

Construction Details of Striated Thornbill's Nest

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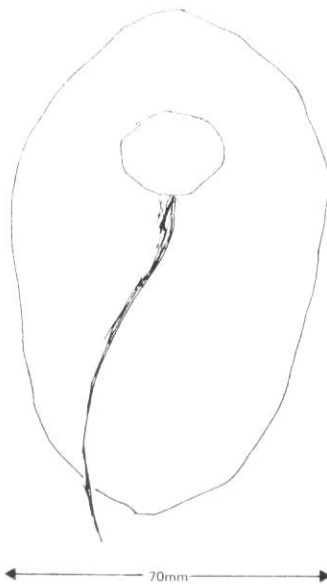
A nest of the Striated Thornbill *Acanthiza lineata* was found on the ground on 7 October, 1977, after a period of severe storm with high winds. It appeared to be complete but held neither eggs nor young birds. The area where the nest was located is a remnant of sclerophyll forest bordering a stream by a roadside not far from Yarra Glen, Victoria. Vegetation consists of a mixture of Eucalypt species with a dense shrub understorey.

Identification of the nest was made after comparison with known nests of the species. This included one in the area, located at a height of 4 m which contained young birds being fed by the adults.

The nest was built mainly of fine pieces of the red stringy bark of *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* and was firmly attached at the top by cobweb and pieces of bark wound around a fine twig which branched at the point of attachment. The break of the stem had occurred barely 4 cm from the attachment point of the nest.

The outside of the nest appeared whitish, having an overlay of whitish-grey bark pieces, with only a little brown showing. There was a small amount of moss on the top of the hood and around the entrance, but nowhere else. A strip of red-brown bark tailed downwards from the bottom of the entrance, firmly attached by cobweb to the outside of the nest, and ending below the nest and longer than it (Fig. 1).

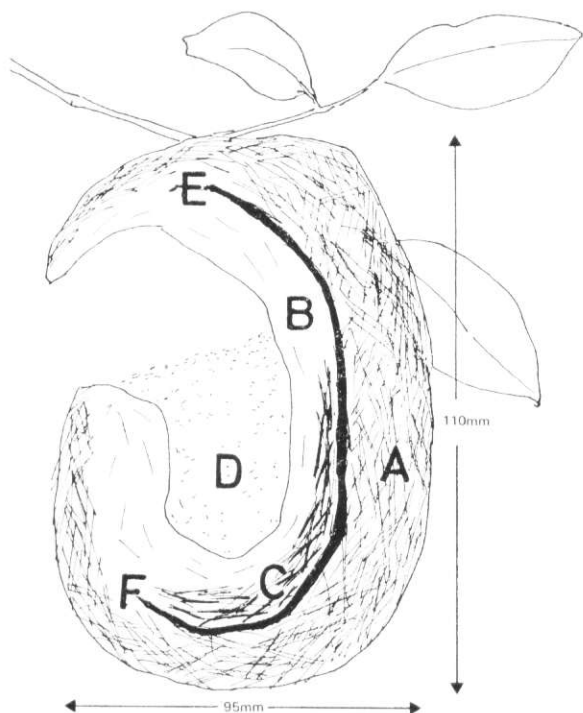
The outer layer of the nest was thick and matted, giving the appearance of a complete shell which could be peeled off; this is shown in Figure 2 (A). It was of fibrous reddish bark teased and interwoven with cobweb, fine pieces of white bark, and six small spider cocoons. I carefully teased apart the material next to it (B), a wall of 183 separate pieces of reddish bark, loosely woven together, with a few cobwebs incorporated. In this wall there was a small amount



● Figure 1. Striated Thornbill's nest showing strip of bark attached to outside.

of fur from both Brush-tailed Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* and Swamp Wallaby *Wallabia bicolor*, interlayered within the bark towards the base (area C). Even after separation of (A) and (B) the shell of matted material forming the outside of the nest stayed together in one piece.

The lining (D) filled the nesting chamber to a slightly higher level than that of the entrance. There were 320 feathers, some so small that they looked like fur. Feathers from Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* and Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae* could be identified. Mixed with this was a small amount of fur from Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and Swamp Wallaby. This lining was matted together at the bottom into a cup-shape. The whole lining cavity seemed to bulge with feathers.



● Figure 2. Construction details of Striated Thornbill's nest.

- A. Shell of fibrous bark.
- B. Wall of bark pieces.
- C. Area where fur was interlayered.
- D. Lining, mainly feathers.
- E-F. Strut of strong bark, 244 mm long.

The longest strip of bark was strong and thick, and seemed almost to be a strengthening strut. It was 244 mm long (E-F) and was woven in vertically, stretching from the top to the bottom of wall (B).

Nesting materials apparently vary considerably. Campbell (1900) states that some nests are made mainly of moss, others of grass, and that the lining can include '... vegetable hair (of ferns)'. Other materials recorded by him are feathers, opossum [*sic*] fur, wallaby fur, silky down from seed-pods, streamers of bleached seaweed and green or white spiders' nests. Obviously individuals take advantage of local material.

Acknowledgements

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References

- Campbell, A.J. (1900), *Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*, Vol. 1. Sheffield.

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Recovery Data

Items for Recovery Round-up are obtained from:

1. Secretary, Aust. Bird-banding Scheme
2. Individual banders
3. Miscellaneous sources.

The Secretary of the ABBS kindly provides most of the data involving recoveries away from the banding place and these constitute the largest part of Recovery Round-up. However, for a number of reasons, longevity information is not readily available from this source. Most longevity items included in Recovery Round-up are forwarded by a few banders in response to previous requests.

Banders are asked to forward to me details of longevity items which they consider may be suitable for inclusion in this section. As a guide in deciding suitability, items for the particular species should be checked in recent issues. If in doubt send the details anyway.

Hon. Editor.