

the nest, which had broken away at the top. Nest had been built low down in a willow. Young Cuckoo could not fly and both Warblers were feeding it. Twice small dragon flies were fed to it, wings included. Warblers fed it every few minutes. Young Cuckoo's gape yellow.

1937, November 21: Nest of Warbler found with one Shining Cuckoo's egg and one Warbler's, both nearing hatching. Warbler came to nest carrying thistle-down. Nest appeared to be in perfect shape; no sign of any interference. November 27: Nest found to be deserted.

1939, January 1: Warblers seen feeding young Shining Cuckoo not long out of nest. Both Warblers were gathering food and took it to Cuckoo.

1939, January 2: Nest of Grey Warbler in broom, 5 feet from ground, contained young Shining Cuckoo just about ready to leave. The nest had broken away near the top, so that it was open for three parts of the way round, the back alone being intact. It was also resting on a small fork of the broom, which gave it additional support. Young Cuckoo completely filled interior of nest.

The Variegated Wren.—In *The Emu*, vol. XXIX, pp. 193 and 291, Mr. K. A. Hindwood describes a possible instance of polyandry amongst Variegated or Lambert's Wrens (*Malurus lamberti*). Over the last two or three years I have been able to study this species in the heath-lands around Sydney, and during the breeding seasons have had a number of nests under observation. At practically every nest one female and two males were observed feeding the young, and one of the males was invariably more brightly coloured than the other. Whilst one was attired in the brilliant plumage of the fully adult bird, the colours of the other were much duller, and there was a certain amount of brown amongst the blue feathers of the head. Mr. Hindwood, in the articles quoted above, also refers to this difference in coloration and records it in two separate parties which he observed. That seems to suggest that the second bird was a young male from a previous brood, for, if the species were polyandrous, one would expect to find, in some instance at least, both males "faultlessly arrayed in their gorgeous plumage of scintillating blues and velvet-black, with chestnut-red shoulders."

Whilst I do not deny that it is possible that both males were mated to the female, yet in view of the foregoing observations, and particularly of the fact that I have never seen two fully-coloured males at the one nest, I think that it is more likely that one is a young unmated bird from a previous brood.

On October 29, 1938, I discovered a nest containing three Wren's eggs, and a young Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo which

had just hatched. The female was still brooding and, as soon as the camera was set up, returned to the nest, and the accompanying photograph was taken in the late afternoon light. The bird sat so still that I was able to give an exposure of $\frac{1}{2}$ second without any movement. When I left the nest at dusk, the Wren's eggs were still unhatched, and the young Cuckoo had made no attempt to eject them. The next morning I revisited the nest and found that all three Wrens had hatched and the young Cuckoo was trying to throw them out. Although it worked almost unceasingly for over three hours while I was there, it had not succeeded in ejecting any of the Wrens when I had to leave. It was rather fascinating to watch that blind, naked and apparently-helpless scrap of bird-life. It would first wriggle around on the bottom of the nest until it succeeded in rolling a young Wren into the hollow of its back, when it would gradually work itself into such a position that its back was directly beneath the opening. Then, firmly grasping the nest with its feet, it pressed its head upon the bottom of the nest to secure greater leverage, and, with "wings" quivering, slowly commenced to push the Wren up until it was almost upon the entrance ledge. The final effort, however, seemed to be too much for the Cuckoo, and each time, in endeavouring to throw out the Wren, it overbalanced and, turning a complete somersault, landed on its back in the far side of the nest. Several times it actually succeeded in getting the Wren on to the inside of the ledge, but on each occasion both birds fell back again into the nest. Although this was repeated about 15 to 20 times while I was watching, only once did the Cuckoo misjudge the position of the entrance hole, and that time it pushed one of the Wrens up the side of the nest about an inch away.

A few days later when I again visited the nest, the Cuckoo was in sole possession, and there was no sign of the young Wrens.—J. D. WATERHOUSE, Albury, N.S.W., 4/8/39.

In the Wild Birds (Ducks and Geese) Protection Bill which was recently passed in the House of Lords, very material progress is made for the conservation of such birds in Europe. Not only is the close season extended for wild Geese and most wild Duck (it will now last from February 1 to August 11) but the importation of birds from abroad during that period is also prohibited. Large numbers of Ducks are caught annually in decoys in various parts of Europe in the breeding season and this, too, has been a severe drain on the stock of birds. Now the loss of the English market is expected greatly to alleviate the situation.