

Nest and Eggs of *Geobasileus hedleyi rosinae* (Dark Thornbill).

By J. Neil McGilp.

This species has been known as long ago as 1912, yet the eggs and nest have not been described.

Mr. G. M. Mathews described the species in "The Austral Avian Record," Vol. ii, No. 1, p. 9, from a skin collected by Captain S. A. White.

Captain S. A. White wrote an article in "The Emu," Vol. XIX, Part 2, pp. 81-2, wherein he described the habitat, habits, food, etc., of the Dark Thornbill.

The nest and eggs had not been discovered until it was my good fortune to find it on 30th September, 1924, in the type locality, St. Kilda, about 15 miles north of Adelaide, S.A.

Long ago, when I read Captain White's article in "The Emu," I decided that should I be the first to find the nest I should ask him to describe it, and thus complete the article. Captain White, while congratulating me on the discovery, courteously declined my request that he should describe the nest and eggs, and asked me to do it.

The finding of the nest took considerable time and patience. The two birds were watched for some minutes amongst the samphire, when one was lost sight of. The other bird visited a certain samphire several times, so I investigated that spot and flushed a bird directly from the nest. From my experience of these birds I do not think many nests containing eggs will be found unless by accidentally flushing the bird right at one's feet.

A little later another nest was located without much difficulty, as the parents were busy feeding a young Narrow-billed Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx basalis*), which was the sole occupant of the nest, it having pushed out two foster-parents' eggs.

Nest.—The nest was attached to the small twigs of a samphire, just inside the thick foliage of the bush. The bottom of the nest was just less than 6 inches from the ground. The samphire containing nest was growing, with hundreds of others, well out from the mangroves, and almost at the intersection of the samphire and the saltbush flats. The nest is almost globular in form, with a neatly rounded entrance near the top. It is composed almost entirely of fine white strands of seaweed loosely woven together and matted with cobweb and white spiders' cocoons. Externally it is well decorated with large

white cocoons (spiders'), and inside is snugly lined with feathers in the bottom half of egg cavity. The nest measures 4 inches in height, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in width, and the entrance is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. There is no hood over entrance. At first glance the nest could easily be taken for one of the large white cobweb nests of a spider, which are common in the samphire locality.

Eggs.—Two in number and slightly incubated. They are oval in form, but slightly pointed at the smaller end. The shell is close-grained, and carries a little lustre. The ground colour is white, and is sparingly freckled all over the surface with dull reddish-brown spots. The markings are heavier on the larger end, and form a distinct zone. The eggs measure (1) .64 x .5, inches, (2) .64 x .47 inches, and are now in my "Origma" egg collection.

The eggs thrown out of the second nest were dented, but allowed of measurements being taken as follows:—(1) .64 x .43, inches, (2) .64 x .47 inches.
