The Avicultural Magazine, Vol. xiii, Nos. 3, 4 and 5. Part 5 (Jubilee number) contains "The Grass Parrakeets. Some Facts and Fictions," by Edward Boosey.

Le Gerfaut, 1934, Nos. 1-4.

Mammals of the Ruby Mountains Region of North-eastern Canada, by Adrey E. Borell and Ralph Ellis. Reprinted from *Journal of Mammalogy*, Vol. 15, No. 1. From Ralph Ellis.

Australian Science Abstracts, Vol. 14, No. 1.

The South Australian Ornithologist, Vol. xiii, Part 2.

The Wilson Bulletin, Vol. xlvii, No. 1.

The Auk, Vol. lii, No. 1.

The Birds of Nippon, Vol. i, Pt. 4, by Prince Taka-Tsukasa. See review in this part.

The Condor, Vol. xxxvii, No. 2.

Remarks on the Origins of the Ratites and Penguins, by Wm. K. Gregory, with discussion by R. C. Murphy. Reprinted from the *Proc. Linnæan Soc. of New York.*

The Ibis, Vol. v, No. 2.

Correspondence

POISON-BAITS AND WILD LIFE

To the Editor

Sir—It is a curious fact that the defenders of the poison-bait overlook the "careless human" (to give him a mild name) who is always to be found in the ranks of those who prepare and spread the poison. Beside such a man the statements and experiments of Professor Whitehead and others are, unfortunately, of little value. Even if the conclusions that are drawn are absolutely correct—and possibly that is doubtful—no amount of care will eliminate the careless human fool. I am convinced that our bird-life and other wild life will continue rapidly to vanish before the poison-cart. Through the "That's near enough" method of many persons, baits often contain a greater percentage of poison than required; and thick spreading, by dropping handfuls of the bran, leaves it in a form highly dangerous even to stock. I found one heifer dead among poisoned grasshoppers, and in the same district I heard from a reliable source of two other cows that had died during the same week.

I have evidence that birds will eat insects even when covered with Paris-green, therefore it is mere assumption to believe that birds will differentiate between poisoned and non-poisoned insects. I blew powdered Paris-green into a nest of termites, and, after a while, dozens of winged forms of the insects began to vacate the nest and crawl all over the ground, their bodies covered with the green powder. To my dismay a pair of Singing Honeyeaters that lived and

nested in my orange grove arrived and devoured the termites greedily, and would not be driven away. Needless to say the birds were missing from that day. A neighbour of mine put down bran and arsenic baits for cutworms around his tomato plants and, as a result, a pair of Yellow-tailed Thornbills that were nesting in a eucalypt nearby, were poisoned. I found both birds dead.

I was unfortunately in hospital during the grasshopper-poisoning campaign in the north-west of Victoria, but I am certain that had I been present I would have discovered poisoned birds. I think it was Mr. Kinghorn, of the Australian Museum, who stated that the economic importance of a few thousand poisoned birds was nothing compared with the value of the poison in checking the grasshoppers. My own considered opinion is that artificial methods of control on a large scale are a waste of money and time, and, if the last grasshopper campaign can be taken as a sample, absolutely useless. When poison is used, then, on account of the loss of valuable wild life, they are senseless. Weeks after the authorities had stated that they had the plague in check, I drove through a living wall of grasshoppers for fifty to eighty miles, and that was only a tiny section of the country affected. If artificial methods must be employed an oil-spray, if used in the hopper stage of the grasshopper or locust, is harmless to bird-life, and far more effective. Our insectivorous wild creatures and climatic conditions are the agencies that will effectively assist in combating such visitations as insect-plagues, and, as thinking men we should work in conjunction with such natural forces. Our wild life is vanishing through many causes, and in some places there is such a scarcity of birds that it would be difficult to secure evidence of wholesale poisoning.

Yours, etc.,

L. G. CHANDLER.

Red Cliffs, Vic.

COLOUR OF JACANA'S COMB

To the Editor

Sir—I was very pleased to read in the last issue of *The Emu* that what I asserted (Vol. xxxiv, p. 142) caused the variability in the colour of the comb of the Lotus-bird, viz., that it is a vaso-motor manifestation—such as is known in other *Aves, Reptilia,* etc.—has the support of so eminent an authority as Dr. Stresemann, of Berlin. The difficulty in determining the true colour of any bird is, of course, due to the angle of light from which the bird is viewed. Such an example we have in Humming-birds, Peacock, Rifle-bird, etc.

Referring to Dr. Stresemann's note, is there not a mistake in using the word "breeding"? Is not "brooding" meant?

Both birds take part in the breeding, one or both in the brooding. I imagine it is only a slip.

I had a specimen sent to me last month, for scientific purposes. It was a male. The reproductive organs were of large size, suggesting either (a) end of breeding season or (b) approaching the same. The stomach contained seeds and vegetable matter, and one smooth-skinned caterpillar, all of which I am endeavouring to have identified.

Yours, etc.,
E. A. D'OMBRAIN, M.B., ETC.

Sydney.
April 27, 1935.

TASMANIAN REPORT

To the Editor

Sir—I shall be grateful if you will correct a mistake that occurs in my R.A.O.U. Report for Tasmania in the January number of *The Emu*. There it is written that Dr. Wood-Jones has suggested that the Thylacine should be allowed to breed on Macquarie Island and establish itself there. The locality he mentioned to me was Betsy (or Lady Franklin's) Island, just outside the mouth of the River Derwent. Macquarie Island, in high southern latitudes, is obviously unsuited for such a purpose.

Yours, etc.,
WILLIAM L. CROWTHER.

190 Macquarie Street, Hobart.
April 1, 1935.

Two German Bird Research Stations—the Bird Observatory of the State Biological Institute in Heligoland, and the Rossittee-Kurische Nehrung Observatory of the Emperor William Society—are arranging the annual release of 160,000 ringed birds. Inscriptions and figures on the rings indicate the centre of origin. A request from the German Embassy, London, has been made through the Dominions Secretary that any persons obtaining information regarding the birds should forward reports to either of the Research Stations.

The cost of printing and producing *The Emu* has been increased, and as the continuance of the Union's projects depends on its finances, members are specially requested to pay promptly their subscriptions and arrears. The Union's financial year begins on July 1, and subscriptions become due at the *beginning* of each year, not at the end. Members please note.