

This leaves us at the moment with the problem of identifying the species which owns the nest in the photograph. Of the pigeons and doves occurring in the area, all except the White-quilled, Flock, Partridge and Plumed Pigeons are tree nesters and can be dismissed. The nesting habits of the latter three species however are well documented and in all accounts show no variation from basically "a scrape in the ground lined with grasses". This leaves only the Rock Pigeon as the owner of the nest, or perhaps some as yet unidentified species, which is extremely unlikely. Accepting the fact that the nest in the photograph belongs to this species returns us to the contradiction in the accounts presented. When weighed up, the slender evidence as presented above shows two accounts in favour of a scrape in the ground, and two in favour of a stick nest built on a rock surface. I can only pass the problem on to ornithologists visiting the Kimberleys, who have an opportunity to investigate it: where does the White-quilled Rock Pigeon nest? In sand, on rocks, or both?

#### REFERENCES

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**Honeyeaters and Emu Bush, *Eremophila*.**—In 1958, I wrote a short paper on the association between the Black Honeyeater, *Myzomela nigra*, and the Emu Bush, *Eremophila longifolia* (*Emu* 57: 127-129). That paper has been subsequently referred to by a number of authors, who, in the main, mention only *longifolia*. My more recent observations in the extreme south-west of New South Wales show that other *Eremophila* species may be of importance to the Black Honeyeater and other honeyeaters. This publication is to draw attention to that fact.

The following *Eremophilas* occur with some frequency in my home area, and are here briefly described and their importance as food sources for honeyeaters assessed.

**SPREADING EMU BUSH, *Eremophila diversifolia*.** A low shrub reaching about 2 feet in height, usually in association with Black Box, *Eucalyptus largiflorens*, adjacent to the Murray River, under which trees it may form a continuous ground cover. The flowers are small and profuse. They are a pale mauve in colour. I have never seen any honeyeaters feeding on this Emu Bush although it forms an important habitat for wrens, *Malurus melanotus* and *M. assimilis*.

**DWARF EMU BUSH**, *Eremophila glabra*. A shrub growing to 3 or 4 feet high on sandy loam, usually in association with Belar, *Casuarina cristata*, or bull mallee, *Eucalyptus* spp. The flowers are deep uniform red in colour and are not very profuse. Although a number of different honeyeaters have been seen feeding on this Emu Bush it does not appear to be of great importance or of special popularity.

**LONG LEAF EMU BUSH OR BERRIGAN**, *Eremophila longifolia*. A small tree growing on a variety of soils and bearing a profusion of dull reddish flowers. A very popular food source for the Black Honeyeater, the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, *Acanthagenys rufogularis*, the Singing Honeyeater, *Meliphaga virescens*, and the Miners, *Myzantha* spp.

**SPOTTED EMU BUSH**, *Eremophila maculata*. Similar in size and growth to *glabra* but growing mostly in shallow depressions in heavy sand loams. The flowers are red with spotted throats. Undoubtedly the most important of the local *Eremophilas* as a food source for honeyeaters. Flowering is most profuse and nectar production very high. Patches of this Emu Bush will attract numerous honeyeaters of all species from a large area. In October 1965, a small, non-breeding irruption of the Black Honeyeater occurred. Without exception all birds of this species seen were on *E. maculata* or *longifolia*. At the same time, a patch of *maculata* no more than 75 yards square, was attracting over 100 individuals of 11 different species of honeyeater, including the Pied Honeyeater, *Certhionyx variegatus*, the first known local occurrence of this species and the Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, *Meliphaga ornata*, which at that spot was at least 7 miles away from any mallee, the normal habitat of the species.

**TWIN LEAF EMU BUSH**, *Eremophila oppositifolia*. This is a tree growing up to 20 feet in height and always in association with Belar. The dry scrub country in which these two trees grow does not normally carry a high honeyeater population and this Emu Bush does not seem to be of sufficient attraction to cause any increase of birds. The White-fronted Honeyeater, *Gliciphila albigrons*, however, appears to favour it and the normal honeyeaters of this shrub, such as the Spiny-cheeked, the Singing, and the Striped, *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*, will feed upon it without any particular concentration.

**TWIGGY EMU BUSH**, *Eremophila polyclada*. A dense shrub growing up to 10 feet high, this Emu Bush is confined to the heavy grey soil adjacent to the Darling River. It has a large white, purple-spotted flower, carried in some profusion. It appears to be almost as popular with all honeyeaters as is *maculata*, but unfortunately grows in such small stands that, locally, it has little influence on the honeyeater population.

**NARROW LEAF EMU BUSH OR TURPENTINE BUSH,** *Eremophila sturtii*. A fairly common shrub in damper depressions in mallee country. It grows to over 10 feet in height and when in bloom is smothered with a mass of very pale, purplish flowers. It is a most attractive foliaged shrub, beautiful when in flower, but unfortunately has no attraction whatever for honeyeaters as a source of nectar. Singing Honeyeaters, and to a lesser extent, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, are to be found in areas of this bush in fair numbers, apparently as permanent residents.—J. N. HOBBS, Police Station, Buronga, N.S.W.

**Roosting of the Black-capped Sittella.**—When in the south-west of Western Australia in October, 1963, I witnessed one of those delightful incidents in avian behaviour that provide the magnetism to bird-watching. In an open-forest area between Broome Hill and Gnowangerup a flock of eleven Black-capped Sittellas, *Neositta pileata*, was located. The setting sun still shone brightly and enhanced the black, white and grey of the birds' plumage and intensified the orange wing-bars. After flitting for a while in close formation from tree to tree they began to settle on a short, horizontal, dead limb jutting out from a tree-trunk, and about twenty feet from the ground. It was straight, smooth and thin enough for a suitable roosting-perch.

One by one the birds settled down, each one packing close and snug beside the other. However, when ten had finally perched on the limb there was no room left for No. 11. After it fluttered briefly above the packed line of roosting birds it finally wedged itself between two of the others and shuffled down far enough to grasp the perch, with the result that another, finding the pressure too great, swung under the branch, pendulum-fashion, to finally drop off and repeat what No. 11 had done. Again, when it had settled in another was forced out, and so the procedure was repeated many times, with either the bird on the end or one in line losing its position.

My companions and I had stayed longer than time permitted, so reluctantly we drove on, not being able to prove finally whether all eleven managed to somehow settle down on the branch, or one was forced to find a lonely perch on its own.—ARNOLD R. MCGILL, 119 Wollongong Road, Arncliffe, N.S.W.