

A paper by C. A. Fleming will appear in the next *Emu*. Australian members are invited to take up the matter, also, so that results might be compared.

Obituary

J. P. ROGERS

The death of the well-known collector, John Porter Rogers, occurred on July 10, 1941, in Albury, N.S.W. The information has only recently come to my knowledge. No man added more to the knowledge of the distribution of our birds, nor collected more Australian natural history specimens.

Rogers was discharged from the army on December 24, 1918, after which he managed his uncle's property and then took up land for himself. In 1934 he retired to a small holding from which he was able to ramble over the country, doing some buying for the Hume Ice works at Albury, where he helped to grade rabbits and skins. Owing to scarcity of man power, he undertook to help the company in any useful capacity. In the winter of 1941 he contracted pneumonia and died in the Albury Hospital, and is buried in the cemetery of that town. He was 68 years of age. He is survived by his widow and daughter.

I met him in Albury towards the end of 1940 and we discussed former days and his great success, little dreaming that this would be our last meeting. His name has been perpetuated in our science. For a sketch of his life, and portrait, see the *Austral Avian Record*, vol. v, no. 5, June 1, 1927.—G.M.M.

Reviews

Royal Albatross.—In a privately-printed booklet L. E. Richdale gives a popular account of this species, a lighter version of his *Emu* paper. Copies are available from the author at 2/-. In addition to the main subject matter, there is a comment on the 'mismanagement of matters concerning native birds,' and a reference to a controversy that arose, apparently, because the author chose *The Emu* in which to publish his writings, instead of adopting a parochial outlook. It is interesting to note that a critic described the R.A.O.U. as "an association of ornithologists considerably interested in collecting the skins of rare birds."—C.E.B.

Telling America about our Birds.—The Sept.-Oct., 1942, issue of the *Audubon Magazine*, vol. XLIV, no. 5, contains an article 'Birds of Australia' by Jack Jones. It might appear an obvious account to us, but to those to whom it is addressed it gives a compact outline of our birds and their ways. It introduces 'all the well-known characters'—Lyrebird and Bower-birds, Mallee-fowl and Jackass. It surveys briefly and colloquially the principal items of our ornithological largesse.

Inspired by the author's lament that Australian birds do not generally have attractive names, Roger Tory Peterson tells, in the same issue, how American birds also suffer from inapt and cumbrous titles.

On the whole he considers that Australian birds are not so badly named. Apparently everyone can realize the imperfections of his own whilst not grasping the shortcomings of the other fellows.—C.E.B.

Waterfowl in Captivity.—In 'The Ducks of New Zealand,' *Avicultural Magazine*, 5th ser., vol. VII, no. 3, p. 86, Sydney Porter deals with *Spatula rhyncotis*, *Casarca variegata* and *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus*, from the aspect of those birds in captivity. The New Zealand form of the Shoveler is considered much brighter than the Australian bird. The large numbers of larvae of mosquito and other surface-breeding insect pests that are consumed by surface-feeding ducks is stressed. The last-named species is stated to "share with the Dipper the ability to forage at the bottoms of the swiftest flowing mountain streams." The technical description of the very specialized bill is 'translated' as having "a flap of skin hanging over the tip . . . which no doubt prevents the food being swept away."

In the same number, at page 94, J. Delacour writes on 'Tree Ducks,' birds differing from other Anatidae in the short, rounded body and wings. *Dendrocygna eytoni* he considers the most handsome of the genus.

Points of interest in the account are that, contrary to what one might think, tree ducks do not generally perch, and that the rather elaborate nests are not built in tree hollows but among reeds and water plants and are not lined with down.—C.E.B.

South Australian Ornithology.—In the August, 1942, issue of the *South Australian Ornithologist*, vol. XVI, part 3, T. G. Souter concludes his 'Birds of Mid-Yorke Peninsula' and there is a note by E. F. Boehm concerning the time of change of colour of the irides of *Corvus coronoides* from bluish-grey to dark-brown.—C.E.B.

The Birds of Long Reef.—Under this title K. A. Hindwood (*Proc. Zool. Soc., N.S.W.*, 1941-42, p. 14), gives an account of this close to Sydney area where he has recorded 43 species, chiefly swamp, shore and sea birds. Of migrant birds the earliest and latest dates are given. The account is based on 75 visits extending over 10 years, but largely at weekly intervals during the year ending in February, 1942.

White-breasted petrels, presumably the Fluttering Petrel, occur off the reef in considerable numbers and it is considered probable that they are migrants from New Zealand. Similarly White-fronted Terns (*Sterna striata*) are thought to be visitors from the same locality, a small proportion only crossing the Tasman Sea. The reported taking of eggs in Tasmania in 1888 and 1897 is supplemented neither by later records or recent enquiries. The east-west movements of the Double-banded Dotterel are also worthy of closer investigation.

The Grey-tailed Tattler is recorded, though seldom, and there is a queried record of the Sanderling, a rare form in south-eastern Australia. Several photos. add interest to the account.—C.E.B.

Whitney South Sea Material.—*American Museum Novitates*, nos. 1166, 1175, 1176 and 1192 deal with various revisions and systematic notes on several groups. The first is 'Notes on the Polynesian Species of *Aptornis*,' by Ernst Mayr, the next two 'Notes on Some Non-passerine Genera,' by Dean Amadon.

These latter deal (*inter alia*) with geographical variation in *Notophaps nova-hollandiae*. Comparison of birds from all parts of the range reveal no geographical variation in colour, though there is sufficient size variation to justify recognition of two subspecies—the nominate race, and *nova* subsp. nov. collected by Macmillan in New Caledonia. Extensive material available from the Whitney Expedition has enabled Amadon to revise the work of Hartert and Peters on *Nycticorax caledonicus*. The forms *minihassae* and *caucasicus* are not recognized. In the type localities of those forms there are hybrid populations between *hilli* and the adjoining forms. 'Notes on

the Genus *Cacomantis* is prefaced by an account of the confusion regarding the names in use for the Fan-tailed and Brush Cuckoos. For the former *pyrrhophanus* is used, and *variolosus* for the latter.

No. 1192 is 'On the Fruit Pigeons of the *Ptilinopus purpuratus* Group,' by S. Dillon Ripley and Hugh Birkhead. The authors agree with Mayr that all the small fruit pigeons dealt with belong to the same group but consider the matter too complex to permit of the creation of a superspecies as suggested by him. Three groups are recognized, with the centre of distribution claimed as the Papuan region. *P. regina* appears the most closely related to the Papuan stock.—C.E.B.

Cuckoo Problems.—E. C. Stuart Baker's book of this title (H. F. & G. Witherby Ltd., Lond., pp. i-xvi + 1-207, col. and mon. pls., price 25/-), is a well-presented account of an engrossing subject. Adaptation of cuckoo eggs to agree with those of fosterers, by elimination of those contrasting most, is achieved by the fosterers deserting. Unlike eggs are also eliminated by ejection. Numerous examples are given. This connotes the ability of foster-parents to discriminate, and accounts of various experiments in proof are included.

Specific instances of adaptation in the eggs of European forms and of Indian forms of the Common Cuckoo, in the latter of which the author is enabled to draw on his own extensive personal experiences, establish that the assimilation is real. The specialization conditioned by individual cuckoos always being parasitic on the same species strengthens the assimilation. The coloured plates are marked no less by a remarkable range of variation in the eggs of individual cuckoo species than by mimicry so close that distinction is sometimes difficult. In examples outside *Cuculus canorus* a reference is made to a dearth of Australian material. The close resemblance in ground colour of the pale pink egg of *C. pallidus* to those of several fosterers (misspelt as 'Annelobia, Ptilotes, Minorhina, and Myzanthe') is commented upon. Elsewhere the dissimilarity of the olive egg of *Lamprolaima plagiatus* is grouped with the lack of adaptation of English cuckoo eggs laid in Hedge-Sparrow nests as the only contradictions of the theories. The idea of the selection of domed nests in the Australian instance, rendering simulation unnecessary, is not endorsed. It is not known whether there is any significance in the fact that it is in the section dealing with this Australian cuckoo that the following occurs—"most egg-collectors have a very unscientific desire to acquire as many different species of fosterer as possible, quite regardless as to whether this teaches us anything of value or not."

Territories are probably selected by the hens, and the females alone are assumed responsible for egg colours and types. Methods of placing the eggs in nests are discussed. Direct laying, and projection when nests cannot be entered, are the only methods accepted without question. Cuckoos whose young eject their foster-brethren or eggs are thought to be only those that have a special conformation of the back. In the non-ejecting forms the foster-brethren probably starve through being less insistent and are removed from the nests. A summary of conclusions gives 24 points considered proved and 7 yet to be definitely established.—C.E.B.

Correspondence

LAMBERT DRAWINGS, ETC.

To the Editor,

Sir,

When writing about works that one has never seen or studied, one is apt to become confused. As neither Major