

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. 1-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 Myzanthé') is commented upon. Elsewhere the dissimilarity of the olive egg of *Lamprocoptes 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

Whittell nor Dr. Serventy has seen the Watling or Lambert drawings, I should like to say that one is a copy of the other, except that there are four drawings of birds in the Lambert set not included in the Watling, as pointed out in 1923. The worker who studies one set knows the other.

The reproduction of a drawing from one set is identical with the corresponding drawing in the other.

Latham, in 1799, made some of the drawings in the Lambert set his types when, as he said, he wrote on them the names by which he wished each painting to be known and also wrote his latin diagnosis. When Strickland made his remarks he was discussing only those names given to the Lambert drawings.

In the Scientific Report of the British Graham-Land Expedition, 1934-37, vol. I, no. 2, Aug. 24, 1940, Dr. Brian Roberts says that *Oceanites oceanicus wollastoni* published in *The Emu*, vol. XXXVII, p. 141, October, 1934, is a nude name.*

That is not so: the name was given to a bird from Wollaston Island and the measurements included.

Yours, etc.,

Canberra,

GREGORY MATHEWS.

November 7, 1942.

*See 'Synonyms, Homonyms and Nomina Nuda,' by Keith Sheard, on page 177 of this part.—Ed.

PROCELLARIA GAVIA

To the Editor,

Sir,

Dr. Serventy's 'review' (*Emu*, vol. XLII, p. 127) differs somewhat from ordinary reviews in that it is nearly as long as the article reviewed. He endeavours to prove that my collaborator Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, has 'compelled' me to 'eat my words.' I object to having my very definite description of the colour of the specimens of *Reinholdia reinholdi* (*Cinathisma cyaneoleuca*, syn.) twisted to agree with Forster's *P. gavia*, which was '*supra coerulescenti-nigra*.' This can only be construed as 'blue-black,' *coerulescens* meaning dark blue. In reviewing my birds long after the 'bloom' had faded, I admitted that there were intermediate shades from blue to brown—never black. Having handled fresh examples of *Puffinus assimilis* which is a blue-black bird, I adhere to my belief that the birds I collected were definitely *not* Forster's *P. gavia*.

Yours, etc.,

28 Martin Place,
Sydney,

A. F. BASSET HULL.

November 9, 1942.

The date of publication was January 11, 1943.