

a light eye-ring on the adult, nor did I notice any yellowish wash on the primaries. The juvenile was similarly coloured but had a narrow off-white eye-ring and a fleshy light orange gape. I did not notice a yellowish wash on the nape and throat as described by Serventy and Whittell (1976) and Officer (1964), although I did not specifically look for this character.

—PETER MENKHORST, Victoria.

#### REFERENCES

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**Observations on the Nest and Young of the Pheasant Coucal.**—During a botanical research trip to the Mitchell Plateau (lat. 14°47'S, long. 125°48'E.) N.W. Kimberley, in the wet season of February 1979, we found two nests both containing young of the Pheasant Coucal (*Centropus phasianinus*). The first was noticed on February 5 when we disturbed a bird which flew up from the ground. After searching the vicinity the nest was discovered in a tall, dense stand of grass up to 1.5 m high, growing under the Fan Palm (*Livistona eastonii*) on grader spoil at the edge of a disused grid line. The locality was where Airfield Swamp overflows into the headwaters of Camp Creek. The nest was dome-shaped, 40 cm high and constructed out of the two principal grass species (*Themeda australis* and *Coelorachis rottboellioides*) growing there (Fig. 2). The centre of a clump of *Themeda* had been pushed aside about 5 cm from the ground to create a platform for the nest. On this a layer of *Coelorachis* 8 cm thick

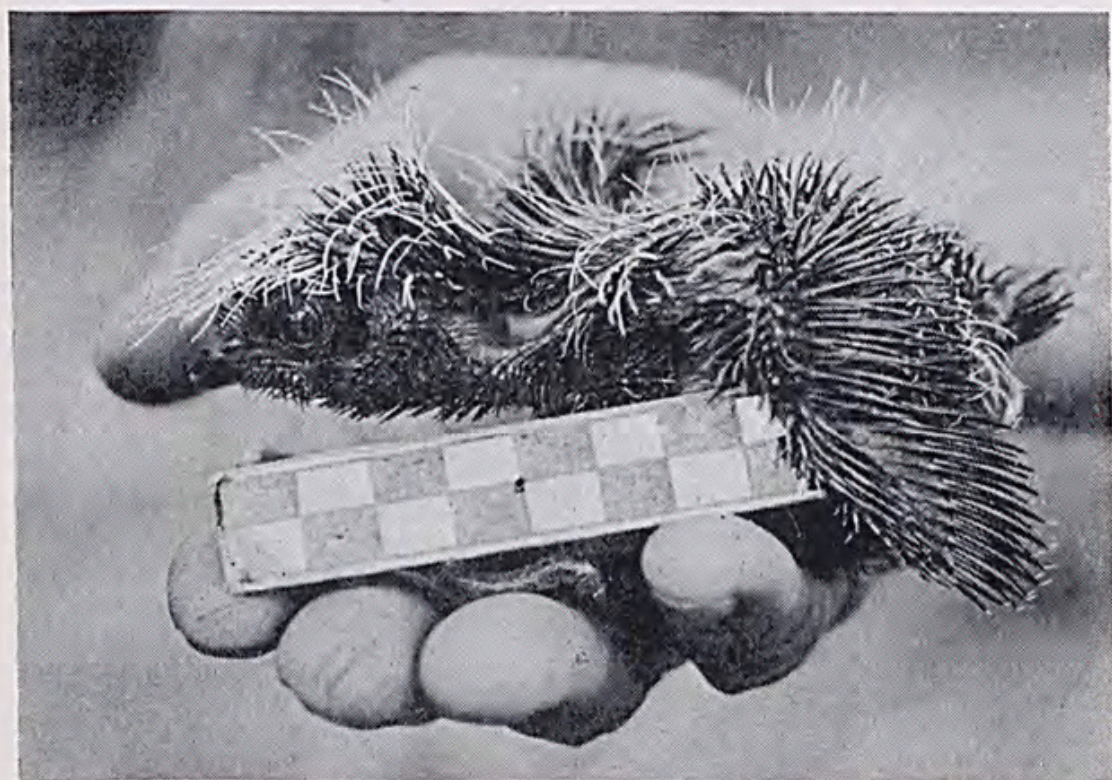


Fig. 1.—Young of Pheasant Coucal after removal from nest. Scale is in cm.

had been used to construct the floor of the nest which was lined with a 4 cm layer of *Eucalyptus* leaves. The walls and roof were made of stems and leaves of *Themeda*, drawn together, with some *Coelorachis* loosely woven into it. On both sides of the nest the grass had died and browned off. On closer inspection it was found that the *Themeda* had been broken over, some appearing cut, to create a camouflaged effect. The nest entrance was oval shaped and approximately 10 cm in diameter.

The nest contained three chicks and some egg shell remnants. The



Fig. 2.—Nest of Pheasant Coucal in tall dense grass under the Fan Palm *Livistona eastonii*. Arrow indicates nest entrance.

chicks were black in colour and clothed in coarse white sheaths of the developing feathers (Fig. 1). Their stomachs were grossly distended. When one of the chicks was removed from the nest it opened its beak, spread its wings and defecated a brown, foul-smelling fluid.

The second nest was located on February 6 in a dense stand of *Coelorachis* up to 2 m high growing adjacent to the track leading from the Amax basecamp to Surveyors Pool. The dominant vegetation here was an open forest formation of *Eucalyptus tectifica* (Grey Box), *Eucalyptus latifolia* and *E. confertiflora*, with an understorey of *Erythrophileum chlorostachys* (Iron Wood) and *Planchonia careya* (Billy-goat Plum). When disturbed by the noise of our vehicle one of the birds flew clumsily up from the ground into a nearby tree where the other parent was perched. They both remained in near proximity to the nest (unlike the bird from the previous nest) scrambling from branch to branch leaning down towards us and screeching loudly.

The nest was similarly constructed to the previous one with the addition of a platform-like area of trampled grass, covered with a layer of *Eucalyptus* leaves, immediately outside the nest entrance. The nest contained four chicks and one egg but no shell remnants. The chicks were covered in white feather sheaths, the youngest chick being about half the size of the eldest.

—K. F. KENNEALLY, Western Australian Herbarium; K. C. PIRKOPF, Nedlands and J. A. SMITH, Maylands.

## OBITUARY

JOHN TROTT (1903-1978)

Our member John Callas Trott died at a convalescent hospital near his home at Como on August 20, 1978. He was born in York on February 19, 1903. On his mother's side he was descended from the Clarksons, early settlers in the State, some of whom came out in the ship *Tranby* in 1830. His father, W. H. Trott, arrived from England in 1889 and joined the Perth branch of the Western Australian Bank, afterwards going to the bank's branches at Geraldton and Cue. After education at the Guildford Grammar School John Trott went as a jackaroo on Mr Vernon Hamersley's property, "Haseley," in Toodyay. For a short time he farmed at Wongan



Mr John Trott, 1928



Pirkopf, K F, Kenneally, Kevin F., and Smith, J A. 1979. "From Field and Study: Observations on the nest and young of the Pheasant Coucal." *The Western Australian Naturalist* 14(6), 163–165.

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