

colony, I find an entry that an old sailor and whaler, and a close observer of nature, who was with me some years, once informed me that he had seen a large colony of White Herons (Egrêts?) nesting in the mangroves south of the Gascoyne River. Perhaps this may have some bearing on the subject of "Galdens."—Yours truly,

Broome Hill, W.A., 19/2/07.

TOM CARTER.

South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE bi-monthly meeting of the above association was held at the residence of Dr. A. M. Morgan, Adelaide, on Friday evening, 25th January, 1907. Mr. J. W. Mellor presided over a good attendance. In reference to the reported destruction of Pelicans and other protected birds on the Coorong by officials of the Fisheries Department, the sub-committee appointed at the previous meeting reported that full inquiries had been made. The committee was satisfied that no depredations had been committed. Inspector M'Intosh, when interviewed, had shown himself to be in favour of bird protection. Capt. S. A. White drew attention to the lateness of birds breeding this season, and to the large numbers of common Teal about in all swampy localities. It was thought that the remarkably mild weather and copious rains in the interior in the spring were responsible for these facts. Mr. J. W. Mellor reported having attended, in company with Capt. S. A. White, the Australasian Ornithologists' Union Congress in Tasmania in November of last year. Afterwards he had travelled extensively in the interests of natural history through the interior of that State, and had visited many elevated situations to observe the bird life. Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., graphically described a visit to the Big Scrub, New South Wales, in company with his son, Mr. F. R. Zietz, last spring. They had done remarkably good work in taking field notes and securing specimens for the Adelaide Museum, some of which were much-needed species. Mr. Zietz showed the Sanguineous Honey-eater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*), Rose-breasted Robin (*Petræca rosea*), Orange-backed Wren (*Malurus melanoccephalus*) and the Variegated Wren (*M. lamberti*), Caterpillar-eater (*Edolisoma tenuirostre*), Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*), Noisy Pitta (*Pitta strepitans*), Russet-tailed Ground-Thrush (*Geocichla heinii*), Drongo Shrike (*Chibia bracteata*), and bright-plumaged Fruit-Pigeons, viz., the Purple-breasted (*Megaloprepia magnifica*), White-headed (*Columba leucomela*), and the Topknot-Pigeon (*Lopholæmus antarticus*). Specimens collected by Dr. A. Chenery in the locality of Oodnadatta were exhibited, and the peculiar rusty colouration of the feathers, corresponding with the aspect of the country, was noted. Dr. A. M. Morgan displayed a number of birds' eggs, including those of the Black-capped Tree-runner (*Sittella pileata*) and Orange-winged Tree-runner (*S. chrysoptera*). Mr. M. Symonds Clark tabled a conspicuous notice which is being issued by the Government to assist in the protection of our useful native birds, which the meeting thought was a step in the right direction.

Notes and Notices.

A COLLECTION OF CUCKOOS' EGGS.—Mr. Sept. Robinson, A.O.U., has now field notes on eggs of 68 species of foster-parents of the various Australian Cuckoos observed with an egg each, or sometimes two, of a Cuckoo.

REPORT ON THE BRITISH MUSEUM, 1906.—Donations from Australia.—Mr. Bernard Woodward presented 52 birds from south-west Australia (including 5 species new to the collection). Mr. W. E. Balston presented 374 birds from south-west Australia, collected by Mr. T. Shortridge. Mr. A. J. North presented 98 eggs.

USEFUL EAGLES.—At the November meeting of the South Australian Ornithological Association the value of the common Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaëtus audax*) as a rabbit-destroyer was discussed. The members fully confirmed a report by the Inspector of Fisheries that great numbers of rabbits were killed by a single pair of these birds for food while rearing their brood of young. It was contended that, although these birds occasionally secured a young lamb, the amount of good they did fully compensated for this, and in the majority of cases it was thought that they killed only weakly lambs, or those that had lost their mothers and would eventually die. In many cases they picked up the dead carcasses of freshly dropped lambs. It was represented that infinitely more sheep and lambs died from the effects of shortage of food supplies, under the influence of rabbits, than were killed by the Eagles, whose energies in destroying the rodents increased the possibilities of grass fodder, and therefore it behoved the farmers to protect the Eagles as useful birds.

THE exhibiting of a crocodile's egg (*Crocodylus porosus*) at the last quarterly dinner of the Bird Observers' Club brought forth the following remarks from Mr. A. Mattingley:—"It will be observed that the contour of a crocodile's egg is similar to that of the mound-building birds, and it is interesting to observe here that the crocodile is a mound-builder and lays its eggs in a mound after the method adopted by the mound-building birds. The apices or ends of the egg of the crocodile and of the mound-building birds in Australia are similar in shape, both ends of the egg being of uniform size. Thus, if we accept the dictum that birds have descended from some reptilian ancestor, and are merely extremely modified and aberrant reptilian types—glorified reptiles, in other words—that birds' ancestors were four-footed creatures which gradually metamorphosed into feathered bipeds, the fore legs becoming specialised, forming wings, &c., then the foregoing remarks of the similarity of nesting and the contour of the eggs show something in common between the crocodiles and birds. Furthermore, the powder-down found on the bodies of Herons and other birds is no doubt the relic of this affinity. If one accepts the theory that the skin of reptilian ancestors of birds gradually evolved a down, and later on feathers, or elongated scales, then it seems probable that this powder-down is the connecting link."

SUGGESTIONS AS SUBJECTS FOR PAPERS.—1. Why should *Petroeca phænicea* do, as Mr. J. W. Mellor says—"all leave lowlands at approach of spring, and repair to the elevated regions and Tasmania to breed?" 2. Did Union members—as to *Acanthornis magna*—kill the "last of the tribe," or was it the first? 3. Why should Kingfishers be absent from such a well-wooded and watered country as Tasmania (see p. 167)? 4. Cannot anyone give a feasible explanation of the absence of the Lyre-Bird from Tasmania? 5. There are some portions of the full life-history of the Snipe (*Gallinago australis*) wanting. Why cannot they be supplied? Is it lack of observation again?—H. K.

EDITORIAL.—The Council of the A.O.U. has accepted with regret the resignation of Mr. Henry Kendall, who, on account of urgent private business, retires from active work in connection with the Union. For the first four years of its existence Mr. Kendall was one of the co-editors of *The Emu*, and latterly an advisory editor. The Council has had engrossed upon its minutes its very great appreciation of Mr. Kendall's services in the cause of ornithology. A copy of the minute has been forwarded to Mr. Kendall.

Mr. C. F. Belcher, M.A., LL.B., one of the present editors, will be absent in Europe for the next 12 months. During his absence Mr. A. J. Campbell, Col. Mem. B.O.U., will act as *locum tenens* for Mr. Belcher.

PROSPECTIVE TRIPS.—Mr. Thos. P. Austin, of Cobborah, N.S.W., writes:—"My present intentions are to take a trip to Cardwell, North Queensland, this year, as soon as my shearing is finished, for the purpose of bird-observing. The following year, if possible, I hope to visit the Abrolhos Group, off the coast of Western Australia. Should you know of anyone willing to join with me in either of these trips I should be very thankful if you would ask them to communicate with me."