

## Camera Craft

**The Yellow-tufted Honeyeater.**—On October 1st, 1922, I found the nest of a pair of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga melanops*), containing three eggs, one of which was that of a Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*). By October 7th there were three young birds in the nest, but on the next day the young Cuckoo reigned supreme. I secured six photos, only one being a failure. The accompanying photo is the best of the five. The Honeyeaters, which were very tame, visited the nest in turn, and supplied the gluttonous Cuckoo with food. The nest was situated in a small shrub alongside a gum sapling. By bending the sapling out of the way, I obtained a good light, had the nest free from shadows, and avoided the risk of a too dark background. There were several pairs of Honeyeaters chasing a Cuckoo, which had evidently made the paddock her nursery. On several occasions I visited this place, intending to attempt a picture of the Cuckoo laying in a Honeyeater's nest, but although I spent many afternoons watching, as far as possible, both the Cuckoo and Honeyeaters, I was unsuccessful in finding a nest. That there were several nests, and that the Cuckoo used them, I feel quite sure.—MARC COHN, R.A.O.U., Bendigo.

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**Silver Gulls.**—While in South Australia last year, Mr. H. O. Fletcher, from the Australian Museum, Sydney, and I visited one of the Adelaide beaches, and noticing a fairly large flock of Silver Gulls on the sand decided to try and obtain a picture of them. They appeared tame, so we purchased some sponge cake at a neighbouring tea-shop, and sitting down on the beach distributed it over the sand in view of the birds. Presently they realised it was food, and the whole flock commenced gobbling it up as fast as they could. We remained quite still, and overcoming their shyness, the birds came very close to us, ate up the crumbs close by, and literally asked for more. When they were about four feet away a couple of exposures were made. The picture depicts them waiting for more cake to be thrown.—M. S. R. SHARLAND, R.A.O.U., Hobart.

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**The Red-kneed Dotterel** (*Erythrogonyx cinctus*).—During September, 1922, I spent a week-end at Bendigo as the guest of Mr. Marc Cohn, a new member of the Union and an enthusiastic photographer. The previous year I obtained pictures of the Black-fronted Dotterel (*Charadrius melanops*), and in the hope of further observing these interesting birds we walked along the pebbly margin of the Bendigo Creek at Golden Square. Not more than two hundred yards from the tram-line we found several Dotterels feeding along the creek, but Mr. Cohn was first to notice that there were three or four pairs of birds of a different



The Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (*Meliphaga melanops*) at nest

Photo. by Marc Cohn, R.A.O.U.



Photo. by M. S. R. Sharland, R.A.O.U.

Silver Gulls (*Larus nove-hollandiae*) on the beach



Red-kneed Dotterel (*Erythronyx cinctus*) nest and eggs

Photo. by R. T. Littlejohns, R.A.O.U.

species amongst them. Not long afterwards a nest was discovered among the pebbles, and between two dry weed-stems. One could not fail to notice how these weeds were chosen with due regard to the protection of the eggs. In colour and form the dry stems harmonised with the marking of the eggs, and the shadow thrown by the stems across the nest heightened the effect.

The cameras were focussed at a distance of twenty-four inches from the eggs, and fifty feet of thread was used to release the shutter. The presence of the camera appeared to cause the female bird little concern from the beginning, but, if either of us showed his head in order to note the progress of the subject, she departed hastily.

At this stage the male bird would usually forsake his friends further along the creek, and walking directly behind his mate appeared to drive her back to duty. A few large stones placed near the nest served as a screen, and the sitting bird became more confident. But the stones also prevented us from seeing when the subject was in a satisfactory position. So that it was small wonder that the pictures obtained on this day were not good.

The next day, however, matters had improved considerably, and the bird showed little fear. So the stone screens were dispensed with, and pictures were easily obtained. It was then that a curious habit of the Dotterel became apparent. As she approached the eggs she paused a couple of feet away, then carefully and deliberately shook her feet, first one and then the other. I came to the conclusion that the idea was to dry her feet after walking in the mud and water before she sat upon the eggs.

Like the black-fronted species, the Red-kneed Dotterel makes a great pretence of being injured in order to lead the intruder away from the nest. But the acting of this pair was most elaborate. They placed the head almost on the ground and raised the wings and tail until one almost expected the birds to overbalance. This action was probably intended to counteract the protective colouring of the plumage and so draw attention more effectively to the apparent injury.—R. T. LITTLEJOHNS, R.A.O.U., Melbourne, 27/1/23.

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**Wood Swallow Notes.**—On several occasions I have had good opportunities for observing and photographing the female White-browed Wood Swallow at close quarters. Until recently, however, I never could induce a male of the species to pose before the camera. The birds are naturally shy and suspicious, and a really tame pair are difficult to find.

The bird reproduced was one of a pair whose nest I located in the Moorabbin (Vic.) district. The male, much to my satis-



faction, was a most attentive parent, and gave good opportunities for photography. During the last season three species of Wood Swallows were nesting in close proximity to each other in this district. It was noticed with most of the nests found that small clutches were the general rule. The nests of the White-browed and Masked species contained in most cases one egg only. This unusual occurrence was attributed to a scarcity of food.

The birds were feeding the young on a large species of beetle which were greatly affecting the green trees in the locality, in many cases nearly stripping them of their foliage.—S. A. LAWRENCE, Caulfield, Vic., 16/3/23.

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**A Southern Stone - Plover** (*Burhinus magnirostris*), lived at Wahrenonga, on the North Shore Line at the home of Mr. Doyle. The bird has the run of a large grass paddock, and nests among the grass and stones. Two eggs were laid, but as there is no male bird, the eggs were, of course, addled. In one photo the bird is cautiously sneaking up to the nest, and in the other, is using its protective powers.—ARTHUR F. D'OMBRAIN, R.A.O.U.

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The White-browed Wood-Swallow (male) feeding young in nest

Photo. by S. A. Lawrence, R.A.O.U.