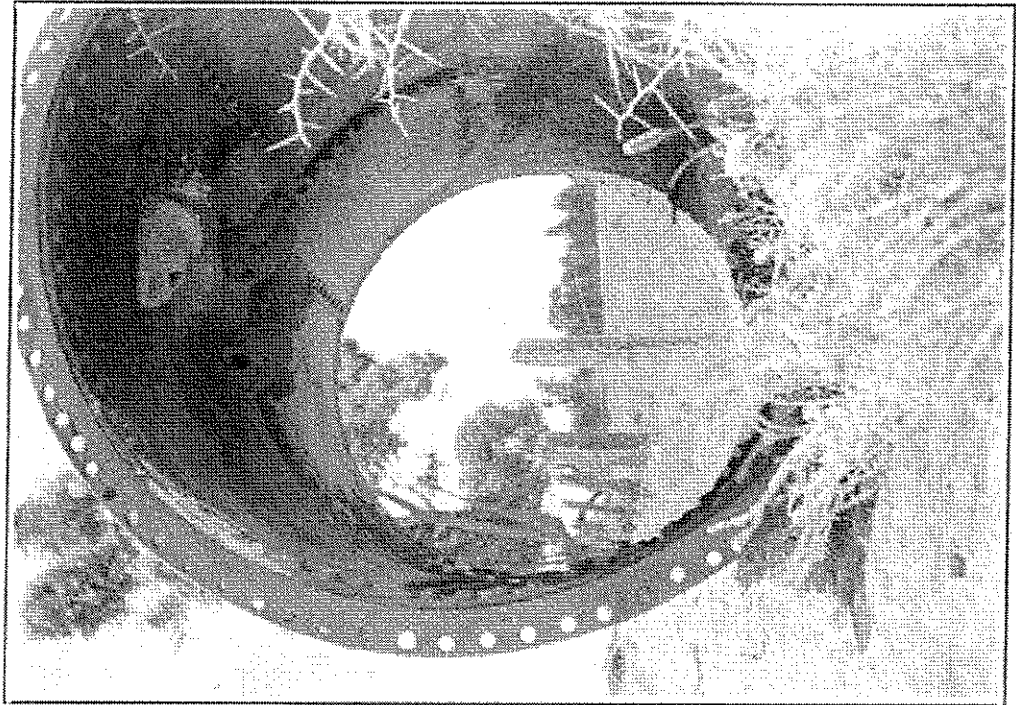
The tameness of the birds suggested that it might be possible to photograph them at work; so we returned two days later (December 7) with the necessary apparatus. Arriving at about 11 a.m. on a very warm day, we found that the work had advanced considerably. Some nests appeared to be practically finished externally, while others still lacked the "spout." No mud was being added, but some of the birds were picking up short lengths of straw from the roadway, and taking them into the nests, presumably for lining purposes. After the camera was set up, however, they declined to enter the cylinder during the hour and a half that we had at our disposal, and I had to be content with the accompanying snapshot of the nests without the birds. It was necessary to hold the camera abnormally low—about 18 inches from the ground—to show the nests adequately; hence the exaggerated size of the cylinder.

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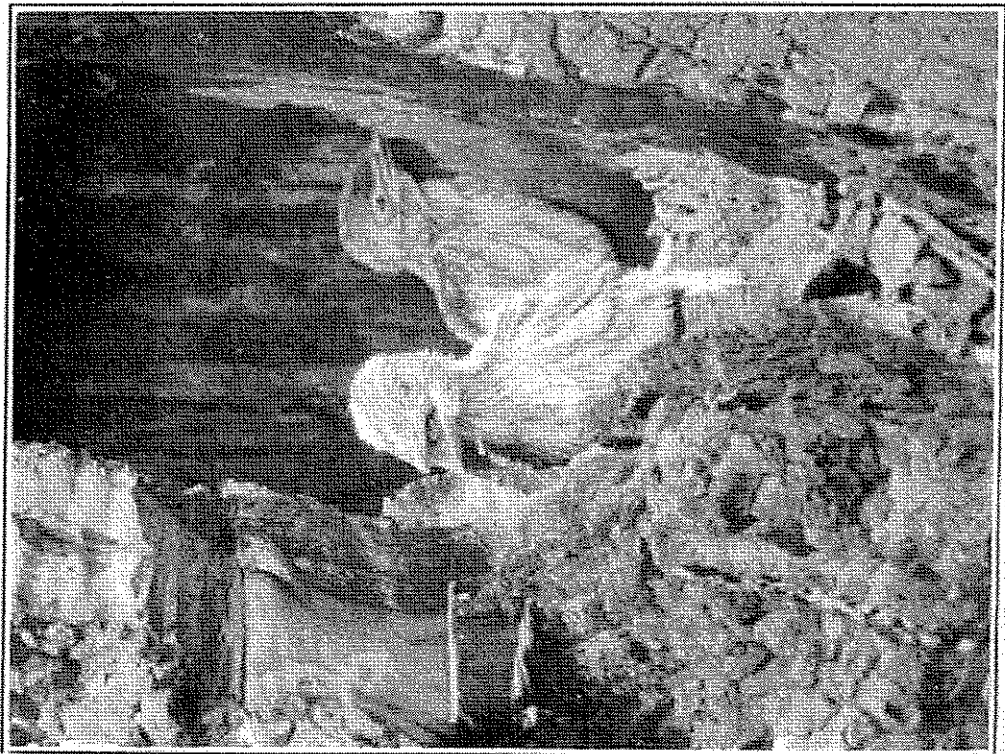
**The Nesting of the Kookaburra.**—Usually the Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*) chooses a deep hole for nesting purposes, more often than not the entrance being gained through a "spout." Hence the nestlings are not suitable photographic subjects. Some years ago, however, a pair of "Jackasses" was located, nesting in an open hole in a burnt stump, about nine feet high, but as there was only a roll-film camera available the accompanying photograph is far from being perfect.

On October 22 the hole was occupied by two newly-hatched young—squirming, naked, bulging-eyed and generally repulsive-looking—and one egg. No nesting material was used other than the rotten wood and the filth of the birds. Four days later the three nestlings, still blind and quite naked, were clamouring for food. On November 2, as the hole was approached, the adult birds left, and I was fortunate enough to see the larger of the two nestlings (one had disappeared) attempting to devour a fledgeling, probably a Blue Wren. This great swallowing feat was managed after many violent gulplings, the young Jackass being very satisfied with the performance, gurgling and laughing in a manner that reflected credit on his upbringing. The nesting hole by this time was very filthy, the stench being almost unbearable.

A rare and curious name for the Kookaburra is Johnnie-bottom.—A. E. BRIDGEWATER, R.A.O.U., Mansfield, Vic.



Fairy Martins' Nests.  
Photo, by H. Ross-Walker.



Nestling Kookaburras.  
Photo, by A. E. Bridgewater, B.A.O.U.