

Family Charadriidae

No. 160.—*Terekia cinerea*, Terek Sandpiper, becomes *Xenus cinereus*. Although it was recognized that under the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature *Xenus* was not invalidated by the prior *Xenos*, use of the generic name *Terekia* was adopted in the *Checklist* in order to conform with British usage. See footnote on page 26. However, *Xenus* has since been generally adopted—J. L. Peters, *Check-List of Birds of the World* 2, 1934; *Hand-book of British Birds* 4, 1940; E. Mayr, *List of New Guinea Birds*, 1941.

Stray Feathers

Hybridism in Wood-Swallows.—In a recent article I gave details of a bird seen in north-western New South Wales, which was possibly a hybrid between the White-browed Wood-Swallow (*Artamus superciliosus*) and Masked Wood-Swallow (*A. personatus*)—*The Emu*, vol. 44, pp. 59-60. I further remarked that "I know of no previous mention of a hybrid of these two species."

A short time ago Mr. J. S. P. Ramsay, of Sydney, favoured me with the loan of a diary kept by his late father, Dr. E. P. Ramsay. Detailed therein under the date September 25, 1885, was a list of skins forwarded by Mr. George Barnard, of 'Coomooboolaroo,' Duaringa, Queensland. Amongst comments written by Dr. Ramsay in connection with these various skins was the following—"... also skins of a male *Artamus superciliosus* and of a female *personatus*, which had paired, and had a nest with eggs—it is to be regretted that they were not allowed to hatch them out; we might then have had a 'new species'! As these species nearly always travel together, and breed near each other, often in the same tree, it is not unlikely that they often interbreed. Nevertheless I have never found any that might be taken for hybrids among many hundreds shot at different times extending over a period of 25 years, and in the different colonies. Their range extends from southern Australia to the central parts of north Queensland. Mr. G. Barnard says the eggs 'are scarcely to be distinguished,' i.e. of the two aforementioned species. The eggs of these pair of different species so mated 'differ very slightly from' those of *A. superciliosus*."

This instance of mating between these closely-related species, apparently is repeated briefly by A. J. North in *Descriptive Catalogue of the Nests and Eggs of Birds Breeding in Australia and Tasmania*, pt. 1, 1889, p. 44. This work is also known as *Catalogue No. 12, Australian Museum, Sydney*. I am indebted to Mr. K. A. Hindwood for forwarding information on the above; also for drawing

attention to a further instance of hybridism, published in *The Emu*, vol. 8, pt. 4, April, 1909, p. 224. Mention is made therein of 'a specimen of unusual interest' exhibited by Mr. North—a hybrid adult male, *A. superciliosus* × *A. personatus*, obtained by Mr. H. Greensill Barnard, of Bimbi, Duaringa, Queensland, on September 9, 1908. Mr. Barnard came upon a flock of *A. superciliosus* nesting about five miles away from home, and among them was the hybrid, which was mated with a female of *A. superciliosus* engaged in building a nest. Plumage notes in detail are recorded. The description I obtained of the bird in north-western New South Wales is almost identical with that written of the one exhibited by Mr. North.

The information published in *The Emu* was taken from the *Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W.*, vol. XXXIII, pt. 4, March 11, 1909, p. 735, and repeated by North in *Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*, vol. 2, pt. 3, September 30, 1909, p. 257. On page 259 of the same work, North again refers to the two mated species obtained by Mr. George Barnard.—A. R. MCGILL, Arncliffe, N.S.W., 10/8/44.

Hybrid Wood-Swallows.—In the last issue of *The Emu* (vol. 44, pt. 1), in notes by A. R. McGill, p. 59, he mentions seeing a bird among a flock of Wood-Swallows (*Artamus personatus*, and *A. superciliosus*) that was evidently a hybrid. Many years ago large flocks of these birds nested on Coomooboolaroo station, Dawson River. On several occasions I noticed the two species mating, but did not see any hybrids. Some years later the late A. J. North wrote asking me to collect him a few bird skins. While doing so I came across a large flock of *A. personatus* and *A. superciliosus*. Among them I noticed a very striking male hybrid, showing very strongly the characteristics of both birds. This skin should be in the Australian Museum, Sydney. Probably the reason why more of these hybrids are not observed, is that Nature steps in and causes most of the eggs to be infertile, or, if they do hatch, the hybrids are mules.—H. GREENSILL BARNARD, Rockhampton, 13/8/44.

The Bustard.—Pictures published from time to time in the daily press and popular periodicals showing members of the Armed Services with freshly-killed Bustards (*Eupodotis australis*) intended for cooking and eating have aroused disquiet among conservationists as to the future status of the bird, particularly as there are now so many troops in areas where formerly the Bustard remained comparatively unmolested.

A letter from an R.A.O.U. member (L./Cpl. Lyle Rhodes), recently stationed in northern Australia, will help to restore confidence in the future of the Bustard, though there can be no doubt that continuous propaganda as to the practical and aesthetic value of the Bustard is required

throughout Australia to secure its existence in reasonable numbers.

The following comments are from L./Cpl. Rhodes' letter (dated September 14, 1943):

"... I have the pleasure of seeing a change in the general attitude adopted towards the Bustard. Towards the latter end of my stay most of the troops allowed the bird to go unharmed during their incursions into areas where the bird was relatively common. Of course, as can only be expected, troops in isolated portions of Australia did kill a large number of birds—they often provided the only fresh meat available. Yet there was none of the wanton destruction which occurred so frequently when I first arrived up there. . . . Fortunately the bird is common throughout a large tract of the north, and, apart from man, nowadays has few enemies. The fox has not penetrated to their habitats as yet, though to offset that advantage are the large numbers of goannas which abound in all types of country up north. They undoubtedly steal many eggs and cause damage; certainly they constitute the greatest menace of the few birds that do suffer. . . . Actually, I am inclined to think you would be quite pleasantly surprised at the number of Bustards to be observed during a tour of the more open country. It was a definite surprise to me. It is unfortunate, however, that the Bustard is so trusting and quiet."

JACK JONES, Maidstone, Vic., 22/1/44.

Striped Honeyeater.—In *The Emu*, vol. 44, part 1, p. 44, I read with interest the notes by the late A. J. Elliott on the Striped Honeyeater (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*). In the Rockhampton district, central Queensland, I have frequently seen this bird within twenty miles of the coast, though it is far more plentiful eighty to one hundred miles inland. In September, 1916, when collecting specimens for the late H. L. White of 'Belltrees,' at Cardwell, Rockingham Bay, north Queensland, I obtained a pair on Gould Island, a small island near Cardwell. To reach the island the birds would have to fly over the sea, about six miles. I did not observe the bird anywhere on the coastal part of the mainland, but found it on the tableland about 30 miles inland from Cardwell. The coastal range behind Cardwell rises to a height of 3,000 feet. How did the Gould Island birds get there? Were they driven to the coast during a drought on the tableland or were they blown there in one of the cyclones that occur in that part? However they got there, it shows how easily a bird colony could be started in an unusual habitat.—H. GREENSILL BARNARD, Rockhampton, Queensland, 13/8/44.

Obituary

DR. ERNEST ARTHUR D'OMBRAIN

Dr. Ernest Arthur D'Ombrein, M.B., B.Sc. (Melb.), F.R.A.C.S., F.R.Z.S., who died on June 23, 1944, at Killara, near Sydney, New South Wales, was a foundation member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. Many of his friends and contemporaries of those early days of the