

distinct. One of the nests was built high up in the branches of a red gum. When I found it, three birds were engaged in driving away a pair of Pied Butcher Birds, and the fourth was sitting on the nest. This was found to contain five eggs—conclusive proof of the double occupation, especially as two of them differed widely from the others.

The last nest of all was the only one which held photographic possibilities. When the birds appeared to be incubating we commenced operations. The female, which was sitting on the nest, was not at all shy; she would not leave the nest till I was half way up the tree, and returned to it before I had reached the ground again. She sat a few feet away, evidently camera-shy, for some time, but a half-hour's wait achieved the desired result, which is reproduced here. The nest was built in a thin horizontal fork, and measured internally 4 inches across by 2 inches deep. It was made externally of twigs, fine grass, stems and leaves, cobwebs, spider cocoons, and other woolly material. It was lined with fine grass and a few of the bird's own feathers. The black bars on the breast feathers and the black tips on the wing feathers were quite distinctive.

Near each of the nests I found a patch of feathers on the ground; evidently the "plucking" takes place here, and suitable feathers are afterwards removed to the nest. After the nesting season the birds congregate in small flocks, and it is not uncommon to see nine or ten of these beautiful silvery birds feeding together on the ground.—A. C. CAMERON, R.A.O.U., Biddeston, via Oakey, Qld.

The Silvereye.—The Grey-backed Silvereye (*Zosterops halmaturina*) is a common bird in most parts of Victoria, especially in the tea-tree scrub along the north shore of Phillip Island in Westernport Bay, where the French naturalists, Quoy and Gaimard, claimed to have procured the type specimen.

Twenty years ago during Christmas holidays in Gippsland, I used to find many nests of this bird in the hawthorn bushes. Most of the eggs were heavily incubated. Near Melbourne the breeding season commences towards the end of November and is continued through into January. The eggs hatch out rapidly, twelve days being about the incubation period. The birds are not difficult subjects to photograph and when on the nest the female will remain so motionless as to enable a photographer to take a time exposure of it. Once while engaged a photographing a pair of Silvereyes at their nest the shutter was accidentally released when the bird was not at the nest, but the negative subsequently revealed both birds together in the bush making their way cautiously towards the nest.—D. J. DICKISON, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.