

YOUNG COLLARED SPARROWHAWKS IN NEST (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*).
Photo. by G. A. FERRIS.

whole Island with a small-tooth comb, we cannot prove that the bird we mention is extinct. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Would not the poet who wrote that be pleased to know that we have not yet given up hopes of seeing the Saddleback again amidst his friends the Yellowheads.

Camera Craft.

SPARROWHAWKS AT HOME.

Few nature photographers have had an opportunity to record the home life of the Collared Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*), indeed the series of pictures secured last season by Mr. W. C. Tonge and myself, probably are unique, in some respects. Mr. Tonge, a keen observer, lives at Eltham, Victoria, where unnumbered paddocks, a pleasant little stream, and bits of almost virgin bushland provide food and shelter and nesting sites for many native birds, and some introduced species. Towards the end of October (1924) Mr. Tonge sent news that a pair of Sparrowhawks was nesting, close to his house, on Eltham Heights. A week later, we went to the nest-tree together, and photographs of nests and eggs (4) were secured. My friend had built a platform for the cameras, opposite the nest, at a height of about 35 feet. It was an easy climb, but my half-plate camera proved troublesome, among the wind-tossed boughs. The platform was shaky, and in order to focus on the nest, I had to assume awkward positions. It was tiring, and disappointing, at first, many plates were spoiled through camera-movements. Time exposures were essential, for we often had dull weather, and the nest was over-arched by small boughs. Mr. Tonge, choosing his days, obtained a fine series of photographs in the eight weeks or more during which he kept the nest under observation. My own weekly visits to the Sparrowhawks' home, were less fruitful but the day before the brood took wing, I secured one rather good picture. One of the three young birds flew as I reached the platform, the others remained, but were restless. Their parents on this and other occasions were highly aggressive. Both "dived" at me repeatedly, but not together. They swept by often but a few inches from my head, and once I felt the touch of wings. The female, I fancy, was the bolder of the two, but both were very daring. Their attacks were most insistent when the eggs were on the point of hatching, and when the young were nearly ready to fly. But whenever I climbed to the nest, one bird, or both, made a "demonstration." Mr. Tonge has a full record of the home-life of this Sparrowhawk family. Writing to me on November 23rd, he said: "I have been keeping the hawks' nest, under close observation and on Wednesday morning 19th observed one of the birds standing on the nest, and, thinking that there was something doing, I climbed up and saw two creamy-white nestlings. The nest also contained, besides the two unhatched eggs, portion of the head and breast—cleaned of feathers—of some small bird, from

which the parent had evidently been feeding the young, and, you would hardly credit it, the nestlings were picking at it, and their little black beaks were covered with blood from it—they were just out of the shells! I have been able to secure several fine negatives, one has the female bird standing on the nest and looking down at her young ones; also one standing in the nest with wings half-open, and several others.”

The field notes of an observer, who is able to visit the same nest every day are much more valuable than those of a week-end visitor. I hope that Mr. Tonge's "history" of the Eltham Sparrowhawks will be published in full.—CHARLES BARRETT, Melbourne.

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SCARLET ROBINS.

The two pictures reproduced herewith of the Scarlet Robin (*Petroica multicolor*) at the nest were taken at Lorne, Victoria. The nest was placed in the fork of a small shrub about three feet from the ground in a little sheltered hollow near the sea front. The three young were fed very persistently by the male bird, who, for this purpose, visited the nest three or four times more frequently than his mate. The picture of the female bird represents the first of three visits to the nest on the 14th October. After each visit a young one flew from the nest. The male bird did not visit the nest on this day. The young bird with its mouth open evidently expecting food, which it did not get, was the first to leave the nest, flying about 30 yards away to the parents. The picture of the male bird was taken at $\frac{1}{2}$ sec. at F.8. about three feet from the nest, and that of the female at $\frac{1}{2}$ sec. at F.8. in bright sunshine at a distance of about four feet.—C. H. KELLAWAY, M.D., Melbourne.

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FANTAIL CUCKOO (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*) AND BROWN THORNBILL (*Acanthiza pusilla*).

While watching a female Blue Wren feeding a young Bronze Cuckoo, my attention was drawn to a pair of Brown Thornbills, whose scolding led me to believe that they had a nest in the vicinity. My surmise proved to be correct, as I found the nest situated in a tangle of fallen branches and bracken fern. It contained a fully fledged Fantail Cuckoo. As the light was not sufficient to allow an attempt at taking a photograph of the Thornbill feeding the Cuckoo at the nest, I removed the Cuckoo to a more exposed position where the light would permit photography.

The Thornbills showed very little hesitation in facing the camera as the Cuckoo kept up an importunate plea of hunger, which probably encouraged the foster-parents to feed it. When being fed it did not take the food from the foster-parents, but simply opened its beak and the food was placed in its throat, which act I have attempted to photograph.—T. V. GIVENS, R.A.O.U., Canterbury, Vic.

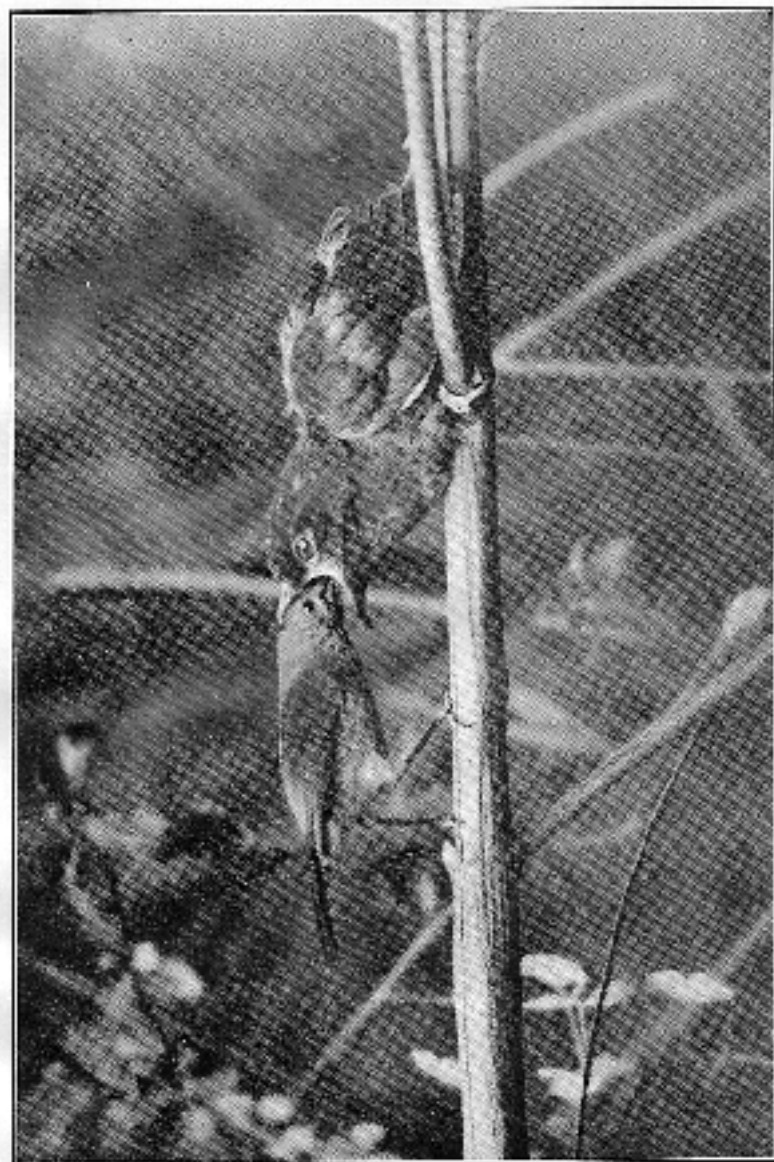


MALE SCARLET ROBIN (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*) AT NEST.
Photo. by DR. G. W. KILLGUS.

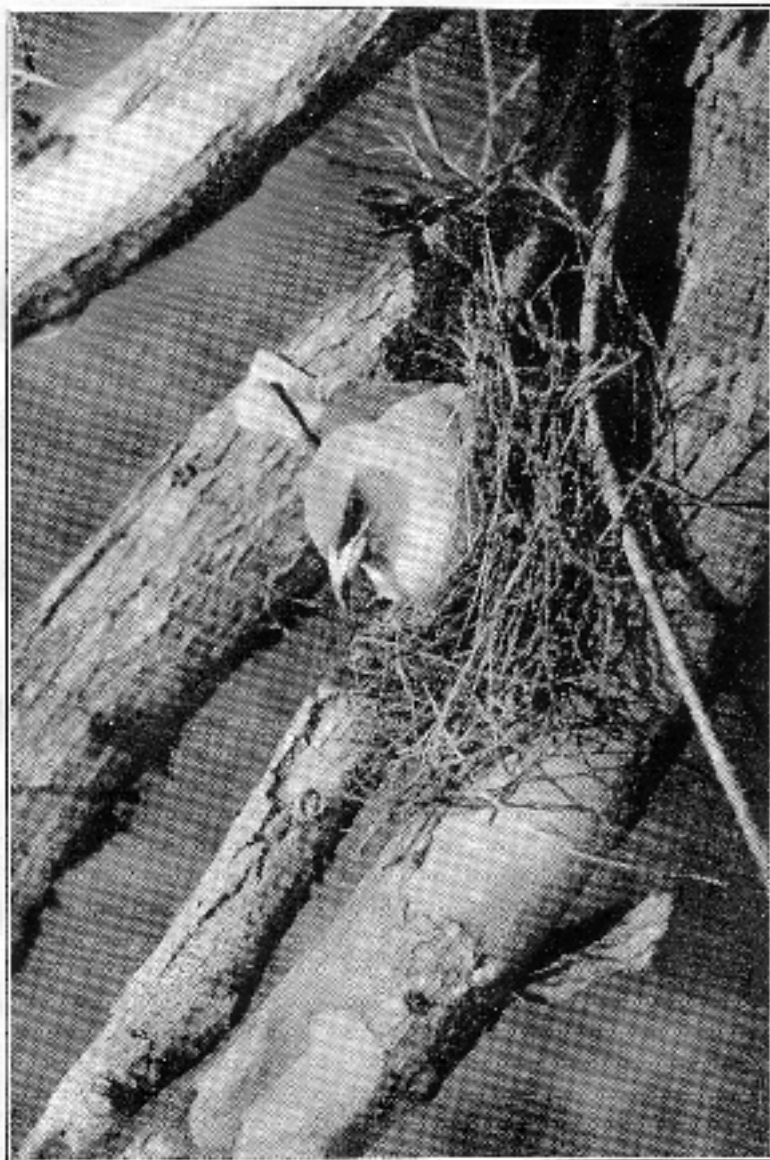


POMARINE SKUA (Pterodroma pomarina) AT NEST.

Photo. by Dr. G. E. Schuyler.



BROWN TITMUSE (Acanthiza pusilla) FEEDING YOUNG RASTAL CUCKOO (Cacomantis flabelliformis).
Photo. by T. V. Green, B.A.O.L.



MASKED WOOD SWALLOW FEMALE ON NEST.

Photo. by R. T. DALLMAN.

THE "EVILS" OF BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY.

I was amused to read a statement by a well-known ornithologist in which he claimed that bird photographers caused the deaths of many birds by keeping the parents away from the nest. Evidently that gentleman spoke without knowledge or else his experience of bird photographers has been unfortunate. Perhaps, however, it may be as well to give some idea of the actual methods adopted to safeguard the subjects.

Wood Swallows are seldom trustful and the Masked species is perhaps the least tractable. So that the photograph reproduced and two others of the same bird were the sole result of eight hours' work. But during those eight hours the camera and tripod were removed or shifted further from the nest a dozen times in order that the bird should not be kept from the eggs for lengthy periods.

Young birds are considered in the same way. In very hot weather when the direct sunlight necessary for photography is likely to harm the nestlings I invariably provide shelter in the form of a bunch of leaves attached to the end of a springy stick. The shelter is drawn away by means of a second cord only when the adult bird approaches the nest and is allowed to swing back again should the parent retire.—
R. T. LITTLEJOHNS, Melbourne.

Bird Protection.

THE QUESTION OF BIRDS BECOMING RARE AND THEIR PROTECTION.

By A. G. BENNETT, M.A.S.O.P. (Argentine), R.A.O.U., Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.

THE question of birds becoming rare, even to extinction, is, I am aware, a well debated point. In the newer countries it appears deplorable, at least at first sight, that so many should go out of existence. Of course, man and his domesticated animals are in most cases blamed off hand. The question is, are we justified in such hasty conclusions?

The Falkland Islands, in which I have resided for more than twelve years, offer, I think, some light on the subject. Although the avifauna of this comparatively small group is not, outside its oceanic species, connected with Australian birds, yet it is a new country with a sparse population (three sq. miles per capita).

We have no authentic information as to the bird population prior to the arrival of man as a resident. Certain it is that there was a fox on the two main islands which existed on birds. This fox, being stupidly tame, soon went out. The horse, cow and pig were introduced at an early date and went wild. These must have greatly altered the conditions. The greatest alteration probably followed the introduction of sheep, these being closer feeders.
