

**Nests of the Gang-gang Cockatoo.**—In Mr. Howe's article on the Gang-gang Cockatoo in the July number of *The Emu* there are one of two statements that are not quite correct. Mr. Howe quotes me as saying the birds invariably breed in a hollow, dead spout. This is not correct, as of the three nests I have noted two were in such a position and one was in the main barrel of the tree. The first nest contained one egg, and was found on 2/11/1922; the second, with two young birds just hatched, was found on 30/11/1922, and the third with two young about a week old on 7/12/1922. With regard to the presence of the Glossy Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) in the Casterton district, there is a Black Cockatoo with a red-tail here, but I have never taken a specimen, and it may turn out to be the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*C. banksi*). I hope to spend some time with the Gang-gangs this spring, and later to obtain a specimen of the local "Red-tail." If successful I shall write up my notes for *The Emu*.—C. E. SIMSON, R.A.O.U., "Roseneath," Casterton, Vic.

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**Bell Miners in the Casterton District, Western Victoria.**—

On the 7th May of this year I noted a flock of perhaps 40 or 50 Bell Miners (*Manorhina melanophrys*) on the Glenelg River, about eighteen miles north of Casterton. They appeared to be feeding amongst the leaves of the red gums, and were travelling in a south-westerly direction. This must be a western record for the birds, and it will be interesting to see if they establish themselves in the suitable country that starts forty miles further down the Glenelg River.—C. E. SIMSON, R.A.O.U., "Roseneath," Casterton, Vic.

## Reviews

[A List of British Birds prepared by the Special Committee Appointed by the British Ornithologists' Union, and published by the authority of the Union.]

[*Systema Avium Ethiopicarum*.—A systematic List of the Birds of the Ethiopian Region. By William Lutley Sclater, M.A., M.B.O.U. Prepared in conjunction with Special Committees of the British and American Ornithologists' Unions. Part I., pp. 1-304. Published 30th April, 1924. Price, £1/1/-.]

A hearty welcome was given to these very important works which reached Australia practically together.

Curiosity ran high as to the standards of the *Systema Avium* (A.O.U. and B.O.U.) committees. It must be confessed that disappointment was keen, as it was realised that there was still much to be done before a uniform list of birds on uniform standards could be prepared.

Mr. Sclater is to be congratulated on the fine work he has done in dealing so effectively with the birds of so important a

region as the Ethiopian Region. Though he refers to the A.O.U. and B.O.U. committees, yet such different names are used in these lists for so many birds common to the two lists that it is evident that much investigation and consultation will be necessary before the same name can be used for the same bird on both lists. (Australians when beginning the work of preparing the Second Edition of the Official Check-list made the use of the same name for the same bird their basic principle.) The classification of the two lists under notice, too, differs. Sclater adopts the classification used by Mr. A. H. Evans in the volume on *Birds* in the Cambridge Natural series; while the B.O.U. list is based on the classification of the *Handlist of Birds*, by the late Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, though beginning with the highly-developed Crows and ending with the more primitive Quails—the reverse of Dr. Sharpe's arrangement which was used in the Official Check-list of the R.A.O.U.

Though Mr. Sclater in the B.O.U. list apparently accepted one genus for the Sandpiper group of wading birds, yet in his African list he used several genera for the same birds.

The R.A.O.U. Check-list committee in particular found profit and interest in the study of these valuable lists. They feel encouraged to publish their list at an early date as a contribution that will probably help forward the search for finality of name and uniformity of standard.

The R.A.O.U. designedly adopted a "lumping" standard as regards genera. The B.O.U. List confirms that by placing the White Egrets in one genus. Likewise the White-browed Albatross—a casual on the B.O.U. List—is placed in the typical genus *Diomedea*. The lumping of the Sandpipers in one genus by the B.O.U. committee indicates a growing and spreading desire for still larger genera—a demand also strongly expressed in America. Both lists group the Kestrel with the typical Falcons; our Brown Hawk being intermediate would necessarily be included in the genus *Falco*.

It is noted that both lists adopt the practice of the American ornithologists of considering such generic names as differ only in gender endings as being identical. Thus *Erismatura* is used instead of *Oxyura* (not *Oxyurus*) on the African list. Both A.O.U. and B.O.U. committees have adopted that limited phase of one-letterism. Some ornithologists would go further and discard *Limicula* because of a prior *Limicola*, and *Meliphaga* because of a prior *Melophagus*.

It is noteworthy that both lists follow the International Code, though Sclater adds, "as nearly as possible, but there is a certain amount of ambiguity in the application of some of the rules which leaves the correct name for certain species still in doubt." The R.A.O.U. has likewise a few doubtful cases.

Australians regret that no list that has appeared recently supports the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in trying to stabilise nomenclature by accepting certain well-

known generic names. In opinion 67 the International Committee finally accepted *Gallinago* with 101 other generic names. Both the B.O.U. and Sclater's list discard *Gallinago* in favour of the prior name *Capella* for the widely-spread Snipe. It was at one time hoped that the *Systema Avium* when finally prepared and issued as an authoritative list would be the final word in ornithological nomenclature. That day is not yet in sight. Meanwhile thanks and congratulations are offered to Mr. W. L. Sclater and to the B.O.U. Committee (Mr. A. H. Evans, Dr. E. J. O. Harbert, Mr. Tom Iredale, The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, Mr. G. M. Mathews, Mr. W. L. Sclater, Dr. N. F. Ticehurst, Mr. H. F. Witherby and Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker, Hon. Secretary of the Committee) for securing a distinct advance in the naming of the world's birds.

### R.A.O.U. Conference

ROCKHAMPTON — OCTOBER, 1924.

Leave Melbourne not later than 11th October.

13th—Leave Brisbane per train, 9.30 p.m.

14th—Party arrives at Rockhampton, 3.45 p.m.

Evening—Civic reception.

15th—10 a.m.: Conference opens.

(His Excellency Sir Matthew Nathan in the chair.)

Presidential Address, Dr. J. A. Leach: "Naming Australian Birds."

2 p.m.: Outing—Lakes Creek.

8 p.m.: Lecture—"Birds of Australia," Dr. J. A. Leach.

16th—10 a.m.: Conference continues.

"Birds Observed during the past 50 years at Coomoolabaroo, Duaringa," by C. A. Barnard.

"Birds Likely to be Met in Rockhampton District," Mr. W. B. Alexander, M.A., C.F.A.O.U.

"Bird Notes from Willis Island," by J. Hogan, Meteorological Observer (communicated by A. J. Campbell, C.M.B.O.U.)

2 p.m.: Visit Botanic Gardens. Guests of his Worship the Mayor.

Lecture—"Birds in the Field," Capt. S. A. White. Park Avenue State School.

8 p.m.: Lecture—"Early Australian Bird Pictures," Mr. W. B. Alexander.

17th—10 a.m.: Visit to Gracemere. Guests of R. S. Archer, Esq.

2 p.m.: Conference continues.

8 p.m.: Lecture—"Economic Value of Birds," Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U., at the School of Arts.

18th—9 a.m.: Visit Olsen's Caves (all day trip).

19th—All day Trip on Fitzroy River.