

ments are still being tried to combat the *blowfly pest*, but at present it has not been successful, but the fox and the crow play a very important part in eradicating much of the trouble. During portions of the year the fox does good in combating the rabbits and fly pest, but in the lambing season plays such havoc that at this period pastoralists wage war on the fox.

It will be readily seen that the once persecuted Crow is now considered useful, whereas not five years ago, this bird was destroyed in that particular part of South Australia. This tends to show that even without protection by law, the Crow has secured protection for the good that it does. There is no need to protect him in that district at least. I realise, even as big a supporter of the Crow as I am, that protection by legislation will not improve matters, but may do considerable harm, as there are yet hundreds of men who destroy the Crow, and would possibly even go to greater trouble if they were "prevented by law." I believe that in S.A. at least I was one of the first land-owners to realise the value of the Crow, and when I mentioned the good it did, I was not well received. Now things have changed. Capt. White has done good work in persuading townspeople that the Crow is a useful bird. As for the country in South Australia, I do not think it will be long before the Crow will be the "most protected bird."

It was extremely pleasing to me to see mention of the Crow in this report on a piece of the country in which I have never been. The increase in Crows in S.A. has astonished me. I heard the other day that "Crows are in flocks around Peterborough and Terowie, and that no one is trying to shoot them." So the "Black Devil" is coming into his own at last.—J. NEIL, MCGILP, R.A.O.U., King's Park, South Australia.

Camera Craft

Notes from Merriwa.—Appended hereto are a few notes on various species of our birds that may be of interest to readers of *The Emu*:—

Uroaetus audax. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—On September 30th, 1923, I found a nest containing two young birds, on the edge of which was a dead rabbit with a spring-trap still attached to its leg. The trap weighed 23 ounces, and must have been a clumsy obstacle for the Eagle to manage. These birds are common in the district, and there is no doubt that, where possible, they prefer rabbits as food to lambs. It is a sheep-raising country, and yet in nearly 10 years' experience, which includes well over 200 nests observed, we have only two or three times found lambs on the nest, while I have seen the remains of as many as 14 rabbits on one nest alone.

Epthianura aurifrons. Orange Chat.—Most interesting visitors this year were five or six of these little birds, including two beautiful males. They appeared on November 30th, and stayed for about a week, in the vicinity of a public road. This is the first record of the bird in this district, and must be almost a record for its most eastern range. We are not more than 90 miles from the coast, and just within the eastern watershed. No doubt, they were driven by the dry conditions out of the interior. Its congener, the Crimson Chat (*E. tricolor*), was also noted breeding—its first appearance here since 1914.

Meliphaga chrysops. Yellow-faced Honeyeater.—On November 6th, 1923, when on a short trip to the coast, I discovered a



Nest of the Plum-headed Finch

nest containing one egg of this Honeyeater and one of a Pallid Cuckoo. On the following day, to my surprise, the Cuckoo's egg was alone in the nest. What removed the Honeyeater's egg? If a marauder, he would surely have taken both eggs. A fascinating theory that occurred at the time was that the Honeyeater, objecting to the intrusion of the Cuckoo, had built another nest, and removed his own egg thereto; but a thorough search for a new nest failed to reveal anything.

Aidemosyne modesta. Plum-head Finch.—I enclose a photograph of a nest containing five eggs *in situ* in a clump of Aloes (*Cactus sp.*). I regret the bird is not at it. This is our first record of the bird in the district.—B. C. J. BETTINGTON, R.A.O.U., Terragong, Merriwa (N.S.W.).

The Cuckoo and the Red-capped Robins.—During the season 1922-23 I found six nests of the Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*), all of which contained an egg of the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo (*Chalcites basalis*). From the similarity of the eggs and the fact that I saw only one Cuckoo near these nests, I feel reasonably certain that the same Cuckoo laid all the eggs. The owners of the first nest were victimised twice; the Cuckoo laying again after I had removed her first egg. Apparently the Cuckoo laid every second day. On September 25th, I found the first nest, containing only a Robin's egg. On the 26th, it contained only a Cuckoo's egg, which I removed. On the 28th, the Cuckoo laid again in the same nest.

On the 29th, I found nest number two, containing two Robin's eggs, and the 30th only one Robin's egg, and also a Cuckoo's. Later I found nests three, four, and five, also victimised. On November 5th, I found nest number six, which, owing to the advanced stage of incubation of the eggs, was the only one at which I had hopes of securing a picture. The tree, growing on the edge of an embankment, was in a poor position for photography, being capable of approach only from one direction. Several pictures taken during afternoons were spoiled owing to the sun being in an unsatisfactory quarter, but the accompanying photograph, obtained in the morning, was more satisfactory. MARC COHN, R.A.O.U., Bendigo.

Stray Feathers

North Tasmanian Notes.—On a recent trip in car and on saddle round the north-west coast of Tasmania, as far as Balfour, about fifty miles south of Cape Grim, I made a few memoranda which may be of interest to some of your readers. First, a single specimen of the Black and White Fantail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), of whose presence in the Huon district I notified you some years ago, was seen brandishing his misfitting tail on the pasture at Black River, near Stanley. At the latter place, also, the Brush Wattle-bird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) has now become common, though unknown there up to within the last few years. On the vast heathy plains about the mouth of the Arthur River, the plaintive piping of the Grass Bird (*Megalurus gramineus*) was much heard. This bird is rare in many parts of Tasmania. In the low coastal scrub south of Temma a flock of about twenty White Cockatoos was seen. Forty years ago these beautiful birds could be seen in large flocks in the grain fields; now the verdict is: "We seldom see them."—G. MURRAY ANDERSON, "Raggal," New Town, Hobart.



Red-tailed Bobir at rest containing young Cuckoo.
Photo. by Mr. Con. B.A.C.U., Berlin.