



Ground Cuckoo-Shrike at nest.

Photo. by L. G. Chandler.

country, unless the birds are driven from it by drought, is the open, treeless downs which the fox (and the dingo) studiously avoid, it being too exposed for those animals' liking. There they would be conspicuous and mobbed by birds. It has to be remembered, too, that in England in medieval times, the fox must have been at its zenith, having little to worry about, there being no gamekeepers then or packs of foxhounds, while at the same time Bustards, which were considerably sought after for food by the people, flourished and were described by old writers as moving about in droves, much as we could see them here thirty years ago.

Now that the long drought, which drove the birds to the coast for feed, has broken, I am glad to find that there are still a good many of them about, although nothing like the numbers formerly to be found. If people will only refrain from molesting the bird and not boil its eggs when found I still have great hopes for *Eupodotis australis*.

The Ground Cuckoo-Shrike.—The Ground Cuckoo-Shrike (*Pteropodocys maxima*) is a rare bird in this north-western portion of Victoria. Occasionally I have noticed small flocks of five birds, probably a family party of adults and young, flying over Red Cliffs. The species has a sweet, whistling call that once heard is not forgotten, which call is often uttered whilst the bird is on the wing. This Cuckoo-Shrike spends much of its time feeding on the ground, and when disturbed it has a curious fluttering flight by which it can be recognized several hundred yards away. It is quite fearless at the nest, although usually shy at other times. I was fortunate in locating two pairs of birds last nesting season about eight miles apart, and later found both nests. The first contained three eggs and the second two young birds. Both nests were built mainly of wool, but with a quantity of horsehair, grasses and spider-webs. One had been fashioned on top of and around an old nest of a Magpie-Lark.

The nest in the illustration was built upon a horizontal fork on a dead limb, and was situated about thirty-five feet from the ground. It presented a problem for photographic purposes, but the difficulties were eventually overcome by hauling a ten-foot ladder by a rope to within a few feet of the nest, and wiring it into position. As I climbed the tree and the ladder to change the plates the sitting bird would allow me to approach within six feet before flying off. When the Ground Cuckoo-Shrike is seen at close quarters one realizes to the full what a beautiful bird it is.—L. G. CHANDLER, Red Cliffs, Vic., 19/4/36.