

the drake positively. Their plumage is so similar at present, apart from this, that it would be impossible to distinguish the sexes.

In spite of the paternal responsibilities he has assumed, I noticed that the drake was just as clumsy as the duck with the young birds. He frequently walked on them, or knocked them over, and on the second day it was hardly surprising to find one of the ducklings dead. They appeared to be much more frail than young Black Ducks, although surprisingly active at times.

The remaining six eggs were measured and then broken open. One only had a partly-formed young bird, in a very early stage of incubation, and I cannot understand why it did not hatch with the rest, as it was a fertile egg. The rest all had the yolks intact, and were all infertile. This was most unexpected in a pair of wild birds which would hardly be likely to come from the same clutch, and also as they had hatched twelve young from the last time of nesting.

The eggs were peculiarly pointed, the apex being pointed as well, and there were no markings of any colour on the shell as mentioned by some observers. Measurements were as follows: (1) 1.93 mm. x 1.43 mm., (2) 2 x 1.37, (3) 2.03 x 1.43, (4) 2.06 x 1.43, (5) 1.93 x 1.37, (6) 1.87 x 1.37. The colour was a creamy white but they probably appeared darker than normal on account of being nest stained.

The lining of the nest lifted out in one piece. It was almost two inches thick at the centre, and measured ten inches across. It was almost entirely composed of leaves from the fern which the birds had bitten off and worked into the nest whilst sitting.

I am indebted to Mr. A. Bailey for his keen interest in supplying the nesting times, and for assistance in general observations.

Reed Warbler in Garden.—At Portland (Vic.) late in 1944, the Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus australis*) was heard calling repeatedly from a garden about 100 yards from a large swamp at the back of the town. The garden is over a small hill and out of sight from the reed-bed usually frequented by the birds.

There seemed to be only one bird calling each time, and although a watch was kept on several occasions, it was well hidden in a tangle of shrubbery. Once I caught a glimpse of the bird as it flew swiftly over the hedge towards the swamp.

The owners of the garden readily identified the bird from the pictures in the bird books, and say it sometimes sits on the clothes-line well out in the open. It had been noticed in the garden for some weeks.—I. WATSON, Jolimont, Vic., 14/2/45.