

Correspondence.

SYNÆCUS AUSTRALIS IN NEW ZEALAND.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—Under this heading, on pp. 104, 105 of the last number of *The Emu* appears a note to the effect that Mr. D. Seth-Smith, in *The Avicultural Magazine*, has discovered that this bird is not uncommon in the North Island of New Zealand.

The note in *The Emu* commenting upon this asks the following questions:—"Have cage birds been taken to and liberated in New Zealand, or have wild birds emigrated across the Tasman Sea?"

Synæcus australis was introduced by the settlers, but when and where I can't trace, as no records of the earliest efforts at acclimatisation were kept. However, in 1871, when Captain Hutton published his "Birds of New Zealand," he included a "List of Birds Introduced by Settlers." In this list (p. 66) there appears—" *Coturnix australis*, Lath. All the provinces. From Tasmania."

Later, when treating of the supposed survival of the New Zealand Quail upon the Three Kings, the late Sir Walter Buller wrote (Trans. N.Z. Inst., vol. xxiv., p. 1,891 (1892)):—"But of *Synæcus australis*, the Brown Quail of Australia, which has been introduced into New Zealand, and is now extremely plentiful in all parts of the country."

On p. 348 of the "Index Faunæ Novæ-Zelandiæ" (1904) appears *Synæcus australis*, Lathrades (Swamp Quail), Australia. This is in an Appendix, the title of which is "List of Naturalised Animals," the explanation of which reads:—"This list includes those animals which have been introduced, either intentionally or unintentionally, by human agencies, and have become so well established that they may be considered as part of the fauna."

I have collated these three references simply to show that to New Zealand students the occurrence of *Synæcus australis* is a well-known fact, and has been for nearly forty years. That it should be termed "an interesting discovery," and be worth recording by Australians, seems to me surprising.—I am, &c.,

TOM IREDALE.

Christchurch, N.Z., 1st Nov., 1907.

P.S.—Since writing the above the "Transactions of the N.Z. Institute for 1906" has been received. On p. 508 the dates of introduction of birds now acclimatised are given, and for the bird under notice read:—"Auckland, 1867; Christchurch, 1866; Green Island, near Dunedin, 1868 and 1870."—T.I.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—In the last number of *The Emu* (page 104, vol. vii.), you ask—"Have cage birds (of *Synæcus australis*) been taken to and liberated in New Zealand, or have wild birds emigrated?" On page 127 of *The Ibis* for January, 1893, occurs the following sentence:—"It is very unsatisfactory to learn that the supposed bevvies of the New Zealand Quail (*Coturnix novæ-zealandiæ*) asserted to have been recently met with in the Three Kings Islands (*cf.* Birds N.Z., i., p. 228, footnote), turn out to belong to the Brown Quail (*Synæcus australis*), introduced from Australia, and that the native species is undoubtedly extinct."—I am, &c.,

TOM CARTER.

Broome Hill (W.A.), 28th Oct., 1907.

Bird Observers' Club.

THE September meeting of the Club was held at the residence of Dr. H. W. Bryant, Toorak. There were present Messrs. Cole, Campbell, Chandler, Howe, Mattingley, Ross, Barrett, Nicholls, and Surgeon-General Williams. Apologies were received from Messrs. G. Shepherd, R. Hall, Spowers, Batey, and Dr. Horne. The subject for discussion was "Cuckoos." Mr. Christian, of Raywood, forwarded some field notes, and Mr. Batey, of Drouin (Vic.), contributed a paper. Can Cuckoos time the extrusion of the egg? was an interesting point raised by Mr. Mattingley. Mr. Cole exhibited a young Cuckoo (*C. pallidus*) reared in nest of White-plumed Honey-eater (*Ptilotis penicillata*). Skins of *Drymaædus brunneipygia*, *Pardalotus xanthopygius*, *P. ornatus*, *Malurus melanotus*, *Pachycephala gilberti*, and *Cinclorhynchus rufescens* were exhibited by Messrs. Mattingley, Ross, and Howe, obtained by them in the Mallee scrubs. Dr. Bryant exhibited many beautiful forms of aquatic birds. Mr. J. N. Tregallas was elected a member, on the motion of Mr. J. A. Ross, seconded by Mr. A. J. Campbell. It was resolved that the hon. secretary write congratulating Mr. Robert Hall on his obtaining the curatorship to the Hobart Museum. After supper a hearty vote of thanks to the host terminated a pleasant and interesting meeting.

On 16th October the Club met at the residence of Surgeon-General Williams, when fourteen members were present. Apologies were received from Messrs. Campbell, Christian, Batey, Barrett, and Nicholls. The host was voted to the chair. The subject for discussion was "Hérons." Two country members (Messrs. Batey and Christian) sent notes. Mr. Cole exhibited three mounted specimens of the Night-Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*)—two in immature plumage, and one adult male in beautiful feather. Mr. Mattingley exhibited a clutch of four eggs of the Plumed Egret (*Mesophoyx plumifera*). This bird is apparently rare, and he and Mr. Ross share the honour of taking the first authentic clutch. Surgeon-General Williams exhibited many beautiful forms too numerous to individualise here, but one case, containing Night-Hérons, White-fronted and Pacific Herons, White and Plumed Egrets, and Bitterns, was specially admired by the visiting members. After supper the host took members through his well-appointed rooms, and delighted them with his many fine curios, works of art, native implements, &c.

The quarterly dinner of the Club was held at the Mia-Mia Tea Rooms, Collins-street, Melbourne, 20th November. There were present Messrs.