

A RARE COMBINATION OF CUCKOO EGGS

By J. NEIL MCGILP.

On September 5, 1943, I paid a visit to an area of samphire bush and tea-tree scrub near the Grange. The locality is subject to inundation by high tides, when only the higher ground is above water. It is a favorite resort of several of our Cuckoos, and I have visited there practically every year since 1919 and have found eggs of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo on many occasions, the eggs of the Pallid Cuckoo only once, in 1927, and those of the Black-eared Cuckoo in 1924.

Late in the afternoon I noticed a pair of Spotted Scrub-Wrens carrying lining material into a nest, and being aware of the fact that this species often adds lining to its nest after eggs have been laid therein I carefully inserted my finger into the nest but found that eggs had not been laid. I was particularly careful not to disarrange the nest unduly, for from past experience I knew that the birds do not like interference with their home. The nest appeared very nearly finished and ready for eggs. It was remarkably well hidden in the dense foliage right at the top of samphire some five feet high. The entrance was well constructed.

During the afternoon I noticed several Fan-tailed Cuckoos, two Black-eared Cuckoos and one Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo, and had found a nest of the Spotted Scrub-Wren with one very heavily incubated egg and another nest of the same species with

two eggs, one of which was the egg of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

On Saturday afternoon, September 11, 1943, I again went to the locality, and when I approached the nest above referred to as "building" a Spotted Scrub-Wren flushed. I was very surprised and pleased to find that the nest contained two eggs of *Sericornis maculata*, one egg of *Owenavis osculans*, and one egg of *Chalcites basalis*. This combination is, I think, a new one for South Australia, and probably for Australia. The nest showed no sign of having been interfered with and there was not any egg or eggs on the ground under the nest.

The overall measurements of the nest were height 6 inches and width 5 inches, and the entrance was exactly $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the opening. The top material hung well down over the entrance. The material used for construction consisted of light strips of tea-tree bark, dried leaves, and a greenish-colored alga—water scum, which had dried, all the material being woven together into a fairly solid structure. The nest was lined with algae, rabbit fur, and feathers, the whole of the interior being well and snugly lined.

Another Spotted Scrub-Wren's nest was found, and it contained one young Scrub-Wren—not a Cuckoo—a day or so old.