

In order to test the theory that the top nest may be used by the male bird as a roosting place at night I visited the nest with a torch on eleven nights, between the hours of 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. In no instance was the male bird in the top nest, though the female was sitting on the eggs in the lower nest, except on one warm moonlight night (August 11), seven days after the full clutch had been laid. A check visit the same night about an hour later revealed that the female was still absent. Apparently she did not incubate that night.

During my visits at night a close examination of the small bush in which the nest was built failed to reveal the presence of the male, which must have roosted elsewhere, possibly in a clump of trees about thirty yards away.

In view of my notes on the actions of the pair of birds at Lane Cove, and on previous observations on the habits of the species, I suggest that the upper chamber or 'cock's nest' is the natural outcome of the nest-building instincts of the male bird which persist after the essential nest, in which the eggs are deposited, has been completed. As the male appears to take little, if any, part in incubation, the nest-building impulse, in greater or less degree, persists until such time as the eggs hatch, after which time he is fully occupied, together with the female, in feeding the nestlings.

I think that this is a logical explanation of the additional nest, generally built on top of the nest proper, though at times adjoining it, or even separated from it a little. In any future work on the subject it is, of course, essential that the sexes should be distinguishable in life; this could be accomplished by banding or by marking the birds in some way. With the pair of birds nesting near my home this was possible because the presumed male was a semi-albino.

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**Deserted Cygnets.**—Western Australian newspapers of October 1946 gave considerable publicity to nine young swans that were abandoned by their parents at Lake Violet, Wiluna, apparently because the lake became too salt for the birds' liking. The chairman of the local roads board telegraphed the Curator of the Museum at Perth, Mr. L. A. Glauert, who set in motion arrangements to have the birds brought to the Perth Zoo. Despatched by train, a 700-mile 36-hour journey resulted in the young birds, which were aged about three months, being released in a bamboo-shaded pool with an amplitude of food and everyone's 'solicitations'. Prompt action at both ends of the journey made the 'migration' successful.—C. E. BRYANT, Melbourne, Vic., 20/12/46.