

From Magazines, &c.

"GENERIC NAMES APPLIED TO BIRDS DURING THE YEARS 1901 TO 1905, INCLUSIVE, WITH FURTHER ADDITIONS TO WATERHOUSE'S 'INDEX GENERUM AVIUM.'"—This important list, compiled by Charles W. Richmond, of the U.S. National Museum, has been issued at the Government Printing Office, Washington. It revolutionizes some of the existing generic names of Australian birds, and is recommended to the thoughtful consideration of the future committee or compilers of an Australian check-list.

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TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB'S EASTER CAMP-OUT, 1909.—The club has reprinted in book form from *The Tasmanian Mail* a report on this excursion, which was attended by 85 persons, of whom 24 were ladies. The locality chosen was Wineglass Bay, on the eastern side of the Freycinet Peninsula. In addition to a general report on the camp-out, notes are given on the botany, ornithology, geology, and zoology of the Peninsula, those on the birds being contributed by Mr. Robt. Hall, C.M.Z.S., who deals with the 33 species, including land and sea forms, observed during the period (from Good Friday till the following Tuesday) over which the excursion extended. As a scientific reference, it is unfortunate that the list of bird names is full of typographical errors and obsolete terms. This is to be regretted, as the reprint is issued under the badge of the Naturalists' Club, and therefore should have been revised. Accompanying the letterpress are numerous fine illustrations of the beauty-spots of the locality visited. The function was carried out without the slightest hitch, and the club is to be congratulated on its success.

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ANIMALS PRESERVATION SOCIETY. — A well-attended meeting was held at the Royal Society's rooms last night, under the presidency of Mr. Winchcombe, M.L.C., for the purpose of calling into existence a society for the preservation of our fauna. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. F. Farnell, W. W. Froggatt, W. A. Greaves, H. C. L. Anderson, D. G. Stead, L. Harrison, and others, all touching upon one aspect or another of our indigenous animals or plants. It was urged that from economic, patriotic, natural, historical, and sentimental points of view, a society should be formed to encourage the preservation of our animals and birds. One proposition was that the flora should be also protected; but the meeting decided to deal only with the fauna, and gave the name of "Australian Animals Preservation Society" to the new organization. It was decided to make the subscription 5s. for membership, and the acting hon. secretary,

Mr. L. Harrison, enrolled a large number of members. A committee, comprising Mesdames L. Harrison and Kearney, Dr. Mary Booth, and Messrs. F. E. Winchcombe, F. Farnell, H. C. L. Anderson, A. S. Le Souëf, W. W. Froggatt, C. F. Lindeman, H. E. Finckh, C. Hedley, C. Thackeray, D. G. Stead, and Count Morner, was appointed to draft rules and constitution. Mr. H. C. L. Anderson announced that it was the intention of the Agricultural Department to issue a bulletin of 150 insectivorous birds, and to figure the birds in colours. The announcement was received with applause. Substantial promises of financial and other support were received by the hon. secretary.—*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/5/09.

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EXTINCTION OF THE LYRE-BIRD.—The following is an extract from a letter by Mr. S. W. Jackson which appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3/6/09:—"A few years back an instance came under my notice in which over 400 of our handsome and nationally emblematic Lyre-Birds (*Menura superba*) were wiped out of one district in a single season in order to supply globe-trotting curio-hunters with the unique tail feathers. This illustrates the need for the amendment of the *Birds Protection Act*. If anyone be caught shooting a Lyre-Bird, it is true that he can be prosecuted and fined; but the tails themselves (absolute evidence of a broken law) are exposed for sale everywhere. It must be remembered, first, that it is only the male bird which carries the beautiful tail plumage, which so often costs him his life; and, secondly, that the female rarely (if ever) lays more than one egg each season. Between, therefore, the destruction of the males and the limited breeding of the females, the species is likely to become extinct. Until the law punishes slayer and vendor alike there is no hope for a protection that really protects. Whilst engaged in bird-life research in Queensland last year I brought this matter under the notice of the Premier as affecting the Albert Lyre-Bird (the northern variety, generally confined to the south-eastern part of Queensland and the Richmond River and Tweed River districts of New South Wales). I have since then heard that steps are to be taken to prevent the total extinction not only of this dainty forest beauty, but of others of perhaps equal interest. And this is not before it was needed, for the work of destruction goes on apace. It is not long ago that in a locality in the north-east of New South Wales a party of vandals organized a sort of Lyre-Bird 'drive'; surrounding a patch of scrub in which the birds were common, and setting fire to it, they shot down the unfortunate birds as they struggled through one pitiless ring of fire only to meet their death in another. Finally the tails were cut off and the bodies left to rot, much as the victims of Red Indian warfare are scalped and abandoned."

"NOTE ON SOME LIVING EXAMPLES OF PSEPHOTUS DISSIMILIS."—Under the above title Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., in *The Victorian Naturalist*, vol. xxv. (March, 1909), as the result of an examination of sixteen living birds—five being adult males, and the remainder females and young males—details certain differences between them and Professor Collet's description of the species. Mr. North writes:—"From Professor Collet's description of the adult male of *Psephotus dissimilis*, the living bird differs in the following respects:—The feathers from the sides of the base of the lower mandible, extending in a line immediately below the eye on to the sides of the nape and upper portion of the hind-neck, are black, and gradually pass into a dark greyish-brown on the upper portion of the back and the scapulars; the lesser, median, and greater wing coverts are entirely golden-yellow; the under tail coverts are pale scarlet with whitish margins; bill faint bluish-horn colour, cere slightly darker; legs and feet rich fleshy-grey brown; iris black, eyelid dark greyish-black. Total length, 10.5 inches; wing, 4.9; tail, 6; bill, 0.5. Professor Collet describes the adult male of *Psephotus dissimilis* as 'forehead, lores, and crown dark chestnut;' and Dr. E. Hartert of *P. dissimilis* (?) 'crown of the male is dark brown, not at all chestnut;' and again Professor Collet states that the greater wing coverts of *P. dissimilis* are black, and the lower (under) tail coverts orange. The female agrees fairly well with Professor Collet's description, except that the cheeks are pale blue, not grey, as are also the ear coverts, and that the under tail coverts are paler than in the male. Young males resemble the adult females, but the feathers of the cheeks and sides of the throat and neck are pale verditer blue, and some of the feathers at the base of the bill, and on the forehead, are black. . . . What I regard as the chief point of difference is that not only are the lores, forehead, and crown of the head of the adult male *black*, but that this colour extends down the anterior portion of the cheeks to the sides of the base of the lower mandible." These black markings on the head giving the bird the appearance of wearing a cowl, Mr. North proposes, should it prove to be distinct, to call it *Psephotus cucullatus*, with the vernacular name of the Black-hooded Parrakeet. The specimens examined by Mr. North came from the same locality as those described by Professor Collet—viz., Pine Creek, 200 miles east of Port Darwin.

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"NOTES ON ALBATROSSES AND OTHER PELAGIC BIRDS IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS."—This is the title of an interesting article contributed by Dr. T. W. Richards, of the U.S. Navy, to *The Condor* (January-February, 1909). Dr. Richards was surgeon on the battleship *Kansas*, that visited Australia with the American

fleet last year. Crossing the Great Australian Bight, the doctor enjoyed special opportunities of observing the Albatrosses, several of which he easily identified. "Once well at sea," he writes, "Albatrosses became conspicuous, both by their size and numbers overshadowing all other birds." Dr. Richards concludes with the following remarks:—"I am inclined to believe that among ornithologists unaccustomed to ocean voyaging, a mistaken estimate is apt to prevail as to the relative number of pelagic birds: I say 'relative,' for of course the actual total is enormous. Such a false impression would naturally arise from several causes, the principal one, no doubt, being a failure to realize the immensity of the seas, covering, as they do, three-fourths of the earth's surface: an incredible number of birds may be scattered over this vast area and yet appear, as is actually the case, few and far between. Then, too, these birds breed in colonies, and are best known to us when assembled in apparently countless hordes. While it is true that in making a coastwise trip, say from San Francisco to San Diego, or New York to New Orleans, one would, during certain seasons of the year, have plenty of feathered followers, few of the birds observed would be 'pelagic,' and a voyage over the high seas in similar latitudes would probably be comparatively lonely; indeed, I can confidently assert that except in high latitudes, and especially those of the southern hemisphere, one may sail not only hundreds but *thousands* of miles and not see a bird for days at a time. The recent voyage of the *Kansas*—with the other fifteen battleships of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet—from San Francisco to Japan, *via* Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, and the Philippine Islands, may serve as an illustration. The total distance covered was approximately 12,000 miles, but except from lat. 32 S., long. 178 E. (some two hundred miles north of New Zealand) to lat. 30 S., long. 112 E. (off the west coast of Australia) I did not observe, all told, as many as 100 pelagic birds. Doubtless many escaped notice, but I was much of the time on deck myself, and my shipmates, knowing my hobby, were always keen to send me word whenever any 'strange birds' were about. I think, therefore, such errors were reasonably few and quite insufficient to materially affect the general conclusions expressed herein."

A DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF BIRDS NATIVE TO VICTORIA.—This list was noticed in *The Emu* (viii., p. 224) as a supplement to *The Education Gazette and Teacher's Aid*. The list has been slightly altered by the compiler (Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc.), and has been issued in an acceptable pocket form. Copies may be had on application to the Government Printer, Melbourne; price 6d—the cheapest piece of ornithological literature ever published.