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SHORT NOTES

DAY-SLEEPING BIRDS

I have a horizontal stick outside my kitchen window on which I hang tins of syrup in winter time.

On 23 July 1982, I noticed a Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) apparently asleep on the stick with its claws over the hook of the feeding tin. I stroked the Silvereye gently but it made no move. I was able to put a finger under its claw and roll my finger until the bird was perching on it. The empty tin was removed and a full one put on the hook, and I replaced the Silvereye by hooking its claws over the stick and removing my finger. It remained on the stick for another hour and ten minutes, even though other birds came to feed. Eventually it opened its eyes, flew down to feed a little, and then flew off. I did not know how long it had been asleep on the stick before I saw it.

While I was working in the garden on 15 October 1982, a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) landed on the lawn about 2 metres away and laid an egg immediately. The Starling then moved as if to cover the egg, but instead folded its wings and sat on the grass beside it and went to sleep.

Half an hour later the Starling had not moved. I stroked it, with no response from the bird. I covered bird and egg with a large box and inspected it at about half-hourly intervals. On the fourth inspection I noted that the bird had changed its position a little, and so I stroked it gently. Presently the Starling opened its eyes and a moment later took a little run and flew off.

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