

many minutes would have anatomical support. As already stated, the examination revealed nothing of this nature.

I have given the measurements in both English and metric systems, as one can get more exactitude by the latter method.

The Jacana

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This bird, as has already been told, has been in the Hawkesbury district several years, and from close observation this last season some very interesting facts have been established. The bird makes a floating nest about one foot across at the base, coming up to four inches at the crown, the nest being formed of nardoo and millfoil. It makes several dummy nests a few yards away from the one it occupies—this, I think, is to mislead enemies.* Other kinds of water fowl do the same thing I believe. The Jacanas lay sometimes three, but usually four eggs, which take about four weeks to hatch. One clutch, observed when it comprised four eggs, took twenty-three days. Of course the bird may have been sitting a few days when I saw the eggs, but it is not likely that it had been brooding for long. Of this particular clutch two out of four eggs hatched on February 19, 1934. The two eggs that did not hatch I collected.

I saw three young birds (hatched out of another clutch) three or four days old, which the old one was carrying, two under one wing, and one under the other wing. The chicks would be carried this way, I would say, until they were two or three weeks old—then, being too big to carry, they would hide if disturbed. When the adult bird was carrying them she dropped them in different places a few yards apart if I got too close to her. During the first week they would sit still on the weeds, just level with the water, and would not move, not even the slightest fraction, while their mother was flying or walking around, about 25 feet away, and uttering the peculiar cry that she uses when she has young ones.

After the first week the young started to submerge on being approached, keeping just the heads out. They are then very hard to see. I caught one clutch of three twice, took some "snaps" of them, then let them go. Once I found them several yards apart, and I picked them up and placed them together. The parent bird came to them several times whilst I was sitting in the boat 20 feet away, but I had to wait three hours before she picked them up. The young will not move whilst the parent is uttering the particular

*See paper by K. A. Hindwood, elsewhere in this part.—Ed.

peculiar cry referred to. When she came to pick them up she "sat down" six inches from them, uttered a different cry, and they immediately came up and got under her. I caught two other young birds that I estimated to be 10 or 11 weeks old. They had their bills only out of the water when I came up to them and they gradually sank right under the water until they were at least four inches beneath the surface—that is where I caught them. One of them got over the side of the boat and ran—they were not old enough to fly—about 30 yards before I caught up with it. It submerged when I was a dozen yards away, and when I got up to the spot I was five minutes in finding it. It had turned around facing me with just the point of the bill out of the water. These two young birds I took home. I made a wire crate, 6 feet by 2 feet, and placed it on some weed in the lagoon. The hen (previously mentioned) that was sitting about 30 yards away—it was not their mother—fed them within an hour, and for two days, but they died the following night. They got too cold or "fretted" on account of being shut up I assume. I saw a clutch of fresh eggs close to where I had taken these two chicks, and I believe they belonged to the parents, as there were no other birds about.

When they have eggs the birds generally watch me coming through the reeds. They can, and do, tread around on the nest and sink it to the level of the water, so that it is very hard to see. The eggs touch the water, and, being the colour of the weeds, are difficult to notice. The birds run 20 or 30 yards before rising. If one pulls a boat towards them they will often submerge, reappearing when one has gone some distance past.

They also appear to be able to change the bright red comb to a very pale yellow, when it exactly resembles the yellow flowers on the weed wherein they build.

When the sitting hen that I have mentioned hatched out her young she kept very low in the weeds for three or four days, it being very hard to see her until one reached to within 20 yards of her. She came off to feed early in the morning and late in the evening. The cock bird was never seen within 200 yards of the nest until the last two days of incubation, when he was observed within a few feet of the nest. Four days after the eggs hatched the river rose 30 feet, backing up the lagoon and submerging the patch of weeds where the young were. I watched them, and, when the weeds were nearly submerged, I went out in the boat, picked up the two young ones, and took them to the shore, because I did not believe that they could swim, not being web-footed. I did not see how the parent birds could get them over clear water. (It would perhaps have been better had I left them to see what the female would do.)

Anyway I need not have worried, as a party with a dog frightened one of the young ones into the water that evening, and when I went over to have a look, there it was swimming without difficulty—and only four days old. The flood disturbed them a bit, but they are still around. They are timid, but certainly not excessively so, for I took four photographs of one bird on the nest with the camera set at 3 feet 6 inches away, and I was only 30 yards away in the boat, with nothing to hide behind. I set up the camera and took four pictures in two hours, and the hen did not take more than 10 minutes to come back to the nest on any occasion.

Bendigo Notes.—Every autumn an Oriole (*Oriolus sagittatus*) visits my garden during the few days that it stays, and spends most of the time singing in an orange tree. Last year (1933) it arrived on April 5. A nest of the Chestnut-eared Finch (*Tæniopygia castanotis*) contained three fully-fledged chicks on May 21, 1933. The young birds flew strongly from the nest when disturbed. In Bendigo the White-plumed Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga penicillata*) say quite distinctly, "Look at your feet," "Look at your feet," and, after a pause, repeat the same double phrase. At Black Rock, near Melbourne, on June 4, 1933, the same species rendered the same phrase, but there was something different about it; it seemed to be more hurried and I had difficulty in fitting the same words. I have never heard the Bendigo birds call in the same way as the Black Rock ones did. The possibility that they were young birds was negated by the early date. I am sure of the identification.

I heard an Eastern Shrike-Tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*) emit a few scolding notes like a Willie-Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*). This was new to me, but may not be so to other members. While listening to these birds, a Bronze Cuckoo (sp. ?), which had been perched on the telephone wire overhead, flew down and picked a jet-black caterpillar from a tea-tree a few yards from me. He ate a second and a third before being disturbed by my presence. Afterwards I examined the bushes and collected several caterpillars for identification, but unfortunately mislaid them.

The Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus axillaris*) has been mentioned much in papers and journals recently, and I was not surprised when I saw a pair hovering over the Ironbark Creek on August 6, 1933. One plunged into the creek, which is very shallow, and then flew with something in its talons to a telegraph pole. It ate its catch before I could get near enough to identify the victim. The water splashed up in the same manner as it does when a Gannet