

About three weeks later we found another nest and two eggs almost at the same spot in the tree. This nest and eggs also we gathered in. Visiting the tree a few weeks later we were surprised to find again in the same position in the tree a third nest. This, I am glad to remember, we did not touch.

Scarlet Honeyeaters are fond of leafy trees for their nests, and the little cups of red bark are usually well hidden by foliage. The Turpentine, a handsome tree with abundant leafage, which grows largely in the Wianamatta shale formation of the Sydney district, is therefore much favoured by these Honeyeaters for nesting purposes. Most of their nests that I have seen in the northern suburbs of Sydney have been in these trees. I have found nests also in the Sweet Pittosporum (*P. undulatum*) in gardens, and *Melaleuca* spp. in the bush (both having thick leafage and honey-laden blossoms), one nest only in a Eucalypt and one in a small pine tree (*Pinus insignis*), which same pine in a later season held, hidden among its thick needle leaves, the nest of a Spinebill Honeyeater (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*). What a number of birds like pine trees for their nests! In *Pinus insignis* alone I have seen the nests of over twenty species, from the Magpie to the Mistletoe Bird.

The Scarlet Honeyeater

By N. CHAFFER, R.A.O.U., Roseville, N.S.W.

Among the numerous species of Honeyeaters distributed throughout Australia, I know of none so charming as the Scarlet Honeyeater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*). It is familiarly known as the Blood bird on account of the vivid colouring of the male, and is the possessor of a cheerful animated song in quality far above the average of Honeyeaters' songs. The song, too, is continuously uttered throughout the day. The quiet brown colouring and absence of song of the female renders her very inconspicuous. Away from the nest she is not often seen. She is, however, very vivacious in movement and elegant in build. The Blood bird is one of the smallest of the Honeyeaters, other members of the genus *Myzomela* being the only ones comparable to it in size. The scarlet, too, is not found in any other genus of that group. Each spring I look forward with pleasure for the return of the little creatures from their annual northerly migration.

My first recollection of the birds is in association with the red bottle brush flowers. A particular patch of shrubs



Female Scarlet Honeyeater at nest.

Photo. by N. Chaffer, R.A.O.U.

aflame with colour attracted numerous honey-loving birds, prominent among which were these brilliant little gems. Momentarily they would be almost invisible against the crimson blossom to reappear as they flitted to another flower. The favourite food tree is the Turpentine, and wherever this tree is abundant I expect to find Blood birds. In the coastal jungle country where the giant Turpentine thrust their heads above the surrounding vegetation one may often hear its pretty little melody floating downwards. Essentially a bird of the tree tops, it is more often heard than seen. The *Melaleucas* also are favoured food trees.

Through the courtesy and kindly interest of Dr. de Burgh, of Wahroonga, I was afforded the opportunity of photographing the diminutive little Blood bird. A pair was nesting in the pendulous branches of a Turpentine in his yard, the nest being only six feet from the ground. And what a dainty little cradle it was, only two inches in outer diameter by one and a half inches deep. Bark was the chief material used, with fine fibres for lining, and all loosely bound together with spiders' webs. The male was exceedingly trustful and faced the camera without hesitation, but his mate was rather more shy. The female was feeding the two young largely on insects, while the male mostly supplied honey. Both birds were constantly on the move, flitting swiftly from flower to flower or snapping up a passing insect. The brilliant colouring of the male shone with renewed splendour against the soft cream of the Turpentine flowers. Often he paused a while to give voice to his lively little song. It was indeed surprising what added life and animation the presence of these two tiny creatures gave to the surroundings.

Eastern Curlews.—Driving round the beautiful approach to St. Helens from the south on January 28, 1930, I was astonished to see two Eastern Curlews (*Numenius cyanopus*) wading in the shallows of the shore along which the road runs entirely unafraid and oblivious of the motors constantly passing within 60 or 70 yards of them. These fine birds frequent the wide expanses of mud-flats in George's Bay, in company with all the other Asiatic waders which visit Tasmania for their "winter," and I have been accustomed to see them there every season for many years past. Never once have I seen them so close to the frequented parts of the "Bay" before. They are seldom if ever shot at in this estuary, and this must account for their apparent lack of timidity. There happened to be an unusually low tide in the "Bay" at the time.—ROBT. W. LEGGE, Cullenswood, Tasmania.