

## TAWNY FROGMOUTH IN CAPTIVITY

(Note: the following notes are from a talk by an Adelaide aviculturalist, Mr. B. Thomas, who addressed members at the May meeting.)

In living birds it is possible to sex individuals by close examination: in juveniles the male possesses silvery plumage, whereas plumage in the female is much darker. In adults the male has a pale lemon iris, while the iris of the female is deep yellow-orange. These observations were made on a breeding pair which were kept in a cyclone (wire-meshed) cage of dimensions 8 feet by 7 feet

by 6 feet; there was a shelter and several camouflage branches. The only call ever heard was a soft booming.

Wild-caught adult birds cannot be kept in captivity as live food is required; juveniles readily adapt themselves to aviary conditions.

In the second season, after the birds had reached maturity, the nest was built on a horizontal limb 6 feet from the ground. Both birds took part in the building of the nest.

The first egg was laid on September 9, the second on September 11 or 12. Incuba-

tion was done by the hen only; the male fed her at night.

The incubation period proved to be 30-31 days, the young being hatched on October 8 and 10. The second young bird was much smaller than the first. On October 12 the first-hatched young one disappeared (probably eaten by parents).

In the feeding of the young, food is not fed into the mouth of the chick, which is obliged to reach for it; both adults participate in this task. During the downy stage of the young one, droppings were totally removed by the adults by swallowing.

On October 20 the eyes of the young bird

opened, and growth was rapid in the ensuing weeks. The young bird was dependant on the parents for food for six weeks after hatching, and then it began to seek live food for itself.

In hot weather the hen sheltered the young bird by sitting on the side of the nest, even when it was quite large. The male did not approach the nest during the day and in the evening came only when food was required.

Preparations for flight lasted about a week and the young bird had mastered the art by the time it was a little over four weeks old.