

pointed. Rails are extremely timid, and if a nest is inspected frequently it will suddenly be abandoned, with no trace left of the eggs. When disturbed, the mother Rail will strut around with its wings dragging on the ground, after the manner of a broody hen. When hatched, the chicks are quite black and, I think, leave the nest immediately and follow their parents. The young Rails can run very fast for their size, and, in fact, appear to be nearly all legs. Rails are very fond of Tern eggs, and also account for a large number of young Terns. I have counted over 50 dead young Sooty Terns at one Rail's nest.

The Lyrebird on the Air

Several letters and notes have been received in connection with the broadcasting of the vocal talents of the Lyrebird, a matter that caused considerable comment, not only amongst bird-lovers, but generally. The following notes from Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales are indicative of the widespread interest in the broadcasting and the popularity that subjects of this nature are capable of attaining:—

Lyrebird's Mimicry Recorded.—Considerable publicity was given the Lyrebird in Victoria during its nesting season this year. Of particular interest were a broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Company in June and July, and a sound film which was made by Australian Sound Films in conjunction with Mr. R. T. Littlejohns, R.A.O.U., of Melbourne. Associated with the broadcasting company in the transmission from a gully at Ferny Creek, in the Dandenong Ranges, were Mr. Tom Tregellas and Mr. Michael Sharland, R.A.O.U., and many listeners throughout Australia subsequently wrote to the company, congratulating it upon the success of the experiment. In the intervals when the Lyrebird was not calling, Mr. Tregellas gave an interesting talk through the microphone, describing the Lyrebird and its nesting habits. The particular bird on which the experiment was made was attracted to the microphones by means of a large mirror, in which it was able to see its reflection, and it performed so well that the transmission of its notes could hardly have been clearer if the bird had been trained to appear before a microphone in a city studio. Its mimicry was broadcast for the first time on June 28 through 3LO and 3AR Melbourne, and the transmission was repeated on July 5, when it was relayed to all States. The sound record made by Australian Sound Films was also broadcast, and was later synchronised with Mr. Littlejohns's interesting film of the Lyrebird, which was released for general exhibition in Australia. The Lyrebird is the first wild bird in

Australia to appear either in a sound film or in a broadcast.—MICHAEL SHARLAND, R.A.O.U., Melbourne (now of Sydney).

The Lyrebird Calls.—As doubtless many members of the R.A.O.U. are not familiar with what was carried out recently in Victoria in broadcasting the calling of the Lyrebird, the following notes may be of interest:—On the morning of July 5, 1931, I went by invitation to a friend's house in Devonport to "listen-in" to the notes of the Lyrebird, which were to be broadcasted from Sherbrooke in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria. The morning was clear and sunny after a sharp frost and the reception on my friend's set was excellent. The first notes came through at 10.15 a.m. and continued at intervals until 10.45 a.m., when the bird started really in earnest; for part of the time the bells of St. Paul's Cathedral were chiming and formed a musical background. During the half-hour from a quarter to eleven until a quarter past, we were treated to the calls of the Harmonious Shrike-Thrush, the Pilot-bird, White Cockatoo, Kookaburra and others which Mr. Tregellas said were the bark of the fox, the cry of a young "Mopoke" (Boobook Owl) calling for his supper, and blasting at a quarry. The most favoured notes seemed to be those of the Shrike-Thrush, and of the Kookaburra, to whose peals of wild laughter we were treated again and again. At the session towards evening, my friends heard other calls, described by Mr. Tregellas as those of the Golden Whistler, Black Cockatoo, and the roosting-call of *Menura* himself. The experiment was a distinct success; so clear were the sounds that we could imagine ourselves away in the fern-gully, in close proximity to the feathered mimic.—H. STUART DOVE, R.A.O.U., Devonport, Tasmania.

Reception in Sydney.—Mr. A. H. Chisholm, R.A.O.U., writes saying that the broadcasts were well received in Sydney. Mr. Littlejohns's sound film was also shown and afterwards heard and seen privately by His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales and family. Later the sound film was broadcast to America with prefatory remarks by Mr. Chisholm.

The Genera of Kingfishers in Eastern Australia.—Mr. A. J. Marshall, R.A.O.U., has written since the publication of his notes on the Azure Kingfisher, in the July *Emu*, stating that he did not wish to be taken as having overlooked the genera *Syma* and *Tanysiptera*, which, although they are not found *throughout* eastern Australia, occur in the north of eastern Australia, and requesting that reference be made to that fact. The substitution of "south-eastern Australia" for "eastern Australia," on page 44, would perhaps better define the position.