

Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*) in flight if wishing to ascend. The male bird has since got a new mate. The two are using the old nest of his former mate, and now (27th October) have hatched out their one and only offspring. This seems very peculiar, after being so interfered with in the first attempt. While the female is sitting on the egg the male bird carries her food, which she tears to pieces and eats on the side of the nest. These birds are evidently following the rabbits as they extend further north to New England, as I have not seen them here before, and since finding these have located another pair, nesting also. As these birds live to a great extent on young rabbits, they should be rigidly protected.

### Birds Nesting in the Drought, and its Effects on Same.

BY R. G. HAYS, R.A.O.U., SENTRY BOX, BUNDARRA, N.S.W.

As early as 30th August this year I found the Yellow-tufted Honey-eaters (*Ptilotis melanops*) nesting, and, as these birds are not very common in this district, I became interested in them and watched their nesting operations. I am convinced that all birds group for nesting more or less, and these were a very decided instance, as I found fifteen nests within a circumference of one mile, and outside of that group you could not find a single nest or hear the familiar "Cheop, cheop" of a single bird. Of the fifteen nests found, two only hatched out. One of these was destroyed by a fox when the young birds were nearly able to fly; the other nest was built on the side of a tree, about 6 feet from the ground, and the young survived.

Two others laid two eggs each, sat on them for a while, and then deserted them. Of the other eleven nests completed, all were deserted without having eggs laid in them, and, as this is the 30th October, and all the birds have departed, the nests are still empty, so it looks as if the increase in this particular species will be *nil*, unless rain induces them to start nesting operations all over again in some other locality. It would appear certain that the drought was the indirect cause, and the lack of blossoms, natural food, and water caused by the long-continued dry spell the direct cause. Only one nest was built higher than 4 feet from the ground, one was almost on the ground, the others all about 2 feet high, in small ironbark bushes in most cases, one case on the side of a tree, one in the dead leaves of a fallen tree, and several in a low heath bush. This desertion of nests (all ready for egg-laying) was found also with the Fuscous Honey-eater (*Ptilotis fusca*). Of twenty-two nests found, only three hatched out. The remainder, as far as could be ascertained, never had eggs laid in them; but, as most of these birds build very high, I could not be sure, though I am certain that no others hatched out. Most other Honey-eaters here have not attempted to build yet, as the drought is still in full force (31st October, 1919).