

Nest and Egg of Yellow-breasted Flycatcher.

ko-tek (four notes), we-we (four times repeated); we-we (four times); we-we (four times, pitch altered); phed-e-rate (twice); we-we (four times); ko-tek (twice); we-we (four times), phed-e-rate (twice); we-we (twice); we-we (four times), ko-tek (four times); we-we (three times); we-we (four times, at much higher pitch); ko-tek (four times); we-we (four times); we-we (four times), and ko-tek (once) and we-we (four times), all quickly followed; interval of several seconds; we-we (eight times); ko-tek (once); we-we (four times, pitched high); we-we (four, medium pitch); interval of several seconds; ko-tek; phed-e-rate (four times); piek-up (same value); we-we (three times); intervals were becoming wider, with last few notes faint, 5.21 a.m.

Nothing further was heard till 7.5 a.m., when the first of the day calls was given—a series of six sharp, twittering notes.

The *Grallina*-like notes were particularly interesting because if by imitation they must be by inheritance, as we have no *Grallina* in or near this district. The nearest *Myzantha garrula* was approximately 400 yards away, and on one occasion only did I hear that or any other of its species giving notes of its song. In other words, the male bird was the only singer in the area allotted to a pair of birds at this season of the year.

Mr. Giblin, M.H.A., tells me that Miners sing in chorus; that in the stillness of early morning one bird will strike its first clear, sweet, and strong call, when promptly follow a number of its companions, as if to vie with each other in the pure joy of living another day. Without knowing the fact, I should incline to believe this chorus to be a song of the early part of spring, before the birds have paired and become isolated for nesting.

Camera Craft Notes.

Two Northern Nests.—The nest of the Lemon-breasted Flycatcher (*Microeca flavigaster*) is one of the smallest of those of Australian birds. The structure is about the circumference of a half-crown, and is the receptacle of a single egg. The pretty bird is fairly plentiful in the tropics of Queensland, where it seems to take the place of our familiar friend the Brown Flycatcher (*M. fascians*) of the south. The nest of the White-breasted Honey-eater (*Glyciphila fasciata*) was taken from a paper-barked tea-tree, or *Melaleuca*, near where some "tea-tree" orchids were growing. The nest was suspended over a lily lagoon, and was constructed of shreds and strips of tea-tree bark, and is dome-shaped. The Brown-backed Honey-eater (*G. modesta*) is the only other Honey-eater known to build a covered nest; those of all the rest of the family are open.

I am indebted to the Messrs. Harvey Bros., Mackay, for the two interesting nests which I have illustrated.—A. J. CAMPBELL.
Armadale, 15/11/15.

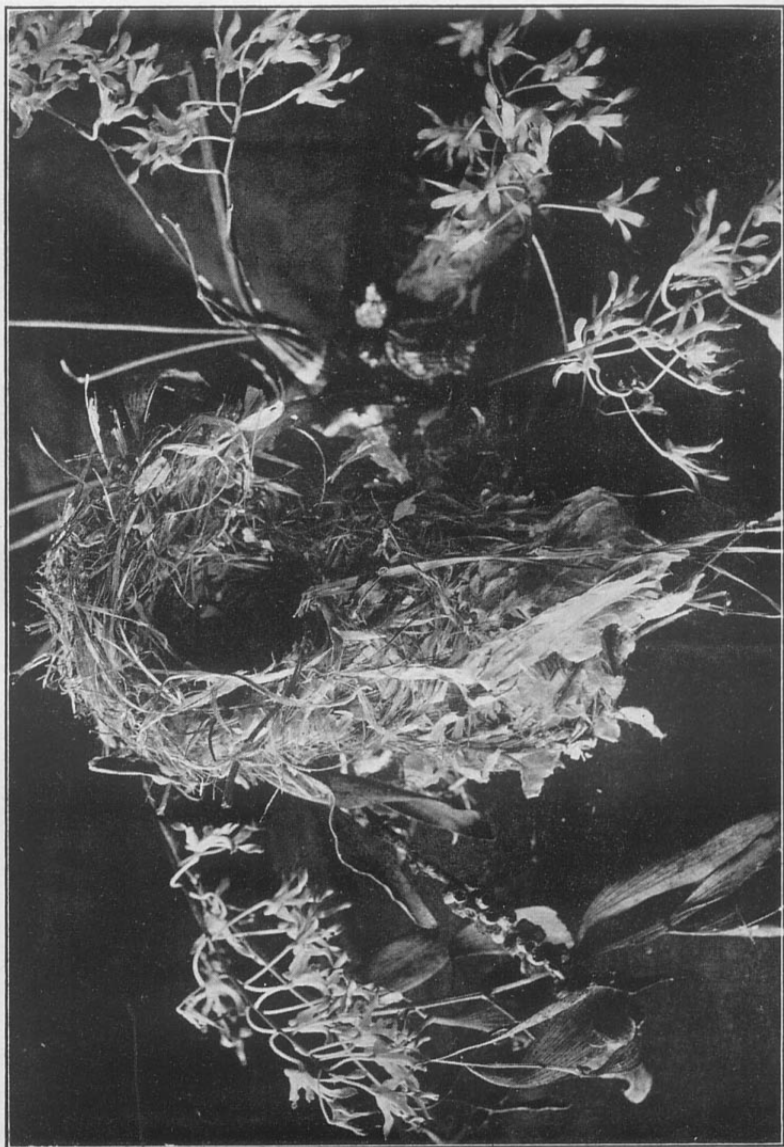
Spotless Crake.—A nest of the Spotless Crake (*Porzana immaculata*) was found by me in the school swamp on the 28th November, 1914. It was built among rushes and reeds over five feet in height, and was placed three feet above the muddy water. The eggs were fresh, and, knowing from previous observations that the period of incubation is 16 to 18 days, I did not look at the nest again until the 15th December, when the three eggs were slightly chipped. Early next morning I again visited the nest, and one chick was out. It immediately dived over the nest into the slush beneath, and a long time elapsed before I found it. I then brought my camera to the nest.



Spotless Crake's Nest, with Chick and Eggs.

FROM A PHOTO. BY (MISS) J. A. FLETCHER.

As the little Crake would not sit still, I made it a prisoner in my camera case for the nonce. Focussing was exceedingly difficult, owing chiefly to the unstable conditions of the boggy ground. When all was ready I placed the chick in the nest. It lay still for an instant, and I exposed a plate. Young Crakes and Rails are difficult subjects for the photographer, as they hide immediately the rushes are parted. A nestful of Crakes is a pretty sight. The down of the little birds is a beautiful, shining, greenish-black. I found a nest at 5 a.m. this morning, but I had barely time to count three fledgelings before the nest was empty.—(Miss) J. A. FLETCHER. Springfield (Tas.), 20th November, 1915.



White-breasted Honey-eater's Nest.

Robin's Nest in Tobacco Tin.—About the middle of October, 1915, one of my sister's scholars reported that a pair of Flame-breasted Robins (*Petroica phænicea*) had a nest in a tobacco tin, which had been fixed to a wall for use as a soap dish. The house had been empty for a while. The tin chosen by the birds as a nesting site was nailed under the verandah of the kitchen. The situation was hardly a good one, on account of the strong draught blowing through. The lighting also made it very difficult to obtain a good photograph. I exposed a plate, and, though the camera was close to her, the brooding bird remained on the nest. I afterwards flushed her to count the eggs; there were three. This was on the 20th October. On the 7th November I went to see if the young birds were still in the nest, and found them fully fledged. The day was windy, otherwise, I think, the fledgelings would have been gone. After a great deal of trouble, I obtained a photograph of the young birds, but, owing to the wind, they would not turn round. They were huddled together. I tried to persuade them to face me, but one became so indignant that it fluttered to the ground. I picked it up, and managed to secure a picture of it sitting on top of the nest, and also of the others in the nest.—(MISS) J. A. FLETCHER. Springfield (Tas.), 27/10/15.



Female Flame-breasted Robin on Nest in Tobacco Tin.

The White-browed Scrub-Wren.—One of the most interesting of small birds is the White-browed Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis frontalis*). Though building in shadowy, secluded spots—usually among dense brushwood or in a pile of *débris*—the Scrub-Wrens are so jealous of privacy that they betray their nests by noisy protest if one approaches the vicinity. I have found scores of nests, and only once flushed a bird. In all other instances spluttering volleys of chiding notes were the prelude to discovery. Anger and rebuke are clearly expressed in the Scrub-Wren's vocal outburst when it is disturbed during the breeding season. At



Female White-browed Scrub-Wren in Nest.

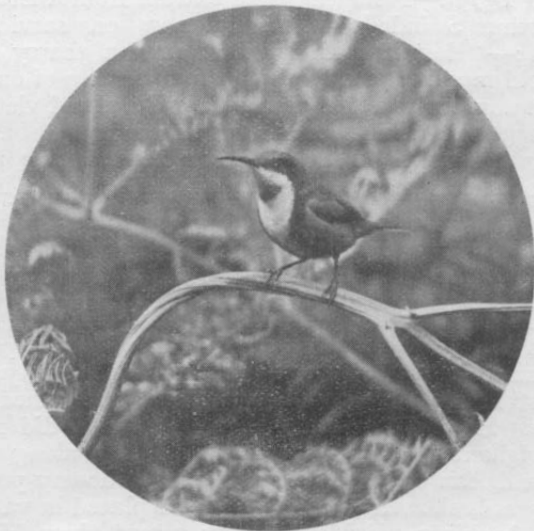
FROM A PHOTO. BY CHARLES BARRETT.

other times, without being chided, I have quietly observed these active little birds prospecting the ground for food. Their notes of peace are rather soft and pleasing; and the birds themselves are so "amusive" and graceful in their actions that one does not soon tire of watching them.

In the coastal tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) Scrub-Wrens' nests are placed among fallen branches or in forks, from 3 to 12 feet from the ground; as a rule the site is low—in fact, a nest may be only a foot above the earth. Like many other birds, *Sericornis frontalis* adapts itself to altered conditions. When the scrub is "cleaned up" to suit picnickers, and heaps of *débris*

disappear, the birds take to the trees. On the moorland which lies at the back of the coastal scrub along some parts of Port Phillip Bay, nests are occasionally found in clumps of heath (*Epacris*) or grass tussocks. My earliest record for seaside nests is the first week in July; usually the nesting season ended in October, with August as the principal month. The Scrub-Wrens are greatly victimized by Fan-tailed Cuckoos (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*). During one season, in the Black Rock district, many of the nests examined contained either an egg of the Cuckoo with two of the Scrub-Wren, or a Cuckoo fledgling in solitary possession. In the majority of cases the Cuckoo's egg closely resembled those of the foster-parents, both in size and coloration.

This season (1915) I was able to secure a series of photographs of the White-browed Scrub-Wren. A nest was found at Evelyn, Vic., the site being a clump of sword-grass in an "island" of tea-tree and acacias, close to the roadway. The lighting was fairly good when a few obtruding boughs had been temporarily pulled aside, and after an hour's indecision the birds became confident. Mostly they approached the nest from the rear, creeping up the sharp-edged grass-stems like field mice. The nest contained three chicks, a few days old, and food was brought to them at short intervals for half an hour; then the parent birds disappeared, and nothing was seen or heard of them for a long time. When they did return it was so quietly that one was perched on the top of the nest before its presence became known to me.



Spine-bill Honey-eater.

Several times in the course of the afternoon these long periods of absence occurred. Finally the female bird entered the nest and remained there. But she kept a bright look-out, as the position of the head and expression of the eye in the photograph indicate. It is not often that one has an opportunity of photographing a Scrub-Wren in its nest.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne, 12/11/15.

Stray Feathers.

Birds Under Shell Fire.—The following is an extract from a letter written by a machine-gun man of the 21st Battalion:—“A rather curious incident took place a few days ago, which might well be termed, ‘in the midst of war we are in peace.’ Just at the first streak of daylight a rather lively artillery demonstration started. Three battleships and fourteen of our field-guns were shelling a Turkish position about 70 yards in front of our particular bit of breastwork. I happened to be observing at the time, and whilst I was crouching down on the parapet, trying to look as much like a sandbag as possible, two Sparrows flew along and perched on my wrist. They preened their feathers and chirped to each other for fully a minute before flying away. This was whilst high explosive shells were screaming overhead at only few second intervals and bursting less than a hundred yards away.”

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Hawks in Egypt.—Following is an extract from a letter written by Mr. Arthur Swindells, R.A.O.U., now on service at the Dardanelles:—“Yesterday three of us hired a gharry and drove round the old mosques and tombs. From the top of one mosque, with a most unpronounceable name, we had a grand view of Cairo. I counted 173 steps as I ascended, and then gave up, as the view claimed my attention. . . . What interested me more than anything about the great mass of masonry, now fallen into disuse, and over 1,020 years old, was the number of niches in the high walls, from which flew Hawks in dozens. The nests could plainly be seen, and I was sorely tempted to essay a climb, but, alas! when I suggested the idea to the guide he immediately became horrified and gesticulated wildly, calling on Mahomed and Allah to vent his wrath on the heathen who would dare profane the sacred walls. As he seemed to take the matter so badly, I thought it well to stifle my desires, but my fingers just itched to get at those nests. However, when on the parapets I did manage to elude his vigilant eye for a moment and skip along to a place where I could lean over and see a nest with downy young. The guide afterwards showed us bowls of water placed in various parts for use of the birds. Evidently they regard these Hawks with a special veneration. The Hawk is about the size of our Brown Hawk, and not unlike the Harrier. They are here in hundreds,