

increased each night. They commenced moaning on the second night. Odd burrows contained an egg the next morning. These eggs are much sought after by the fishermen.

It is impossible to give any estimate of the numbers of Sooty Terns and Noddies nesting on Pelsart Island. The whole area occupied would be fully twelve acres, possible more. The Noddies keep to the centre, occupying about five acres (about two acres almost exclusively).

Rat Island, which was once the principal breeding place for "Sooties" and Noddies, is now almost deserted. When the men were camped there during the 'nineties of last century scraping guano, cats were liberated to destroy the rats. The cats have now increased so greatly, and have worried the birds so much that the latter have sought fresh breeding grounds. Possibly this accounts for the large numbers seen nesting on Pelsart.

Obituary

THOS. P. AUSTIN

Thomas Phillips Austin, late of Turramurra, N.S.W., died on June 18, 1937. He had been a member of the Union since 1906 and was one of its few life members. Although possessing much field knowledge of birds, particularly from the oological point of view, Austin contributed little to *The Emu* or to any other journal. In volume VII appears an article, in two parts, dealing with birds of the Talbragar River district; there is an account of a visit to the Great Barrier Reef in the same volume; and, in volume XII, a short article entitled "Bird-Life near Home." A few papers by Austin were also published in *The Australian Zoologist*.

Austin was born on January 4, 1874, at Hamilton, Victoria. An early interest in natural history, developed as he grew older, became largely concentrated in the acquisition of a particularly complete collection of eggs. A good climber, he employed his ability in that direction not only in collecting eggs but also in the photographing of nests *in situ*. His own 8,000 acres grazing property at Cobborah, New South Wales, was thoroughly worked by Austin, but in addition he made many extensive journeys to interesting bird localities in search of material. The collection gathered together was probably second only to the H. L. White Collection. About ten years ago his collection was offered to the R.A.O.U. but, through a misunderstanding, the matter was not proceeded with. When confiscation of eggs in New South Wales, a year or so ago, was threatened, Austin's collection found its way into the Australian Museum.

The deceased is survived by a widow and daughter. A photograph appears in the *Proceedings of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales* for 1936-37.—C.E.B.