



Flame Robin.

Photo. by A. J. Elliott, R.A.O.U., and A. O. Elliott.

the clutch has been laid, which would account for the very noticeable differences in stages of development usually found among their young ones in the nest.

An Eastern Rosella (*P. eximius*) this year laid as follows:—11/9/'30, 13/9/'30, 16/9/'30, 18/9/'30, and 21/9/'30. She stayed in the nest for the first night, 21/9/'30, and by midday, 25/9/'30, had laid 2 more eggs, having taken 14 days to lay the clutch.

The Flame Robin.—It is interesting to note, that in some localities on the south Coast of New South Wales, that beautiful little bird, the Flame Robin (*Petroica phoenicea*), is rapidly increasing in numbers. It was September 18, 1927, that we found the first nest of the species which we had seen. It was placed in a cavity in a bank facing the south, and both birds were alike in plumage, showing that they were a young pair and this probably was their first attempt at reproducing their kind. The species has increased steadily in numbers since then, until now they are quite common birds here. At least nine pairs nested in our "territory" (a space of about 500 acres on which we particularly carry out observations), during the recent nesting season, and we are almost sure that there were more than that. From our observations the favourite nesting sites are cavities in banks, and, to a lesser degree, in cavities in stones. A few nests are built on the ground, sheltered by a projecting stone, a few in clefts and scars (generally caused by fire), in trees and stumps and still others on top of tree-ferns, although we found only one in either of the last two positions last season (1930). The highest nest which we have seen was placed about 20 feet from the ground. We have found them facing in every direction, although in only a very few instances have we found them open to the north.

Some pairs of Robins rear two broods annually, sometimes using the same nest twice, and at other times building a new one for the second brood. The usual clutch of eggs is three, and about here the parents generally seem to get all their young into the outside world safely. The young feather very quickly. The female pictured is one of a pair which commenced taking life seriously about three years ago. The male was then indistinguishable from the female, although he has now had the flame-coloured breast for a couple of years. He is not yet, however, a well-marked bird when compared with some specimens of his kind. Every nest of this particular pair has been built in a cavity in a bank; not the same one every time, of course. During the past season we found them building on August 24, 1930, and on October 3 we successfully photographed the female.

The young left the nest a couple of days later. Both the adults were rather good subjects for photography, although in their movements, they could be decidedly quick when they felt inclined. On account of his red breast the male is also difficult to photograph successfully without the use of panchromatic plates. We again found this pair nesting on November 1, 1930, the new nest containing eggs but recently laid. One young was reared and left the nest on November 29 or 30. What became of the other two eggs or young we do not know. The dates given concerning this pair are almost the earliest, and were, until recently, the latest, at which we have found the species breeding. However, on December 27, 1930, we found a nest containing fresh eggs, situated in a scar in a stone and a little below a "staghorn" fern. The young left the nest on January 27, 1931—almost two months later than we had previously found the species breeding. The nest was a very prettily-situated one, although, partly on account of its facing the south, it did not lend itself readily to photography.

Male Flame-breasts appear to acquire their brilliant plumage early in the year, and not in the springtime as one might imagine. We noticed one changing his colours in January, 1930, and again another one in January this year (1931). Or is it probable that the males, while still young, return to their sombre plumage after the nesting season is over?—A. J. ELLIOTT, R.A.O.U., and A. O. ELLIOTT, Cambewarra, N.S.W.

Variation of *Barnardius barnardi*.—Recently when visiting the aviaries of the Marquis of Tavistock in company with Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, my attention was drawn to a living specimen (the type) of *Barnardius cromolini*, named by Mr. Mathews. After having expressed my belief that the new species was but a colour variation of *Barnardius barnardi*, and that I had a similar variation in my own aviary, Mr. Mathews and Lord Tavistock requested me to write a note to *The Emu*, stating the fact.

Upon my return to Australia, I again examined my bird and find it to be a replica of the *B. cromolini* of Mathews. The bird is still living and is now in excellent feather. The breast is entirely green without any yellow band. Formerly there was no indication of yellow at all but since its recent moult there is just the faintest suggestion of a tinge of very pale yellow on a couple of feathers. I am therefore still of the opinion expressed in London that Mathews' *B. cromolini* is but a variation of *Barnardius barnardi*.—CLIF. COLES, R.A.O.U., Sydney, N.S.W.