

Nests of the Brown Weebill (*Smicromis brevirostris*).

By S. E. Terrill.

On Tuesday, 5th January, 1937, whilst looking for birds' nests in the Murray Bridge district, I noticed a mallee that was covered thickly with flowers. As I had never seen such heavy bloom on a eucalypt, I broke off three small branches and put them into the back of the motor-car. A few minutes later, as I was about to close the back of the car, I saw a small bird's nest in amongst the blossoms. It contained three young birds almost fully fledged. I carried the small branch containing the nest back to where I got it and fastened it to another branch with small pieces of thin wire. After watching for a few minutes I saw a Brown Weebill feed the young ones in the nest. The nest was originally suspended in the twiglets, leaves, and blossoms—blossoms predominating—about six or seven feet from the ground in the lowest branch of a eucalypt from 15 to 20 feet high. Five days later the nest was empty; doubtless the birds had flown. On Saturday, 23rd January, 1937, I found two similar nests within a few miles of the same district. One was partly dislodged and contained one egg, the contents of which were dried up. All the three nests were about six or seven feet from the ground, and all were in the lowest branches of the tree or clump of trees in which they were built. Branches almost directly above the nests were in every case from two to three times as high as the nest.

The reason I mentioned the height of the nests so explicitly is that Lucas and Le Souef in "The Birds of Australia" state:—"The nest is built aloft among the highest twigs of the tree," and Cayley in "What Bird is That?" states, "Usually attached to thin, leafy twigs near the top of a gum sapling."

(The heights, in feet, recorded for nesting sites in the data available here are—for South Australia, in mallee trees 3, 9, 10 (top), 12, 15; in gumtrees 6, 7. For North-Western Victoria, in mallee trees 4, 4 (top), 6 (top), 6 (top), 6, 6, 7.—J.S.)