

## Stray Feathers

**The Sunbird in Mackay.**—I am glad to be able to report that the pretty little Sunbird (*Cyrtostomus frenatus*) is again in our district. It was completely wiped out by the cyclone of 1918. There are very few here yet, but I was pleased to find a pair in my paddock a few weeks ago, and I am in hopes that they will breed up again.—E. M. CORNWALL, R.A.O.U., Mackay, Q.

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**Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** (*Cacatua galerita*) are just bringing their fledglings about now. We spent nearly half an hour two evenings ago watching the old bird teaching two young ones to get about from branch to branch in a tall dead tree. The time of nesting of these birds depends a good deal on the season. The bloodwood trees have had an exceptional wealth of blossom in this district this year, and therefore the birds and bees have had a glorious time.—Mrs. A. BLACK, Pajingo Station, Charters Towers, Q 10/4/21.

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**Bird Study by Aeroplane.**—There is one good aspect of bird study which I find is neglected in Australia, and as I had something to do with it in England, I suggest it to you as a field worth exploring. That is the study of migration by aeroplane. The best method of doing this is to get in touch with all Government aerodromes, enlist their sympathy so that every pilot is asked to record what birds he meets by day or night, and at what height they are seen, and their general direction of flight. The pilots soon become keen, and even learn to distinguish different birds beforehand, so as to make their job more useful. In this way was found at home how many great flocks of birds pass by day too high to be visible, and even by night enormous numbers were identified. The points the pilots want to note are as stated, with the addition of speed, for which the air speed of the aeroplane should be noted, whether the birds overtake or are passed by the machine, and by about what speed. It should show I think, that about 16,000 feet is the average height of migration. If the suggestion attracts you, and you take it up, I would dearly like to hear from you the facts. My own experience here is confined to being investigated by a Wedge-tailed Eagle at 1000 feet, it seemed annoyed at our presence, and willing to fight; but was able to glide past us without a single wing beat, and we were making 82 miles an hour at the time. But this is not migration, and merely an incident. On the same flight I noticed how we scared the Magpies whenever we came low, making them scurry away with much noise (heard by those on the ground).—

A. J. R. WILSON, Raywood, Vic.

**Cuckoo's Eggs.**—Some interesting notes made on a Cuckoo during the deposition of its eggs appear in *British Birds* for March. The author, Mr. Edgar Chance, kept a single female under observation throughout the whole of this time, which lasted until no fewer than twenty-one eggs had been laid. All were dropped, at intervals of forty-eight hours, into the nests of Meadow Pipits, save in the case of the fifteenth egg, for which the nest of a Tree-Pipit was selected, there being no Meadow-Pipit's nest available. Deposition always took place in the afternoon, and an egg was never left in a nest until after the first egg of the foster-parents had been laid. On each occasion, after dropping her egg into the nest, she removed one of her dupe's eggs, and this was either swallowed at the nest-side or borne away and disposed of. Apparently only when forced by dire necessity will she leave an egg in a nest in which incubation has commenced.—From *Nature*, No. 2685, Vol. 107.

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## State Secretaries' Reports

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### QUEENSLAND.

As was forecast in last report, the handsome Native Companion (*Antigone*) has been transferred from the list of partially protected birds, and given sanctuary for the whole year throughout Queensland. This action was taken by the Government chiefly on the initiative of the Central Queensland Native Birds' Protection Association, a body whose activities could be emulated with advantage in country centres throughout Australia.

It is a custom of this Rockhampton association to conduct an essay competition on birds in the schools of the district each year. This will be repeated during the present year, but the association has gone one better by offering a prize of five guineas for the best essay on "The Value of Birds to the Man on the Land," the competition to be open to "all-comers" throughout the State. Another very useful custom of the association is the periodical advertising in the press of information relating to close and open seasons for birds. They have done this for the past five or six years, and so weakened the excuse of poachers, who say they "didn't know it was close season." The last successful prosecution conducted by the association (through Mr. P. V. Maloney, hon. secretary) was against a man who shot two Bustards (Plain Turkeys) two days before the season opened. The Police Magistrate, in inflicting a fine of £3, said it was quite common knowledge that the association had been making great efforts for years past to protect birds.