

black. The male generally is of a more reddish colour, with a tail of slaty-blue that is marked with a single band of black at the end. The head has a distinct hood of dark brown, streaked at the sides with grey. He is much less spotted than the hen about the back and abdomen, and there is a short black marking extending down the cheeks from the base of the bill.

The male made a much better subject for photography than the hen, for both when entering and leaving the nest he would occasionally remain for a moment on the edge of the entrance allowing me to make a quick exposure, and a picture illustrating this article shows him in a characteristic position. When I climbed to the camera to change a plate or to check the focus, the young ones would sit on their "haunches," huddled together at the back of the hollow, and utter plaintive cries. Two were much larger than their fellows, probably because they were the first pair to be hatched or had managed to obtain a greater share of the food. For the first ten days they were clothed in thick greyish-white down.

It was pretty to watch the parents hovering over the grass close to the tree when seeking food. With wings rapidly pulsating, they would remain in one spot for a minute or two, evidently watching something on the ground, and now and then they would flutter down and seize either a beetle or a lizard. In most instances they appeared to kill the prey before rising, and apparently to make sure that it was quite dead, they would give it a few hard raps against a branch of a tree before taking it to the nest. When in flight they often changed the food from their claws to their bills.

**Fairy Martins in Sydney.**—During May and June of this year (1931) I observed a small flock of about 15 to 20 Fairy Martins in Macquarie Street, Sydney. The little birds were flitting around the higher buildings and clinging to ventilators or any projecting piece of architecture that was available or suitable for a resting place. It was a unique (and pleasing) sight and their small voices could be heard quite distinctly, in spite of the traffic noises. Mr. C. Rhodes, R.A.O.U., of Burwood (N.S.W.), has notes of a large flock of these birds, estimated at 1000 or more, at Abbotsford, some six miles south of the city, remaining there all the winter, on two occasions. The birds were clustering around a large dome over a cooling chamber of a zinc paint plant, twenty-five feet up from the ground. They were clinging to ledges and projecting bricks evidently enjoying the warmth of the walls of the chamber. They vanished by the time nesting was due.—Dr. E. A. D'OMBRAIN, R.A.O.U., Macquarie Street, Sydney, N.S.W.