

The picture reproduced was obtained without trouble. The nest contained newly-hatched young, and the parent bird took little notice when disturbed, as shown, or even placed by hand in a suitable position. Several other species, including the Jackass, Pilot-Bird, Flame-breasted Robin, Mistletoe-Bird, Rufous and Yellow Whistlers, Buff-rumped and Striated Tits, Blue Wren, White-shafted and Rufous Fantails, and Pardalotes, we have found quite as trustful after a little coaxing. Unfortunately, we have not been able to make a record of every case.

## Description of Nest and Eggs of *Melithreptus atricapillus mallee*, Mathews.

(*Austral Avian Record*, vol. i., p. 192, 1913.)

By F. E. HOWE, C.M.Z.S., R.A.O.U.

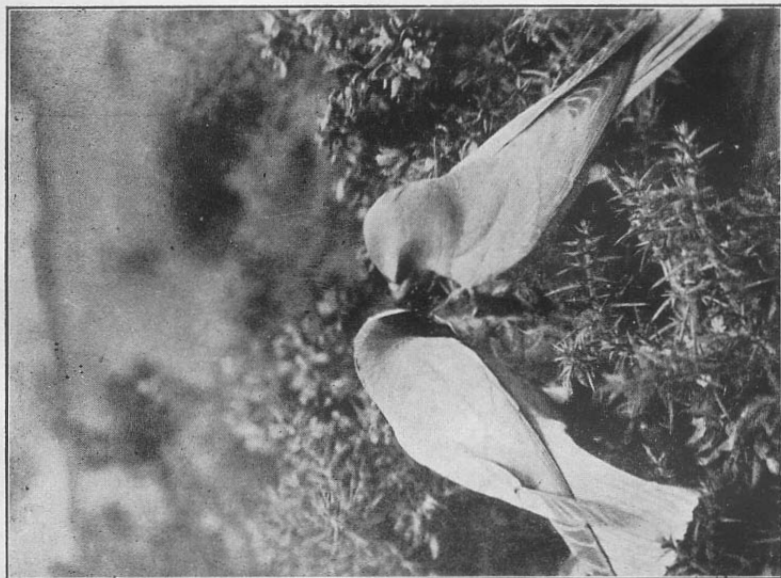
NEST made of grasses and lined with horsehair and fine grass, and decorated externally with a few spider cocoons. Dimensions in inches,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  across by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  depth, egg cavity  $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  in depth, and placed in the topmost branch of a mallee tree.

Eggs.—Two eggs taken from the above nest by Master Roy Ribbons at Carina, north-west Victoria, on 13th October, 1916, are now in my collection. In shape they are nearly oval, and the texture is fine and with a slight gloss. Colour beautiful salmon-pink, but deeper at the larger end, where they are boldly blotched and spotted with rich red-brown. In both specimens purplish-brown markings appear as if beneath the surface. Dimensions in inches:—(a) .75 x .56, (b) .74 x .56.

A set of three fresh eggs taken at Kiata, Victoria, by Mr. William Blucher on 16th October, 1916, are much smaller than the type set. The colour, too, is much paler, and they are more like the eggs taken in southern Victoria. Dimensions in inches:—(a) .66 x .55, (b) .65 x .53, (c) .68 x .55. This clutch is now in the collection of Mr. Erasmus F. Wilson, R.A.O.U.

## Camera Craft Notes.

**A Wood-Swallow Colony.**—Of many pleasant rambles in quest of photographs in the Greensborough district, none has been more enjoyable than those spent at a little spot on the Plenty River known to us as the "Wood-Swallow Paddock." Intersected by dry watercourses, and in parts thickly grown with native and introduced shrubs, the paddock apparently possesses a great attraction for a colony of twenty or more pairs of White-browed Wood-Swallows (*Artamus superciliosus*), which nest there annually. The Sordid (*A. sordidus*) and the Masked (*A. personatus*) are also present, but not in any great numbers. Small prickly acacias appear to be most favoured as nesting sites, but the



Pair of White-browed Wood-Swallows (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) at nest.

PHOTO. BY R. T. LITTLEJOHNS. R.A.O.U.



Yellow-breasted Shrike-Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*) touched by observer.

PHOTO. BY S. A. LAWRENCE. R.A.O.U.

advantage of such an accessible position does not compensate for the extreme wariness of the bird. Several whole days have we spent without obtaining a picture. The nesting site is usually chosen close to a dead gum tree, and this appears to be used by the birds as an observation post. Occasionally an unthinking bird will alight on the look-out belonging to a neighbouring pair. This is the signal for an attack by the owners, who fiercely drive the offender some distance away. The photograph of the pair at the nest was taken in a furze hedge at Meredith. The camera in use in this case was a box one, which did not allow of focussing, everything having to be done by measurement. It was a remarkable chance, therefore, that the picture included both birds.—S. A. LAWRENCE, R. T. LITTLEJOHNS. 23/2/17.

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## Review.

["The Birds of Britain: their Distribution and Habits." By A. H. Evans, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Cambridge: At the University Press. 1916.]

THE Syndics of the Cambridge University Press have been good enough to send a copy of the above little work for the acceptance of the R.A.O.U.; and interest is lent to the book because the author, having visited Australia, is known personally to many members of the Australasian Union.

Though primarily intended for the schools of the British Isles—geographically "a little spot," yet the hub of a world-wide Empire—the book will also be useful for those who require a short handbook which includes results of recent observations, and is adapted to more modern nomenclature—i.e., the new list of the B.O.U. The introduction, in a general way, deals briefly with the origin of birds, technical terms used for feathers, plumages, migration, geographical distribution, &c. The "classification" is also briefly explained; then follows in order each species, succinctly treated. As a sample, here is a little pen-picture about the Puffin (p. 241):—

"By name at least everyone knows the Puffin, Sea-Parrot, or Tammie Norie (*Fratercula arctica*), a black bird with white cheeks and under parts, orange feet, and orange and blue bill. The sheath of this huge compressed bill is shed in pieces in autumn. The bird breeds in suitable places all round our coasts, choosing to burrow in earthy slopes on islands or cliffs, and laying a coarse-grained, whitish egg with faint lilac markings, on the bare soil or a little dry grass. It is amusing to walk about a big colony and see the birds popping out of their holes one after the other and speeding like arrows to the sea, which soon becomes covered with them, while it is equally interesting to watch them passing to and fro with fish for their young later in the season. They bite severely if disturbed in their burrows. The Puffin ranges from