

tion of bird skins in anticipation of the forms expected to be found on Eyre's Peninsula.

One of the highlights of the outings during Congress was the visit paid to the aviaries of Mr. Simon Harvey. Many species of native birds are at home in most impressive enclosures which are 100 feet in length and 12 feet high. Amongst the birds which attracted the attention and admiration of the visitors were Mallee Fowls, Crested Bell-birds, Mistletoe-birds, Golden Whistlers, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, both Brush and Common Bronzewing, Diamond and Peaceful Doves, and numerous Finches, and many Australian Parrots.

On Sunday, November 1, an all-day excursion to Buckland Park was arranged under the leadership of Mr. J. Neil McGilp and Captain S. A. White. The morning was spent wading on the margins of an extensive swamp on which large flocks of Grey Teal and Black Duck were seen. In the lignum around the shallows were Grass-birds and Blue and White Wrens. White-headed Stilts were found nesting in this locality. Later in the day the party proceeded to an area of coastal samphire nearby where two species of birds new to Victorians were found. These were the Dark Thornbill and the Spotted Scrub-Wren, the latter with nest and fledged young. Before returning to the city Mr. and Mrs. Brooks, of Buckland Park, entertained the party at afternoon tea, and prior to leaving there was the satisfaction of discovering a pair of Little Cuckoo-Shrikes commencing nesting in a eucalypt within a stone's throw of the homestead—a record for the locality.

The Adelaide Zoological Gardens were also visited on two occasions—the first at a formal luncheon following the opening of the Congress and again on an informal visit under the guidance of the Acting Director.

It is a pleasant duty to record once again appreciation and gratitude to the South Australian members, particularly Captain S. A. White for his capable organization, and to Professor J. B. Cleland for the hospitality and many kindnesses extended to interstate visitors, which made this lighter side of the Congress business in Adelaide so enjoyable.

Vocal Mimicry Amongst Birds.—Mr. A. C. Cameron's note in the October number of *The Emu* on "Vocal Mimicry amongst Birds," sent me to some of my notes of bygone field days. I do not think that I recorded this particular incident at the time. It is one of several interesting experiences of vocal mimicry that I have had. For a week during August we were camped in our little *Navahoe* as far up the Brisbane River as it was possible for our boat to go. We had anchored in a deep green pool on the southern bank of the river. The water edge was overhung with scarlet bottle-

brush in bloom. Macleay Kingfishers (*Halcyon macleayi*) darted from the branches to the green water beneath, over which blue and silver dragon flies continually hovered. On the opposite side of the river was a lantana thicket where birds spent most of the day in song.

I was certain that there was much vocal mimicry going on amongst Thrush, Whistler and Whip-bird, but until the day of leaving, I had not been able actually to see the birds at their performance—I only heard them. Then I noticed two Grey Shrike-Thrushes and a Rufous Whistler fly into a gum sapling on the opposite shore, and immediately a puzzling mimicry began. I stepped into the dinghy and rowed across the river. As I neared the other side I saw the Whistler and Thrush fly out of the tree and away; but still the mimicry went on from the same quarter. Worming my way through a belt of lantana I found myself on the edge of a cleared grassy space with a log lying across it. Dancing from end to end of the log was a Whip-bird in a high state of excitement. While I watched he mimicked the Thrush's song several times—first in a weak, quavering way as though not at all sure of the notes. Then, as if in derision, he repeated the notes in his own full rich voice. Then followed in the same way the Whistler's song, and lastly his own beautiful notes. The whole performance was amazing and had to be seen and heard to be believed.—L. M. MAYO, South Brisbane, Qld.

Petrels Blown Ashore.—A friend who occasionally sends me a nature note, wrote on September 9, 1936, that numbers of "Blue Petrels" had been cast up on the beaches the other side of Port Sorell and that some had been blown quite a distance inland. We had fierce gales with heavy rain during a great part of August and the early part of September, with heavy surf on the beaches. From my friend's description, I have no doubt that the castaways were Prions (? *Pachyptila vittata*), of which I have sometimes found an individual cast up on the Devonport beach. Neville Cayley mentions that occasionally in stormy weather numbers are found on the beaches of New South Wales. On the voyage from England via the Cape hundreds of Prions—Whalebirds, as the sailors call them—were seen skimming the waves in the Southern Ocean, and they seem able to weather the roughest gales out there. It is remarkable, therefore, that bad weather on our coasts should be so fatal to them. One can only suppose that they are driven inshore by the fierce winds, and in endeavouring to procure food in the surf are dashed against projecting rocks and reefs, with which this coast is studded.—H. STUART DOVE, Devonport, Tas., 7/10/36.