

swung as on a hinge. The column is winged and curved—spotted with purple and crimson.

The insect which pollinates the Leafless Orchid is a mystery. The claw of the labellum suggests that the insect alights on the tip of the middle lobe and thus weighs down the labellum, opening wide the tube to the heart of the flower. The clubbed calli offer firm foot grips and the insect moves forward. As it does so it passes the point of equilibrium of the balanced labellum, and its own weight pulls the labellum closer against the column. When the insect backs out that balancing point is reached much nearer the tip of the labellum since the insect's weight holds it close to the column. It is only after the insect brushes past the stigma and the anthers that the labellum swings open again, freeing the insect for flight to another flower. As its back touches the stigma it deposits there any pollinia it may bear. Walking backwards further it will brush past the anthers and collect from them another pollinia ready for the next orchid visited.

This is the way that small native bees (*Euryglossa rejecta*) pollinate *Caladenia filamentosa* and thus have I seen flies pollinate *Caladenia Patersonii*. Both these orchids have a claw and hinged labellum. But they call for the exact agent since one too small will escape without accomplishing the flower's desires and one too heavy will remain a prisoner.

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Thornbill Notes.**—Mr. Sedgwick's note on the distribution of the Chestnut-tailed Thornbill in the April issue of the *Naturalist* prompts me to add an observation that adds extensively to its range as given in Serventy and Whittell's *Birds of Western Australia*. The bird was observed at Bolgart, foraging in jam thickets in company with Weebills, Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantails and Red-capped Robins.

The Brown Thornbill deceived me while I was intent on tracing some Rufous Whistlers. It whistled one of their notes, "sweet, swt-swt-swt," more faintly but a perfect copy of the Whistlers, which were using the same notes nearby.

—(Mrs.) RICA ERICKSON, "Fairlea," Bolgart.

**How Young Ducks Leave Elevated Nests.**—On September 9, 1946 Mr. Frank Paterson, of Coolup, described to me the first and only instance he had seen of a Black Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) bringing its young down from a nest in a hollow tree. He had just witnessed the incident. He was broadcasting superphosphate in a cleared field with a few scattered trees when he noticed a duck fly down to the ground from a nesting hollow. The bird walked about on the ground at the base of the tree calling and he was amazed to see the little ducklings one after another fall down from the hollow. He was some 40 or 50 yards away when the duck flew down but when the last duckling arrived on the ground



Erickson, Rica. 1949. "From Field and Study: Thornbill Notes." *The Western Australian Naturalist* 2(2), 44-44.

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