

from the trees back into the reeds. I noticed they have a harsh, somewhat guttural call note, not unlike one occasionally employed by the Crescent Honey-eater when a cat or other enemy is in the vicinity. The beautiful Canary-like song of this waterside dweller was heard unusually early this spring; when Mr. Thompson and myself were crossing the North Esk on 22nd September on our way to the bush, one of these songsters was heard in the dry reeds of last season close to the Butts Bridge; usually we do not notice them until well on in October, and they do not nest here until November. Like the Grass-Bird, they have no objection to the proximity of our species provided there is cover, and their rich warble may be heard close to the railway sheds, with trains passing and repassing, and the dense engine smoke flying over their haunts. —H. STUART DOVE.

From Magazines, &c.

"A TRIP TO MOUNT ARTHUR" is a pleasant account of a nature study outing undertaken by Messrs. H. Stuart Dove, F.Z.S., and H. C. Thompson, A.O.U., to the Lilydale district of Tasmania, where a number of birds was noted. The notes are published in *The Examiner* (Launceston), 19/11/07.

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BIRDS OF SPENCER GULF.—Mr. J. W. Mellor, one of the vice-presidents of the A.O.U., has contributed to *The Evening Journal*, Adelaide (18/5/07), a popular account of the birds he noted on the islands about the Gulf during an excursion by members of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, January, 1907.

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BIRDS OF BOROONDARA.—Under the title of "Some Birds of Hawthorn District," Mr. C. F. Cole, A.O.U., has contributed a short but interesting article to *The Victorian Naturalist* (vol. xxiv., No. 5). Having been born and reared in the district, besides being a close observer of bird-life, Mr. Cole's records, especially "old-time memories" are valuable.

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PARTRIDGE-PIGEONS.—In *The Avicultural Magazine* (vol. v., No. 10, New Series), Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., contributes aviary observations on the two species of "Squatter Pigeons" forming the genus *Geophaps*. Because of their terrestrial and other habits, Mr. Seth-Smith does not agree with any attempt to separate these birds from their natural order Columbæ.

"THE TASMANIAN NATURALIST."—The Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club is to be commended in starting a journal of its own. Part No. 2 of vol. i. contains an account of a camp-out of the Club on Bruny Island, Easter, 1906. Several birds seen during the trip are enumerated. "Tasmanian Quail and Game Propagation (with Illustrations)" is a short article by Mr. A. R. Reid, A.O.U., in which he advocated the rearing and better protection of Quail. Mr. Reid's suggestions are practical.

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"FEATHERED IMMIGRANTS" is the title of a Bulletin (No. 16) issued by Department of Agriculture, New Zealand, and compiled by Mr. James Drummond. It contains evidence for and against introduced birds to the Dominion of New Zealand, together with "Notes on the Native Avifauna." It is deplorable to read some of the causes assigned for the disappearance of the native birds: "Destruction of bush," "poisoned grain, stoats, weasels, and guns," "shooting and lack of protection," "indiscriminate shooting," "cats," "sportsmen," "settlement and introduced birds," "all nesting places being occupied by introduced birds," "constant use of the gun," "shooting out of season," "shooting out of season by the Maoris," "allowing boys to carry guns," "Cockney sportsmen," "'kill-in-any-position' shooter," "burning of the bush, wilful destruction of eggs by boys, ravages of cats, and slaughter of waterfowl on the first days of the shooting season," &c, &c.

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PLATYCERCUS ADELAIDÆ IN ENGLAND.—The Adelaide Rosellas are not unlike immature Pennants (*P. elegans*) just finishing the moult and not in full plumage. Mr. W. R. Fasey once bought a pair of immature Pennants which the dealer at the time declared were "Adelaides."

The "Adelaides" were given an aviary in which only two other small birds resided—a pair of Parrot-Finches—and he had nothing of interest to relate for a few weeks till he saw that they were nesting, and finally four young ones left the nest and flew about. Their markings were like those of their parents excepting that the ground colour was of a more greenish shade. Mr. Fasey considers the red marks quite as distinct as the parents'.

Mr. Fasey's other birds nested very freely this year, and he had quite a number of young ones. One interesting Parakeet was a hybrid whose parents were a hen Princess of Wales Parakeet and a male Rock-Pebbler, and he hopes soon to rear some young Blue-banded Grass-Parakeets.—*Avicultural Magazine*, New Series, vol. v., No. 11.

NATIONAL PARKS.—“Fauna and Flora Reserves in Australasia” was the subject of a thoughtful lecture by Mr. Bernard H. Woodward, F.C.S., delivered before the Western Australian Natural History Society on 29th May, 1907. Mr. Woodward’s remarks are chiefly in substance the historical enactments in the respective States regarding national reserves, and will serve a good end by directly keeping the cause of bird protection to the fore. But if we are to have proper bird preserves or reserves we must undoubtedly have those preserves also properly protected by paid wardens, as in America. Anent this matter, an influential deputation* is about to wait on the Hon. the Minister of Lands, Victoria, regarding the reservation of Wilson Promontory. The bulk of the Promontory has been reserved, but a ½-mile foreshore surrounding the park has only been temporarily reserved. The deputation intends to seek favourable consideration—(1) that the whole be reserved for all time, and (2) that a paid ranger be put in charge. A ranger is an absolute necessity, because, even since the locality has been “proclaimed,” it is an open secret that ‘possum poachers (in close season) and timber fellers have been at their destroying work.

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NATIVE BIRDS PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.—A meeting of the Central Queensland Native Birds Protection Association was held at the Belmore Arms Hotel on Thursday week. It was decided to engage a ranger to put a stop to illegal shooting, and bring before the courts those found guilty of such an act. As this will mean considerable expense, the secretary was directed to make a vigorous effort to get in subscriptions. It was remarked that if members had their own interests at heart there should be no difficulty in getting in the money, as it is acknowledged that before the formation of the association there was practically no close season, and were the association to become defunct, the same state of things would prevail again, in which case there would, in a very short time, be no such thing as a game bird in the district. A great many persons, it was also stated, reaped the benefit of the efforts of the association to give the birds six months for breeding by getting six months’ good sport, and yet they would not join the association. Probably the fact that last season was a particularly bad one from a sportsman’s point of view had a good deal to do with the

* Consisting of delegates from the National Museum, Australian Natives’ Association, Royal Society, Royal Geographical Society, Field Naturalists’ Club, Zoological and Acclimatisation Society, Piscatorial Council, and Australasian Ornithologists’ Union. The Minister, who was sympathetic, has been interviewed. He promised to recommend a paid ranger, but was of opinion that the “temporary reserve” of the ½-mile foreshore would have to stand. However, the deputation’s object would be attained if shooting and hunting were not permitted within the ½-mile limit, as it is in the National Park proper.

apathy displayed. At the same time, a majority of the members deprecated the evident belief of some connected with the association that its principal duty was to find shooting for them—a misunderstanding which might be harmful. The object of the association, it was pointed out, was to enforce a strict observance of the close season and so give birds of all species which were protected a chance to breed and ensure themselves against extermination.—*Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 15/11/07.

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MALLEE (VICTORIA) NOTES.—“Nature Notes” in *The Argus*, 6/9/07, records the following interesting field observations by “Mallee Bird” (Mr. Chas. M'Lennan):—

“Quails Nesting.—A friend of mine has just come in from the ‘Sunset’ country, which is situate some 50 odd miles north-west of Pine Plains, and he informed me that Quails—no doubt the Brown and the Little Swift-flying, for I saw them there myself about six weeks ago—are now nesting in vast numbers all over the plain.

“All the Cuckoos—Pallid, Fan-tailed, Bronze, and Black-eared—arrived here this month (August). The Kestrel and White-shouldered Lalage also came. I saw on the ground a splendid flock of Black-faced Graucalus the other day. There must have been fully 300 of them. These are useful birds, for they were feeding upon caterpillars or grubs, which now are rather numerous among the green herbage. My enemies, the Crows and Ravens, do a lot of good in this respect, for they are now to be seen in dozens feeding upon some of the pests.

“Crows and Plover.—I was an eye-witness the other day to a Black-breasted Plover defending its nest, containing four eggs, against the attack of two Crows. The Crows seemed determined to obtain possession of the eggs. While the Plover fought in a most desperate manner with one of the Crows, the other snapped up an egg and made good its escape to enjoy its prize. A bullet from my rifle settled matters as far as the other Crow was concerned. These black rascals destroy a lot of eggs of Plovers and other birds.

“Chestnut-backed Thrush (*Cinclosoma castanonotum*).—I have been watching the antics or habits of the Chestnut-backed Thrush a lot of late, and have seen a good many of the birds in my rambles. These birds do not associate with any other of the feathered tribe. They live for the most part in couples, which presumably pair for life, subsisting upon the insects and other food to be found in the vicinity of their favourite haunts—the low shrubs and undergrowths in the arid regions of the Mallee. Being of a rather shy nature, they do not wander far from the same neighbourhood. The characteristic feature of these birds is the peculiar graceful motion they have of moving

their heads and necks backwards and forwards when standing on the watch. The nest is always built on the ground, near the butt of a mallee bush or under some low shrub. The clutch is from one to three. When flushed, the bird flies but a short distance, and again settles. It resembles in some of its habits the Scrub-Robin (*Drymaëdus brunneopygius*)."

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THE CUCKOO.—Mr. Gordon Dalgleish, a well-known British observer, contributes to the October number of *The Avicultural Magazine* some interesting notes on the Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*). The author claims no originality for his notes, nevertheless he records certain observations which appear to add something to our knowledge of these "birds of mystery" as regards their parasitic habits. The question whether instinct or reason is responsible for the Cuckoo's practice of laying her eggs in the nests of other birds is treated with caution by the author, but he says:—"That a bird should save itself the trouble of catering for and looking after a family is, I think, sufficient proof of cunning and deep thought, and not want of intellect." Mr. Dalgleish also believes that Cuckoos are guilty of eating the eggs of other birds. He states that he once saw an Indian Cuckoo (*Eudynamis honorata*) rob a Dove's nest, and fly off with the egg in its bill, hotly pursued by the owner. Referring to the Cuckoo's power of matching its eggs with those of the different birds selected as foster-parents, the author gives instances which have come under his own notice, and quotes from *The Countryside* (vol. iii., No. 68) a letter written by Mr. Gillett Cory, who states, *inter alia*, that he has examined sixteen nests, each containing a Cuckoo's egg of different species of birds with their respective clutches of eggs. In every case the Cuckoo's egg could scarcely be distinguished from those of the intended foster-parent, even the most delicate markings being closely imitated. Mr. Dalgleish raises an interesting point—"Does the male Cuckoo first find the nest in which the female is to place her egg?" He answers the question in the affirmative, but more confirmation is required than the evidence he adduces before any definite conclusion can be arrived at. The writer states, again, that there is one instance on record (*Ibis*, 1889, p. 219) of the European Cuckoo hatching its own eggs, and he thinks it probable that at times young Cuckoos, after leaving the nest, are tended by the true mother or other Cuckoos. This opens a wide field for investigation, and Australian observers should lose no opportunity of gathering evidence in support or otherwise of the theory. Returning to the question of protective resemblance in the eggs, Mr. Dalgleish concludes that one of the possible reasons for the dissimilarity that sometimes exists between eggs of a Cuckoo and foster-parents is that the Cuckoo has only at a comparatively recent period realised the importance of matching its eggs with those of its victims.

Reviews.

["How to Sex Cage Birds (British and Foreign)."] By Arthur C. Butler, Ph.D., F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., &c., &c. With over fifty illustrations and four coloured plates. *The Feathered World. Canary and Cage-Bird Life.* 9 Arundel-street, Strand, London, N.C.]

DR. BUTLER has added another important work to his already long list of useful books, most of which are familiar to Australians. "How to Sex Cage Birds" will not only be of value to the aviculturists, but also to ornithologists, both field and cabinet. The author's own appreciation of his work is modestly put thus:—

"The object of the present work is to enable owners of birds to decide to what sex they belong, and I hope that the labour which I have expended upon the study of external sexual differences, embodied in the ensuing chapters, will prove useful not only to the student of birds in captivity, but of cabinet specimens. Primarily, I naturally offer it as a sort of *vade mecum* for the use of aviculturists, and should it only be of assistance to them, I shall feel amply repaid for the time and trouble which I have expended in its production."

The present work treats of over 900 species of birds, many of which are Australian—notably Cockatoos, Parrakeets, and Finches. However, Dr. Butler's remarks are brief in connection with the Pink or Leadbeater Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*). He will find, in nature, that the male bird has a black eye, while that of the female is brownish. In the Rose Cockatoo or Galah (*C. roseicapilla*) the male also has a black eye, but in the female it is of a pearl-like colour. With reference to the Indian Banded Parrakeet (*Palæornis fasciata*), Australian aviculturists who have kept the bird are of opinion that both sexes, when mature, possess red bills. The bill is dark in young birds, and commences to turn red with the first moult.

Among the illustrations is a taxidermist's group of Laughing Jackasses (*Dacelo gigas*) from a photograph by Messrs. Kerry, Sydney. Price 3s. 6d.

["From Range to Sea: a Bird Lover's Ways."] By Charles Barrett. T. C. Lothian, Melbourne.]

THIS "Christmas pamphlet" includes a preface by Mr. Donald Macdonald and many photo-pictures from nature by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley. Mr. Barrett (who, by the way, is a member of the A.O.U.) is to be heartily congratulated on his maiden effort at publishing nature notes. Judging simply by this booklet, Mr. Barrett has a great future before him as a nature observer and writer. The publishing price of "From Range to Sea" is one shilling.