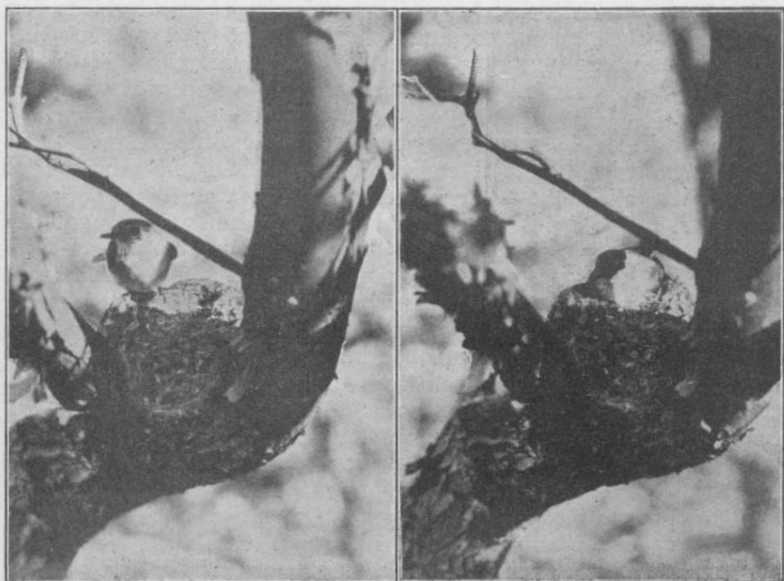


## Camera Craft Notes.

**Effects of Sunshine.**—Bird photographers well know that strong sunlight, though generally helpful, is occasionally troublesome. This fact was emphasized in photographing a female Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*).

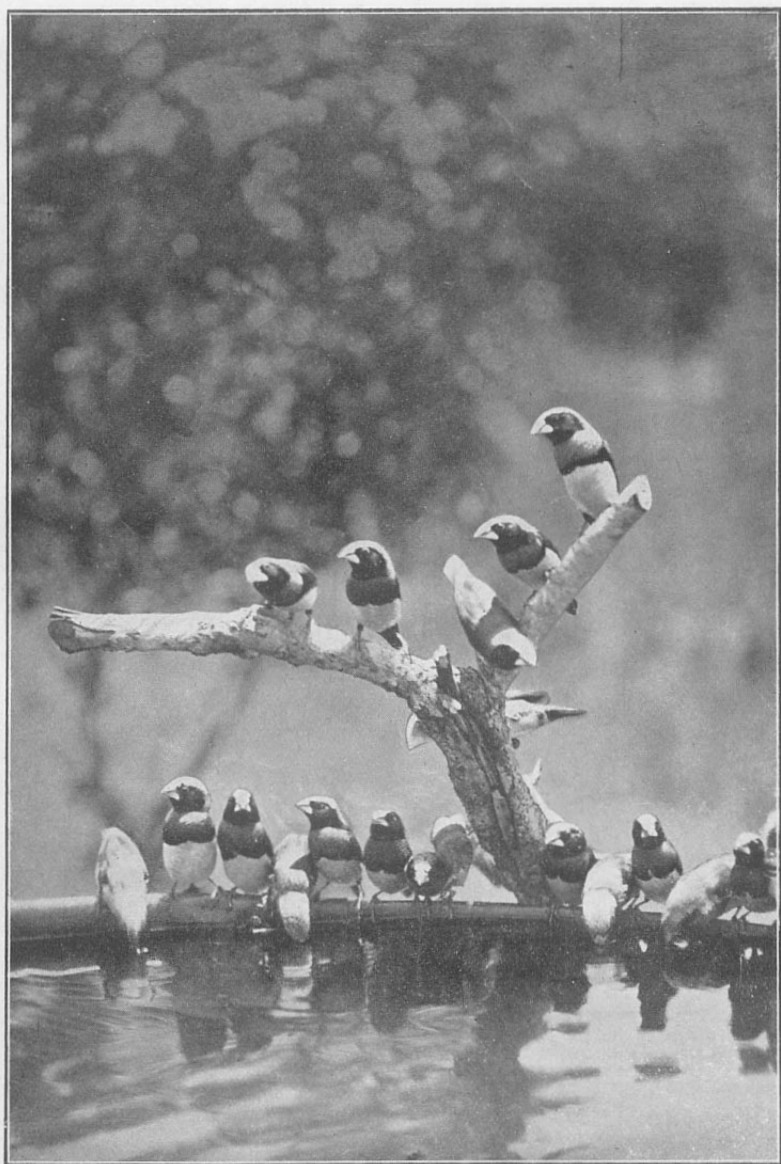
The camera used was half-plate, but a piece of cardboard fitted in front of the ground-glass enabled one to take quarter-plate size pictures, and the two in the print belong to the one negative. They were taken from the same stand, but, of necessity, the body of the camera had to be turned slightly to get the focus for the



Female Red-capped Robin.

FROM PHOTOS. BY A. H. CHISHOLM.

second exposure ; that simple move made all the difference. The bird did not sit long enough for one to note the position of the sunlight on the little figure, but developing the plate revealed an interesting contrast. In the first snapshot the bright light had thrown the bird's breast and the inside wall of the nest into a most pleasant contrast with the shadowed front of the structure ; but in the second attempt it had struck right across the Robin's head, thus rendering the photograph useless as anything more than a curiosity.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Brisbane, 19/2/16.



Chestnut-breasted Finches.

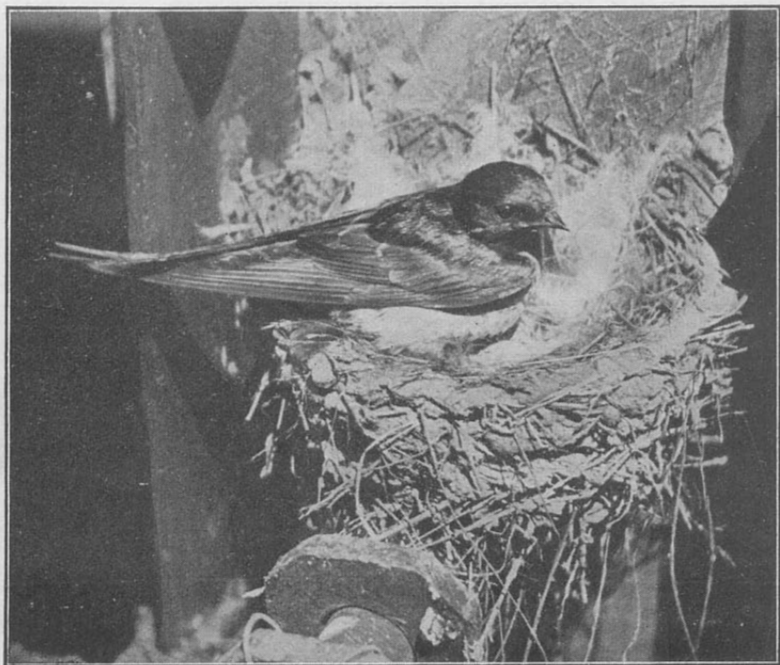
**Fantails and Swallows.**—Bird photographers, especially those using inexpensive cameras, very often find themselves in difficulties through lack of sufficient light to admit of the short exposures usually necessary when dealing with adult birds. In November, 1915, we located the nest of a pair of Rufous Fantails (*Rhipidura rufifrons*), overhanging a creek in a deep fern gully. It was our first experience of the nest since taking up photography, and our anxiety to obtain pictures of the birds accounted for the use of many plates. So far as the tameness of the birds was concerned, the case presented no difficulty. On account of the bad weather at the week-ends and the natural darkness of the gully, however, several exposures, ranging from one twenty-fifth to half a second, failed to make an impression on the plates. It was then, almost as a last resource, that we decided to try long exposures of the bird on the nest—a system we had not previously tried. The birds appeared to face the ordeal so well that we gradually



Rufous Fantail.

increased the exposure until it had reached about 10 seconds. On developing, we were surprised to find that in no case was there any indication of the bird having moved.

For a long time we were unable to obtain photographs of the Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*), on account of the darkness of the position usually chosen for the nest. For this reason numbers of nests under verandahs, bridges, &c., had to be reluctantly passed by. At last a nest was found built in the target pit of the rifle range at Meredith, Victoria, which gave



Welcome Swallow.

FROM A PHOTO, BY R. T. LITTLEJOHNS.

better hope of success. As usual, the position was dark, but fortunately the sunlight was easily admitted by drawing aside the lid of the pit. After a couple of hours' wait the birds became accustomed to the presence of the camera and to the absence of their roof, and the picture reproduced was obtained.—R. T. LITTLEJOHNS and S. A. LAWRENCE. Melbourne, 7/3/16.

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**Birds in Drought Time.**—The long-continued drought of 1914-15 has caused many of our birds to wander far from their usual haunts in search of food and water, and creeks and water-



Chestnut-eared Finches.

holes have remained dry for many months. We make it a practice always to keep water available for the wild birds, and so many species visit the garden and paddock. A small tank, always full of water, is very popular with the birds, and offered facilities for photographs. A box fixed to a rail close to the tank, with a hole cut in the side facing the tank, for the lens, held the camera. A small T hinge, with the arm swinging free, was fixed to the rail, the bulb of the shutter placed in its grip, and a long cord attached. Then one had just to watch and wait patiently until the birds were in the desired position; a sharp jerk released the shutter, and the picture was secured.

The following birds have made it a practice to come to my tank for drinking and bathing purposes, and photographs of some have been obtained:—Helmeted Friar-Bird (*Tropidorhynchus buceroides*), Friar-Bird (*T. corniculatus*), Little Friar-Bird (*Philemon sordidus*), Yellow Honey-eater (*Ptilotis flava*), Yellow-spotted Honey-eater (*P. notata*), Dusky Honey-eater (*Myzomela obscura*), Brown Honey-eater (*Stigmatops ocularis*), White-throated Honey-eater (*Melithreptus albobularis*), \*Striped Honey-eater (*Ptilotis lanceolata*), Blue-faced Honey-eater (*Entomyza cyanotis*), Black-headed Pardalote (*Pardalotus melanocephalus*), Sun-Bird (*Cyrstostomus frenatus*), \*Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*), Black-throated Butcher-Bird (*C. nigrigularis*), Crow (*Corvus coronoides*), Spangled Drongo (*Chibia bracteata*), Lesser Red-browed Finch (*Aegintha minor*), Chestnut-breasted Finch (*Munia castaneothorax*), \*Chestnut-eared Finch (*Teniotopygia castanotis*), Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*), Red-backed Wren-Warbler (*Malurus cruentatus*), Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike (*Graucalus melanops*), Leaden Flycatcher (*Myiagra plumbea*), Black-and-White Fantail (*Rhipidura motacilloides*), Pheasant Coucal (*Centropus phasianus*), Lesser Brown Kingfisher (*Dacelo minor*), Leach Kingfisher (*D. leachi*), Forest Kingfisher (*Halcyon macleayi*), Barred-shouldered Dove (*Geopelia humeralis*), Tranquil Dove (*G. tranquilla*), Little Green Pigeon (*Chalcophaps chrysochloris*).—E. M. CORNWALL. Mackay (Qld.), 18/1/16.

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**Wood-Swallows.**—In my experience, Wood-Swallows are difficult to photograph. Their nests are built at no great height—from two or three feet to about 15 feet from the ground being the general range, though I have found several in fairly lofty positions. As a rule, then, one has no more trouble in focussing on a Wood-Swallow's nest than on a simple landscape. Photographs of young birds are easily obtained, but the adults try one's patience. They skim over and around the nest, make vicious dives at the photographer, and then retire to a favourite perch for a few minutes' rest. This procedure may be repeated at short intervals for several hours, when, if Fortune smiles, a

\* Drought visitors.

plate can be exposed. Often, however, patience is practised in vain.

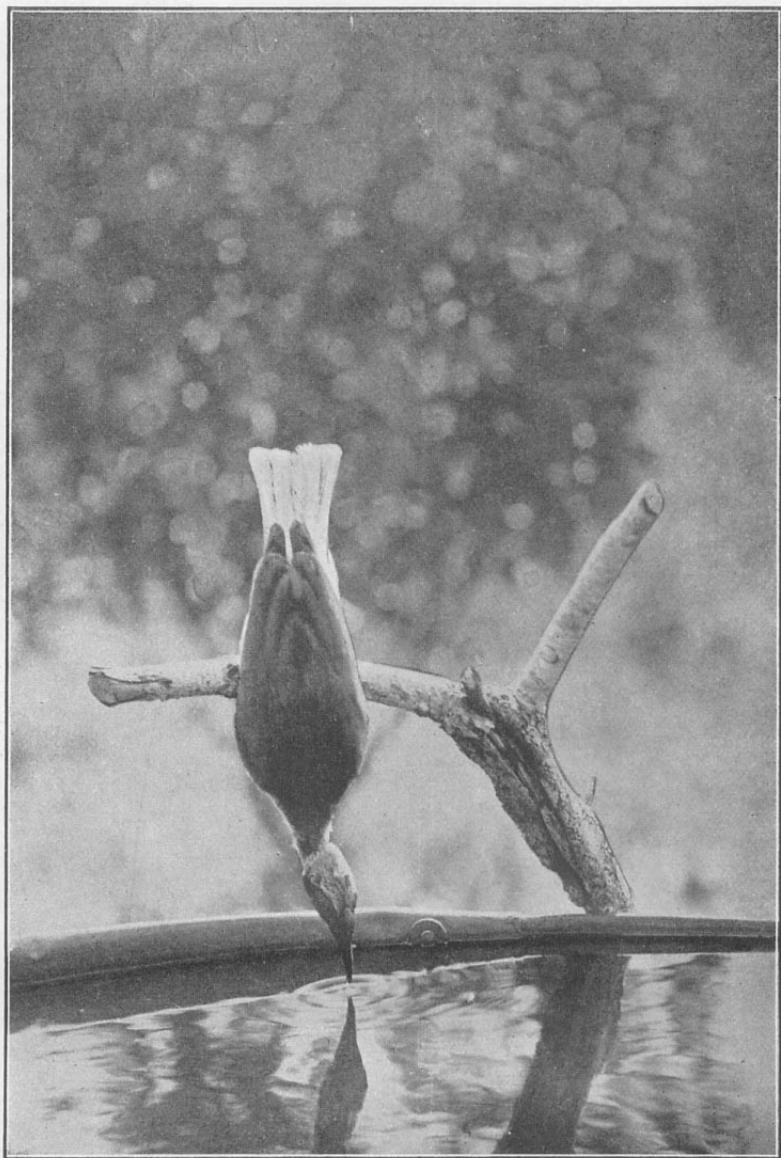
In Riverina I obtained several pictures of White-browed Wood-Swallows (*Artamus superciliosus*) after spending the best part of a broiling day behind a packing case in a small paddock at Jerilderie. The nest was in the top of a coil of wire netting, standing by a post-and-rail fence. It contained three nestlings, about five days old. The female was sheltering the brood from the sun (the temperature was about  $102^{\circ}$  in the shade), quivering her wings to fan them, or else because of her own distress in the



White-browed Wood-Swallow at Nest.

FROM A PHOTO, BY CHARLES BARRETT.

heat ; her beak was gaping most of the time. She flew to a clothes-line in a yard adjoining the paddock when I appeared on the scene, and nearly an hour passed before she approached the nest again. When she did it was only to alight for half a second, flash a glance at the chicks, and dart back to her perch. Later she became more venturesome, and I was able to expose three plates (with good results, as it proved). All this time the male bird was in view, but declined to come within range of the lens. He was very angry, and frequently swooped at the camera. When I went into hiding he seemed puzzled for a while, but,



Helmeted Friar-Bird (Drinking).



having located me behind the packing case, flew over it several times.

Occasionally both birds perched on the clothes-line, and seemed to take counsel together. After noon they began to collect food—midges, small moths, and one or two grasshoppers—with which they approached the nest, only to lose heart when within a few feet of it. This continued for half an hour, when the female, always the bolder of the pair, alighted on the edge of the coil of wire netting and fed one of the chicks. Her confidence increased, and she returned with food five or six times. I despaired of getting a photograph of the male, but at the eleventh hour he summoned sufficient courage to spend a second at the nest; the shutter clicked, and my long vigil was rewarded.

Last season (1915), on Kulkyne station (Vic.), I again attempted to photograph White-browed Wood-Swallows. The nest was about five feet from the ground, in a gum-tree stump, and contained two eggs. The birds were even more wary than those of Jerilderie, and I had to be content with a photograph of the nest, though the camera was in position for some hours.

In January, 1916, a large number of White-browed Wood-Swallows nested in a paddock at Greensborough (Vic.) Most of the nests were low down in sweetbriar rose bushes. All the birds, judging by the nests observed, laid about the same time. Photographs of nestlings were secured, but the parent birds eluded the camera. This paddock, with its little gully covered in briar bushes, dogwood, and eucalypt saplings, was a haunt of many birds besides the Wood-Swallows.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne, 6/2/16.

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## Stray Feathers.

**Range of Rosella**—Since my article upon *Platycercus splendidus*, Gould, appeared in *The Emu* \* I had occasion to visit a property owned by my firm, situated about 60 miles due east of Scone and 30 miles inland from the coast. There I found *Platycercus splendidus* to be the local "Rosella," confirming my theory that the range of the bird extends to the ocean, or thereabouts.—H. L. WHITE. Scone (N.S.W.)

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**Bell Miners.**—With regard to the statement made by Messrs. Campbell and North, to the effect that the Bell Miner (*Manorhina melanophrys*) is extremely local in its habit, I noted at our North Coast property that a colony of the birds never moves, apparently, from a certain bend in a brush-covered creek. For the past three years I have visited the spot pretty regularly, and found the Bell Miners always present, while the man in charge states that during