

Humming-Birds is as singular as are the birds themselves. I believe that generally the eggs are two in number, but I also think it likely that some of the *Phaethornithes*, or rather the members of the genus *Glaucis*, occasionally lay but one; for I have frequently seen only a single young bird in the nests sent to this country, and this single bird generally filled up the entire space of the frail structure, which, as I have before stated, is usually attached to the leaflet of a palm. The eggs are certainly large when we consider the tiny size of the birds which produce them; in shape they are oblong, nearly alike in form at both ends, and are probably of a pinkish hue before their contents are removed; after which they become of an opaque white, and so closely resemble bon-bons that they might easily be mistaken for them. The birds are said to produce two broods a year; and the period of incubation generally occupies about twelve or fourteen, or, according to Captain Lyon, eighteen days. This gentleman, when giving an account of some Humming-Birds whose hatching and education he sedulously watched, as the nest was made in a little orange-bush by the side of a frequented walk in his garden at Gongo Soco, in Brazil, states that the nest "was composed of the silky down of a plant, and covered with a small flat species of yellow lichen. The first egg was laid January 26th, the second on the 28th; and two little creatures like bees made their appearance on the morning of February 14th. As the young increased in size, the mother built her nest higher and higher. The old bird sat very close during a continuance of heavy rain for several days and nights. The young remained blind until February 28th, and flew on the morning of March 7th, without previous practice, as strong and swiftly as the mother, taking their first dart from the nest to a tree about twenty yards distant."

Let me now mention one of the devices employed for the discovery of the nest of the Humming-Birds. Every observer who has written upon them has not failed to descant upon their boldness and pugnacity. Not only do they attack birds of much larger size than themselves, but it is even asserted that they will tilt at the Eagle if he approaches within the precincts of the nest; nor is man exempt from their assaults, of which an amusing instance will be found in the extract from Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley's 'Travels' given on a subsequent page.

It is this readiness for combat which is taken advantage of to find the nest and eggs; and all that is necessary is to tie a string to your hat, and wave it round your head, when, if a female be sitting in the neighbourhood, the male will instantly come down upon you; and by watching his return, the nest may be detected.

Many really absurd statements have been made as to the means by which these birds are obtained for our cabinets. It is most frequently asserted that they are shot with water or with sand. Now, so far as I am aware, these devices are never resorted to, but they are usually procured in the ordinary way, with numbers ten and eleven shot, those being the sizes best suited for the purpose. If smaller shot be used, the plumage is very frequently so cut and damaged that the specimen is rendered of little or no value. By far the greater number fall to the clay ball of the blowpipe, which the Indians, and in some instances even Europeans use with perfect certainty of aim. My friend Professor Jameson has a son who appears to be a proficient in this mode of obtaining Humming-Birds, as I know that many of the specimens he has sent me have been thus procured.

In Brazil very fine nets are employed for this purpose; but how these nets are used I am unable to state. Unfortunately for me, many specimens of the fine species *Cometes sparganurus* in my possession have been