

From Magazines, &c.

Mr. Robert Hall, C.M.Z.S., Hobart, has contributed an interesting and technical article (with figures) to the Royal Society of Tasmania on "The Feather-Tracts of *Sphenura broadbenti* (M'Coy)."

The author deals with specimens kindly forwarded by Mr. Geo. Graham, Otway Forest, Victoria—(a) approximately four days old, (b) seven days later, with eyes open, (c) nearly ready to leave the nest, and (d) an adult male. Mr. Hall regards the *Sphenura* as a disappearing genus. The species under consideration, however, seems to hold its own in its littoral habitats from the region of Geelong to well over the South Australian border.

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Ducks Nesting in Rabbit-Burrows.—Mr. James Drummond, F.L.S., in the *Lyttelton Times*, of New Zealand, for 11th November, 1911, writes of Paradise Ducks using unoccupied rabbit-burrows as nests. On the Waitangi Station, South Canterbury, he states, three instances are reported to have occurred:—"All the nests were fairly close to the homestead. One was near the woolshed, and, as it was conveniently situated, it was frequently visited. The parent birds, both duck and drake, sat very tight, and did not seem to resent the presence of onlookers, even when approached for a close view. The owners of that nest, probably, are a pair which frequent the homestead and are acquainted with their visitors, and know whom they can trust. The burrows in use are on rising ground, and the nests were near enough to the mouth to allow the tenants a glimpse of the outside world. 'I found a good many nests of the Paradise Duck,' Mr. J. W. Murdock says, 'and they were all, with one exception, in somewhat inaccessible places. Some were on rough and steep mountain faces, far from water. One was high up on a cliff overhanging a river, another was about 20 feet above the ground in an old birch-tree that had been partly burnt down. The nest was in a hollow scooped out by the fire. The drake takes his turn at sitting on the eggs. It is a solemn business with him. Perhaps it is his colouring that makes him seem so serious, so different from the gay and light-hearted duck. But for all that I do not think he is trusted to turn the eggs. The duck attends to that work, which can be noted by observing her pretty white head quite discoloured—greasy, in fact—from turning the eggs over amongst the down. The nests are marvels of warmth. The eggs lie upon and are covered with soft grey down, of which the mother bird has robbed herself.'"

To Sell.—"Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," by A. J. Campbell, is out of print, and copies are becoming exceedingly scarce. A secondhand copy (in one volume), in good order, may be had for two guineas. Apply Editors, *The Emu*.