

Correspondence

To the Editor.

Sir,—In my article entitled "Cormorants and Fisheries" in *The Emu*, Vol. XXXI, on page 154, I show that one species of Cormorant was protected in New Zealand. The state secretary of the R.A.O.U. in New Zealand, in his annual report, which will doubtless be printed in the next issue of *The Emu*, now amplifies that by stating that six more species of Cormorants or Shags have been added to the list of protected birds, making seven species of Cormorants to which the Legislature of the Dominion of New Zealand has wisely accorded protection. This act of the Legislature is a magnificent gesture in the cause of protection.—Yours, etc.

A. MATTINGLEY.

"Koonawarra," 13 Turner Street,
South Camberwell, 22/10/31.

LYREBIRD BROADCAST.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I should like to comment on two points in the October *Emu*:—(a) The Lyrebird on the Air.—I, too, had the pleasure of listening in to the Lyrebird and to Mr. Tregellas on July 5. As a special treat to the children of the Catechism, I dismissed them early, and took them to Mr. James Gofton's wireless set in his home opposite the church. Our best mimic here is the Starling, which impersonates almost every bird which visits the rectory garden. (b) Ground Lark on Mountain.—In the report of the May meeting of the Bird Observers Club mention is made of the flushing of the Ground Lark (*Anthus australis*) on the summit of Mt. Cobbler. Twice recently I have climbed to the summit of Mt. Scott. On each occasion in the grass of the bare summit, where the corrected aneroid reading was 3,125 feet, the only bird seen was the Ground Lark.—Yours, etc.,

WALTER WALTERS.

The Rectory, Scottsdale, Tasmania.

VERNACULARS.

To the Editor.

Sir,—Under the heading of "Extension of the Known Range of the Southern Chowchilla South of Sydney," Messrs. A. J. and A. O. Elliott record in the July *Emu* the occurrence of *Orthonyx* on the Cambewarra Mountain (N.S.W.), and claim for the discovery, on the authority of an editorial footnote in *The Emu* a few years ago, a southern extension of thirty miles or so for the species. I am afraid

that, as the author of the footnote quoted, I have led the Messrs. Elliott into a slight error. A. J. North makes it quite clear that *Orthonyx* was recorded on the Cambewarra Mountain long ago, and I should have mentioned this point, instead of referring merely to "the vicinity of the Macquarie Pass." However, the latest note is interesting, in that it proves that the singular sub-tropical bird is still extant south of Sydney.

I feel a trifle guilty also in regard to the use of the name "Chowchilla" for *Orthonyx*. As the representative of Queensland on the Checklist Committee, I gave the chairman (the late Dr. Leach) a number of local names for various species, including "Chowchilla," for the Black-headed Logrunner, of northern Queensland. The sub-committee on vernaculars agreed that "Logrunner" was a vague title, but most of us thought also that "Chowchilla" was suitable for the tropical species, and would not be readily used for the Queensland-N.S.W. species, known to settlers as the "Scrub-Hen" and "Scrub-Quail." Eventually the name "Chowchilla" slipped through, more or less by accident, for both species. Personally, I have not adopted it for the southern bird, and I doubt if it will ever be freely used.

After all, though, vernaculars are largely a matter of taste and locality, and *The Emu* has never attached to them the rigidity associated with technical names. In point of fact, it is useful to print local names, some of which are more agreeable than the more or less "official" ones. Where the need for uniformity exists is in the manner of writing them. We should not have (as is the case in the Checklist) one compound word hyphenated and another written as one word, *e.g.*, "Bristle-Bird" and "Lyrebird," "Pilot-Bird" and "Whipbird." As I remember the discussion on this point, the vernacular sub-committee favoured "Lyre-Bird" being written thus (with a hyphen and two capitals), and other names similarly, but in the rush to get to print at the last moment slight confusion developed. Personally, I favour the use of the hyphen as better English, but whether it be adopted or discarded there should be uniformity.—Yours, etc.,

A. H. CHISHOLM.

Sydney.

P.S.—The Chairman of the N.S.W. Branch of the R.A.O.U. (Mr. Tom Iredale) goes further than I do in regard to a point dealt with above. Following a discussion, he wrote me as follows:—"Southern Chowchilla' is an absurd vernacular, which should be deleted and 'Logrunner' replaced. 'Logrunner' is not vague; it is a distinctive name, as Wagtail, which no one would suggest discarding."

BIRD VERSES.

To the Editor.

Sir,—I have often thought of asking you if you think it worth while publishing bird verses in *The Emu*—a few lines in each number. I am appending two extracts. Perhaps members will express their opinion on the matter.—Yours, etc.,

ETHEL COMRIE-SMITH.

Eight-Mile Plains, Brisbane.

From *THE BIRDS*.

O delicate chain over all the ages stretched,
O dumb tradition, from what far darkness fetched.
Each little architect, with its one design
Perpetual, fixed and right in stuff and line,
Each little ministrant who knows one thing,
One learned rite to celebrate the Spring.

—J. C. Squire.

WINGS.

Feather from under feather springs,
All open like a fan;
Our eyes upon their beauty dwell
And marvel at the plan
By which things made for use so rare
Are powerful and delicate and fair.

—T. Sturge Moore.

Report of Bird Observers Club

Spring being the time of flowers and birds, the Club's programme was filled to repletion. An evening of unusual interest was spent in charge of Mr. Lance Le Souef, who, quoting from an old journal of his grandfather, the late John Cotton, dated 1849, described the bird and other life in the vicinity of Yea, in those days, which were the days of John Gould also. The quaint local names, and sometimes the uncertainty of the bird referred to, provided many questions.

On September 21 Mr. David Fleay, with numerous and original lantern slides, described "Our Marsupials," introducing scarce kinds, both large and small, quite unknown to many bushmen. "Birds of Central Australia," by Mr. David Matthews, made a good evening on October 19.

Outings liberally provided with direct touch with birds and their nests in the bush, were led by Mr. Beck to Morang and to Whittlesea. At Bullengarook, however, disappointment was met with. The old man spirit of that extinct volcano became perturbed, and called up thunder and lightning. Rain fell in torrents and members had to retreat homewards.

The pinnacle of activity occurred during the R.A.O.U. Congress in Melbourne and the subsequent Camp-out in the Mallee, in which many members took part. The evening of November 16 was therefore devoted to a full account by Messrs. Bryant and Ross, illustrated by excellent slides, of that remarkable region.