

When dealing with the subject in "The Poison Plants of Western Australia," in the *Journal of the Department of Agriculture*, 1926, the Government Botanist, Mr. C. A. Gardner, wrote: "Box Poison. Native marsupials eat the plant, and birds, particularly bronzewing pigeons, eat the seeds. Dogs and cats, however, may be poisoned through eating the entrails or bones (not the flesh) of these animals, whether they be cooked or uncooked; they have fits, become mad, biting at anyone within reach, and finally die in convulsions."

When looking through the files of some Western Australian newspapers, the writer came across the following note written by the Albany naturalist and botanist, William Webb, in the *Albany Mail* of July 28, 1885. Webb wrote: "I have just had a valuable dog poisoned by eating the breast-bone of a bronzewing pigeon. I skinned the bird for stuffing, and as it was a fine plump fellow I roasted it for my breakfast and threw all the bones in the fire excepting the breast-bone, which the dog managed to get. Ten minutes after eating it he was quite mad, running about and yelping most piteously. I caught him and poured castor oil down his throat which caused him to vomit the contents of his stomach. This, however, did not ease him, as in a quarter of an hour the poor dog died in dreadful agony. I wish you to notice this circumstance in your valuable paper for the benefit of those people who have dogs and cats they value to keep out of their way the bones of the wild pigeon. For my own part I shall be very badly in want of animal food before I eat another of these birds. I have seen dogs poisoned with strychnine, but their sufferings seemed mild compared to that caused by poisoning from the bones of the bronzewing pigeon. The birds in this locality feed almost exclusively on the seeds of the poison bush, *Gastrolobium bilobum*, and there is every reason to believe that they owe their poisonous properties to this circumstance."—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 3/5/42.

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## Reviews

**Avicultural Notes.**—In the *Avicultural Magazine*, 5th ser., vol. v, no. 2, Sydney Porter has "Notes on the *Neophema* Parrakeets," and "The Grey Struthidea." The Grass Parrakeets are so often the subject of avicultural writings that there is little of novelty to be expected, although non-avicultural birdmen usually consider that aviculturists do not exploit to the full their opportunities for observation. Mr. Porter's notes, which deal with *Neophema splendida*, *N. chrysogaster* and *N. petrophila*, are largely a recounting of Adelaide bird fanciers' gossip. The Orange-bellied parrot is said to nest "at the angle where a stem [of tea-tree] is broken off about 3 or 4 feet from the ground, the bird laying its eggs on the top of the dead stump," which does not agree with earlier accounts.

The friendliness and amusing antics of the Grey Jumper are dealt with and the hardihood of the species commented upon. Copious extracts from Mathews are included and there is a note on the method and skill of nest-building. The peculiarity of the changing colour of the iris is mentioned.—C.E.B.

**Spread of the Fulmar.**—Attention has already been drawn in these reviews (*Emu*, vol. XL, 1940, p. 255) to the work of the British Trust for Ornithology on the remarkable spread in recent times of the Fulmar petrel. The principal report on the investigation has now been issued ("The breeding distribution, history and population of the Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) in the British Isles," by James Fisher and George Waterston, *Journ. Animal Ecology*, vol. 10, no. 2, Nov., 1941, pp. 204-272). It is a noteworthy contribution to the natural history of petrels and if one point more than another is brought home to the Australian reader it is the immense importance of periodical records of distribution, abundance, etc., when it comes to studying the cyclical changes in the status of a species. Already in the Sydney area, to cite one example, we have come to regret the absence of authoritative local lists in the past which would give us some concrete information on the fluctuations of certain species. Well-prepared and frequent local lists, even from well-known areas, can be rich mines of material.—D.L.S.

**The Role of Territory in Bird Life.**—Under this title an acknowledged authority on the subject, Margaret Morse Nice, has prepared a concise critical review of the whole field of territory (*The American Midland Naturalist*, vol. 26, Nov., 1941, pp. 441-487). The local worker who desires to keep abreast of modern discoveries in this rapidly-expanding subject can have no more useful summary aid, for, apart from English and American work, Mrs. Nice has included the principal European contributions in her survey of the literature. References to further reading on special points are provided by a comprehensive bibliography of close on 400 titles. Some, of course, are only of historical interest, but three-quarters of them relate to papers published during the 1930's.—D.L.S.

**New Zealand Ornithology.**—The 70-odd members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand are zealously recording bird movements and events and reporting them in their Reports and Bulletins. Bulletin no. 1 for 1941-42 is comprised chiefly of Peter Bull's notes on movements of Red-billed Gulls and a sea-bird census. The Second Annual Report (1941) contains general notes (records and statistics) on all New Zealand species and special reports on the Silvereye, Reef Heron, Tui and Banded Dotterel. There is a record (first time in the north island) of the Hudsonian Curlew (*Limosa haemastica*).—C.E.B.

**Birds and Mallophaga.**—In *The Ibis*, 14th ser., vol. 6, no. 1, p. 94, G. H. E. Hopkins writes on "The Mallophaga as an Aid to the Classification of Birds." The parasitic Mallophaga spend their entire life on their hosts, and there are highly-specific host-relationships, lines of evolution being parallel, though not necessarily concurrent.

Harrison's principles, set out in the *Australian Zoologist*, in 1914, and his subsequent arguments of affinity between the kiwis and the rails and the absence of relationship between the former and other Ratitae are referred to. The author indicates a few complications, including a parasite-relationship between certain Procellariiformes and skuas possibly produced accidentally and established despite an environmental unlikelihood of success. Various examples of likely affinities are given, although, with the mallophaga 'prominent' as a much-neglected group, there is hardly sufficient for a substantial footing. The author considers that, as the evolution of the mallophaga has been usually slower than that of the hosts, the relationships often remain obvious, whilst those of the hosts have become obscured.—C.E.B.