

paper, I might state that it is possible to have sub-species of migratory birds, and in my "Birds of Australia" I will give details of an extraordinary case with regard to *Micropus pacificus*, for the benefit of Australian workers. Under *Merops*, in that work, I will also fully discuss the above particular item, and I would refer those interested to that place. In justice to myself, I would remark that some of the items Messrs. Campbell and Barnard refer to have been already dealt with in my larger undertaking, and these authors have not considered my latest and most particular studies.

As above stated, I have no wish to belittle the valuable paper presented by Messrs. Campbell and Barnard, but I would have been more pleased had they confined themselves to the field work, in which they were past masters, rather than dabble in a study so foreign to their efforts and so unknown in its usages. I have continually bemoaned the lack of full field observations, and now complain of an apparently lost opportunity, while they have added little to the nomenclatural side, though fully confirming the majority of the sub-specific distinctions bestowed upon the birds of the district they collect in. Many more "collecting and observing excursions to the region" are still necessary, and the "last judge" will not appear for centuries, so that we need not think yet of the "best judge." It only is necessary for each of us to add his iota to the best of his ability to our congenial study.—Yours, &c.,

GREGORY M. MATHEWS.

Foulis Court, Fair Oak, Hants, England.

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### The H. L. White Collection.

MR. H. L. White, as a boy, when at Goulburn, New South Wales, possessed a small egg collection of side-blown specimens. Some seventeen years ago he set about forming a scientific collection of eggs and nesting information pertaining to every known Australian bird. Some of the results and successes of the enterprise are mentioned in *The Emu*, vol. xiii., pp. 65-74 (with three coloured plates), under the title "A Commonwealth Collection." It was easy enough, with the assistance of enthusiastic friends, to procure the commoner kinds, but to obtain the rarer sorts, and to discover the eggs of birds specimens of which were still *desiderata*, Mr. White spared neither pains nor expense; consequently, he had such reliable collectors in the field and forest as Messrs. S. W. Jackson (New South Wales), H. G. Barnard (Queensland), L. G. Chandler (Victoria), F. L. Whitlock (Western Australia), G. F. Hill (North-West Australia), W. M'Lennan (Northern Territory), and others.

When the egg-collecting was proceeding apace, and nearly all species were represented, Mr. White determined to utilize his collectors at the birds themselves. Since the inception of the R.A.O.U.

ornithology had made immense and rapid strides. With research, new forms, so-called "sub-species," were being multiplied and designated; more material was needed to settle many scientific points. Mr. White, in a very practical and patriotic manner, threw himself into the breach, and undertook to procure sufficient material to enable ornithologists in this country to settle their own disputes, instead of these differences being settled in Europe, America, or, forsooth, in Japan. The late Professor Alfred Newton, of Cambridge, once, in writing to one of our members, said that disputed points about purely Australian birds should be settled in Australia, and by Australians themselves—for the obvious reason, no doubt, that Australians were on the spot, with information and material at first hand.

In order not to destroy unnecessarily beautiful bird-life, Mr. White commenced by acquiring a few small, carefully made private skin collections, notably those of Messrs. Lancelot Harrison, Harold Blakeney, Robert Grant, A. G. Campbell, and others. These, with the consignments from the field-workers, soon built up an important and valuable collection. Especially important were the various specimens collected by Mr. W. M'Lellan near the Gilbert "type locality," Northern Territory. It will be recollected that the original Gouldian-Gilbert types went to America. In an honorary capacity Captain S. A. White has also added to the H. L. White collection.

This splendid and unique mass of material Mr. White has generously and unostentatiously donated to the nation, to be housed in the National Museum, Melbourne. As the headquarters of the R.A.O.U. for the time being are Melbourne, the donor's primary idea was to have the material in such a place that it could be available for ready reference by members of the Union, and, of course, for ornithological students in general. And not the least encouraging is Mr. White's magnanimous announcement—"I hope to add materially to the collection from time to time."

The majority of the skins have been excellently prepared, those made by Mr. Robert Grant especially being object lessons in the taxidermist's art. In the general collection there is affixed to every skin a convenient-sized label showing name of collector, locality, date, sex, measurements, &c. This is preferable to the old-fashioned method of numbering, with the registration of details in a separate book. Nevertheless, there is a complete "Key" to the collection, and any specimen (which bears its own history) can be referred to at a minute's notice. The "Key to H. L. White Collection"—the work of Mr. S. W. Jackson—for carefulness and neatness could not be surpassed.

On Friday, 12th October, 1917, a large company of ornithologists and naturalists accepted the invitation of Sir Baldwin Spencer, Director of the National Museum, Melbourne, to view officially this priceless collection. Those present saw for the first time many of the rare birds of Australia. Light refreshments terminated a memorable evening.



H. L. White, Esq., M.B.O.U., Life Member R.A.O.U. —  
(Donor of the £1,000 and other handsome gifts to the R.A.O.U.)

PHOTO. BY CROWN STUDIOS, SYDNEY.

## The Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

### ITEMS FROM SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT, 1916-17.

THE Council has again unanimously decided to postpone the annual congress and camp-out fixed for Queensland, as they consider that all our energies and spare cash should go towards helping our country in its time of need.

Since the last annual meeting the Council has rented a room at No. 2 Temple Court, Collins-street, Melbourne, where it can hold its monthly and other meetings, and where the library of the Union, and the cabinets for bird-skins, eggs, &c., have been placed. The room has been furnished, the tables, chairs, cabinet for bird-skins, &c., having been presented by various members.

During the year 38 new members have been enrolled, 11 have resigned, and we have lost 4 members through death—Mr. E. A. Petherick, C.M.G., Mr. O. W. Rosenhain, Mr. D. B. Fry, and Mr. G. P. Kay, the two latter having been killed at the front whilst bravely fighting for their country. Our president, Captain Macgillivray, has also enlisted, and is now absent in Europe.

A splendid collection of birds' eggs has been most generously presented to the Union by Mr. H. L. White, of Belltrees, Scone, N.S.W. It consists of 365 species, with full data, and these are now being placed in the cabinet in the Union's room. A complete list will be published shortly in *The Emu*, and the Council trusts that members will endeavour to fill the gaps as they are able. The Council has appointed Mr. A. C. Stone as curator of the egg collection, assisted by Mr. F. E. Howe and Mr. J. A. Ross. Mr. White has also generously presented to the Union over 100 bird-skins, as well as a complete set of Gould's magnificent "Birds of Australia." Mr. T. P. Austin also presented a valuable collection of 212 sets of eggs not represented in Mr. White's gift. Mr. Bellington added 30 sets, Mr. Stone 20, Mr. Howe 10, and Miss Fletcher 6 sets of eggs.

A collection of over 2,000 bird-skins was purchased by the Council, and these have now been placed in a cabinet, and are a great help at the conversaziones. A catalogue will be published later on. Mr. A. J. Campbell has kindly consented to act as curator of the skins, assisted by Mr. F. E. Wilson and Dr. Brooke Nicholls. Mr. White kindly presented his duplicate skins.

The splendid reference collection of Australian birds' skins belonging to Mr. H. L. White, and numbering over 5,000 specimens, has been generously presented by that gentleman to the National Museum, Melbourne, and can now be inspected at any time. The Union can hold a monthly meeting in the bird room of the Museum.

During the past year the Union has been registered under the *Companies Act* 1915 of Victoria as a company, limited by guarantee, and not having a capital divided into shares, and without the addition of the word "Limited," but with the addition of the word "Royal" to its name. This was found to

## RECEIPTS AND

For Year ended

RECEIPTS.				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Balance	...	...	...	...	...	...	85	1	9
" Subscriptions—Arrears	...	...	...	53	7	0			
" " Current	...	...	...	147	5	6			
" " Advance	...	...	...	12	15	0			
							213	7	6
" Sales— <i>The Emu</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	18	7	0
" Donation, £10; Blocks, £5 os. 8d.; Exchange, £1 18s. 6d.;									
Interest, 19s. 11d.; Special, £1 6s.; Postage, 4s. 9d.;									
Covers, £2 15s.	...	...	...	...	...	...	22	4	10
" Coloured Fund—Donations, &c.	...	...	...	...	...	...	54	19	3
" Trust Fund—Interest	...	...	...	45	0	0			
" " Donations	...	...	...	4	6	0			
							49	6	0
							£443	6	4

## ASSETS AND

At 30th

ASSETS.				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Savings Bank—Cr. Balance	...	...	...	...	...	...	34	13	5
Subscriptions in Arrears	...	...	...	30	0	0			
Less in advance	...	...	...	26	10	0			
							3	10	0
Library and Furniture	...	...	...	...	...	...	395	0	0
<i>The Emu</i> in Stock, say	...	...	...	...	...	...	200	0	0
Illustration Blocks	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	0	0
Tent, Material, Punch, and Register	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	17	6
Commonwealth War Bond (Trust Account)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,000	0	0
							£1,657	0	11

Z. GRAY, L.C.A., *Hon. Treasurer.*

MELBOURNE, 1st July, 1917.

The President, Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, Melbourne.

Sir,—I have completed the audit of the books and accounts of the  
 The books and accounts were presented in excellent order by the  
 Messrs. Hedderwick, Fookes and Alston have stated to me that the  
 pending completion of the arrangements for it to be taken over by the

## EXPENDITURE

30th June, 1917.

		EXPENDITURE.					
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By	<i>The Emu</i> , vol. xvi.—Printing, &c. ...	183	8	8			
"	" vol. xvi.—Blocks ...	42	17	4			
"	" vol. xvi.—Coloured Plates ...	30	5	6			
"	" vol. xvi.—Articles Association ...	9	7	0			
					265	18	6
"	Licence Fee ...				5	5	0
"	Postage, £7 8s. 5d.; Stationery, £6 18s.; Election, £3 os. 6d.; Lecture, £3 7s.; Library, £3 1s. 3d.; Covers, £3 3s. 2d.; Insurance, £2 9s. 1d.; Exchange, £1 18s. 9d.; Commission, £1 5s. 2d. ...				32	11	4
"	Room—Furnishing, &c., £17 7s.; Sundries, 17s. 2d.; Skins, £13 2s. 6d. ...				31	6	8
"	" Gas, 12s. 7d.; Cleaning, 8s; Fire, 1s.; Freight, 13s. 10d. ...				1	15	5
"	" (Trust Account)—Rent, £32 10s.; Bookcase, £25 18s.; Chairs, £13 8s. ...				71	16	0
					408	12	11
"	Savings Bank—Cr. Balance ...				34	13	5
					£443	6	4

## LIABILITIES

June, 1917.

		LIABILITIES.					
		<i>Nil.</i>					
By	Balance ...				£	s.	d.
					1,657	0	11
					£1,657	0	11

42 TEMPLE COURT, COLINS-STREET,  
MELBOURNE, 14th August, 1917.

Union for the year ended 30th June, 1917.

treasurer, Mr. Z. Gray, and I have certified them correct.

Trust Account War Loan Bond for £1,000 was held by them on 30th June,  
trustees.—Your truly,JAMES BARR, A.I.A.V., A.C.P.A., *Hon. Auditor.*