

By Edwin Ashby.

*Podargus strigoides* (Frogmouth).

The pair previously reported as nesting over the gate leading into my stable-yard was still sitting on the nest on 10th November, 1924. My nephew, Mr. F. Watson Coleman, promised to photograph the nest for me.

After taking a photo of the parent bird on the nest, he pushed the sitting bird off the nest, a proceeding it much resented by making a loud hissing noise, with wide-opened beak. It only moved a foot or so, and soon returned.

There were two fledglings in the nest—one large, with wing feathers grown, the other quite a mite, in whitish down.

On the 18th of the same month the Frogmouth had left the nest, accompanied by one bird only, which was able to fly, and nothing has since been seen of the chick in the down; it was neither on the ground below the nest nor in the nest. On the 18th November the two parents and fledgling were sitting in a tree about three chains away from the nest, both the parents sitting close to the chick; on the morning of the 19th the family had moved to a tree 40 yards still further away, one parent only remaining with the child.

They were watched until 28th November, but only the single adult was seen roosting with the young one. During the day-time the fledgling kept perfectly still, only the parent moved its head slightly when the onlookers were moving about, but by 7 p.m., while still quite light, the young one woke up, bobbed its head several times, and stretched out its wings, evidently trying to wear off the stiffness consequent on its long "day-time sleep." It also tried to awake its parent by pecking it about the beak.

On the 22nd of December the two parents and child were noticed perched in a Sheoak-tree about 400 yards from the original nesting site, about 10 feet from the ground. The child was between the two parents. On going down to inspect them the same evening they had separated, and were perched in different trees, the adults on the watch for prey. It was still light enough to see nearly 100 yards away, and I watched the parent bird swoop down upon some large moth or beetle and fly up into a tree not far from where I stood. Almost immediately the parent was joined by the chick, which flew quite well; on getting the morsel from its parent the young one shifted into the tree close to where I was standing, uttering from time to time a hoarse cry. The parent birds were much disturbed at my presence so near to their young one, and kept flying over my head. I should judge that, although the wings did not actually touch me, they must have been within an inch or so of my hair, for I could feel the movement of the air as they passed over. The chick was still making its hoarse call when I left. Two days later all three were again in the same tree.

*Pardalotus xanthopygius* (Yellow-tailed Diamond-Bird).

The nest reported earlier in the garden at "Wittunga," Blackwood, was still occupied, by either a second or third brood, on 5th January, 1925, for both parents were going in and out with food in their beaks, evidently feeding their young. Through one of the party who was picking figs from the tree under which was the Diamond-Bird's burrow being unaware that the nest was again occupied, he stepped on to the mouth of the burrow and broke it, but next morning the hole was cleaned out and all damage repaired.

On the 26th of January, 1925, we watched two more nests of the same species, both within 30 yards of my house. These we had discovered nearly a week earlier, but no opportunity had occurred to watch the birds and make quite certain to which species of Diamond-Bird they belonged. On the 26th we were

able to identify both pairs, who were apparently feeding their young.

This makes three nesting burrows in my garden in this month of January, occupied by three distinct pairs of this species of Pardalote, all three nests being within 50 yards of my house. I am not aware of ever noting nests as late in the season as this before. Each year this species nests somewhere on my property in the spring, and it is a curious fact that, although its near relative, *Pardalotus punctatus*, is also common in this neighbourhood, and nests in the district, I have never identified a nest of that species in my garden.

Although *P. xanthopygius* is so numerous in the Mallee, it is exceedingly rare to find it frequenting the much wetter hill country, but the fact remains that this locality of Blackwood in South Australia is one of its old habitats, and one is very glad to have this evidence that, in spite of the great increase of houses in the district, this species is apparently holding its own and increasingly making use of the suitable sites in my garden. The fact that the Spotted and the Yellow-tailed Diamond-Birds both occupy this district all the year round, and certainly have done so long before the white people came to Australia, and still there are no intermediates or apparent crossing of the two species, is fairly strong evidence that Mathews is wrong in considering the two forms con-specific.

*Dicaeum hirundinaceum* (Mistletoe-Bird).

During this month of January these birds have still been nesting in my orchard. On 10th there were two nests, both in Apple-trees; in one were two eggs, and in the other it was thought there were young. On the 17th the former still had eggs in the nest, and the latter was empty; either the young had left on the nest on the 10th or did so soon afterwards.

Both nests were beautifully made, resembling a basket of felted cloth, the handle portion over the bough, and in both cases the nests were ornamented outside with the chippings of wood-boring larvae, the debris from the wood-boring larvae of a moth that infests the Wattles (*Acacia pycnantha*). In this district the Mistletoe-Birds invest their nests with these chippings. The reason for the adoption of this habit is a little obscure.