

flight. There were also several fertile eggs. The birds do not stray at all, and, though they are in a wood which is on the extreme outside of the park, I have never seen a single bird outside, nor have I seen them in any other part of the park, though, as you know, they have their complete liberty. We can only catch them by feeding them into traps. We do not feed the chickens until they come to the ordinary winter feeding for Brush-Turkeys and Pheasants together."

---

### From Magazines, &c.

**Montebello Islands.**—*The Geographical Journal* (July, 1913) contains a general and interesting article on these islands by P. D. Montague. The islands are off the coast of North-West Australia, and about 40 miles from the nearest mainland. Mr. Montague had in his party the late Mr. L. Burns, whose obituary notice appears in this issue. Mr. Montague remarks that ten small land-birds are found in the group, the majority of which agree with types from the north-west mainland, but two are sub-species not elsewhere recorded—one a very pale form of *Anthus*, named *A. montebelli*,\* the other a dark sub-species of *Eremiornis*, called *E. assimilis*.\* Of the birds of prey, the Osprey (*Pandion*) was the most abundant. Two pairs of Sea-Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) were also found nesting, and a few pairs of the White-headed Sea-Eagle (*Haliastur leucosternus*). The latter species fed largely on rock-crabs. The mangroves were much frequented by Brown Honey-eaters (*Stigmatops*) and a species of Ground-Dove (*Geopelia*), which roosted in the thick trees during night and from the heat of the day. The nesting season varies according to the rains, said to be usually January or February; but after a shower in July a small percentage of these birds began breeding.

---

### Correspondence.

THE R.A.O.U. "CHECK-LIST."

To the Editors of "*The Emu*."

SIRS,—I am sorry that Mr. A. W. Milligan should have drawn personalities into his defence of the "Check-list." This should not have been done, because I feel quite sure that all the members of the "Check-list" Committee, except Mr. Milligan, know me well enough not to credit me with any wish to be personal. I contend that, in spite of Mr. Milligan's argument, the Tasmanian session did not represent the ornithologists of Australia. The majority at every session is composed of trippers, or, if you like, call them "bird-lovers." How could anyone, who thought for a moment, adopt the list when they had not the slightest knowledge of what it contained?

\* Montague, *Austral Avian Record*, vol. i., p. 181.

The steamer which conveyed Mr. Milligan to Tasmania arrived very late, and that gentleman had time only to go very hurriedly through the list, put it to the meeting, and dash off to catch the boat again for Melbourne. No one had a chance to grasp the outline even of the "Check-list." Mr. Milligan says that there was only one dissentient, by which he means myself. I must say that I feel very proud to have moved that more time be given for consideration, and that the list be referred back to the committee. I was pleased that Dr. G. Horne, of Melbourne, supported me in this, because I spoke on behalf of progressive ornithology.

In reference to *Zosterops halmaturina*, I will mix King Island birds with specimens from the mainland, and will defy any ornithologist, even Mr. Milligan, to pick them out. The *Petroica campbelli* can be manufactured out of any *P. leggii* when skinning the bird simply by stretching the skin under the white frontal spot. This all goes to show that there was not nearly enough material at the disposal of the "Check-list" Committee to enable it to form a fair idea of the work. Mr. Milligan told us at the session all about the American "Check-list" falling to pieces through trinomials, or, in his words, "trinomials were pulling it to pieces with their own weight," and that Mr. Ogilvie Grant, of England, would not use trinomials. How strange that the American ornithologists are stronger than ever on trinomials, and the latest works of Mr. Ogilvie Grant plainly show that he is using trinomials!

In conclusion, I say that Mr. Milligan is entirely wrong in stating that I attacked the "Check-list" Committee. If he thinks that I have attacked him, he has no right to speak for the other members. I feel that I have a perfect right to criticise the "Check-list." I say again that the R.A.O.U. "Check-list" will not be considered scientific by the ornithological world.—I am, &c.,

Quorn (S.A.), 30/7/13.

S. A. WHITE.

---

IS THE MAGPIE A SONGSTER?

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—Dr. Bancroft wants to know "whether many members" of our Union agree with Dr. J. A. Leach in (*inter alia*) his remarks upon the Magpie. Dr. Leach says, "That glorious songster the Magpie"; Dr. Bancroft says, "The Magpie is not a songster at all." Well, I, for one, am wholly in agreement with Dr. Leach. There is a very old saying, "*De gustibus non disputandum*," and if Dr. Bancroft considers that the lovely morning carol of the Magpie is "a harsh, guttural sound," all I can say is that I am sorry for him. In my garden there are several large pines and elms, in which a colony of Magpies roosts, and the music of these birds in the morning is a never-failing source of delight to me. Possibly the Magpies in Queensland do not carol; I have had no experience of them. Possibly, again, Dr. Bancroft has no ear

for music. I know a barbarian who shot his Magpies on account of "the noise they made in the morning." He would perhaps have delighted in Dr. Bancroft. The voice of the Magpie is music to me, and to hundreds of others, and we decline, in spite of Dr. Bancroft's opinion, to consider it a "harsh, guttural sound."

—I am, &c.,

FRANK S. SMITH.

Noorat, Victoria.

---

### About Members.

CAPTAIN S. A. White and Mrs. White, of Adelaide, have started on a trip to Central Australia, and will be absent, probably, for several months. In a letter to a Melbourne member of the R.A.O.U., written before setting out, Captain White stated:—"We will make for Macumba, with the object of visiting some fine bores, where birds may have collected. Next, we will proceed to Dalhousie Springs. From the Springs we will move on to the Finke River, and follow its course into the Macdonnell Ranges, travel along the southern side of the ranges, making trips into the heart of the mountains where gorges will permit of a passage. After reaching Alice Springs we propose to push on further east, exploring the range for all kinds of animal life as we travel. We will work out the extreme eastern end of the Macdonnell Ranges, which is new country, return to the Hall River, run it down into the unknown, and find our way back to Oodnadatta through country which looks fairly blank on the map. This means, of course, 2,000 miles of travel over rough country."

---

### Obituary Notice.

NEWS was received in May of the accidental death by drowning of Mr. Lachlan M'Kinnon Burns, at the Forrest River, near Wyndham, Western Australia. Mr. Burns, although only 24 years of age, had done valuable scientific work in different parts of the western State. A native of Gippsland, he went to Western Australia when a lad. Soon after leaving school Mr. Burns was engaged on survey camps for some time. Two years ago, when Mr. C. Price Conigrave organized his exploring expedition to traverse the extreme northern part of Western Australia, Mr. Burns joined as second in command. Through the efforts of Messrs. Conigrave and Burns a valuable collection of the fauna and flora of that part of the continent was made. Shortly after the return of the expedition, Mr. Burns accompanied a party to the Montebello Islands, off the Western Australian coast, where interesting zoological finds were made for the Royal Society of London.

In the early part of May, 1913, Mr. Burns volunteered to join an Anglican party that was establishing an aboriginal mission station at the Forrest River. Mr. Burns had obtained an intimate