

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.

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## 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

Union have passed on, but they survive in spirit in their contributions to Australian Ornithology and in their influence, through friendship and advice, on later workers. Theirs was a wide and interesting field—observing, recording, collecting, and discovery—in various parts of Australia, and they made good use of their opportunities.

Dr. D'Ombraïn was born at Rathdrum in the heart of County Wicklow, Ireland, and came to Australia with his parents, at the age of ten. His Irish wit and geniality remained with him throughout a long life of 77 years. One of his first outings was made to the You Yangs—hills on the west side of Port Phillip Bay—in 1878. Favourite haunts of his early days in Victoria were the Dandenongs, Fern-tree Gully, Sassafras, Box Hill, Ringwood, and the Otway Forest. He accompanied the excursion to King Island, Bass Straits, organized by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria in 1887. The party chartered the Government steamer *Lady Loch* and, after spending three weeks on the island, returned with many interesting field notes and specimens. (See *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. IV, no. 9, Jan. 1888, pp. 129-164).

In the year 1898 he settled in the western Victorian town of Casterton and shortly afterwards formed a lasting friendship with the late W. McLennan, one of Australia's foremost ornithological collectors. Indeed it was through Dr. D'Ombraïn's influence that McLennan's latent abilities as an ornithologist were developed so fully. Together they roamed the surrounding bush seeking knowledge from the book of nature. A living link in the friendship of these two bird men is a Palm Cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*), one of two which McLennan obtained as fledgelings on the Cape York Peninsula and sent to Sydney in 1912. This bird was named 'Tom Ugly' but when about twenty years old caused some confusion by laying two eggs, and has since laid seventy more. A photograph of this bird, now in the care of Dr. D'Ombraïn's son Athel, appears in *The Emu*, vol. 33, pl. 26. The late Dr. W. D. K. MacGillivray was one of Dr. D'Ombraïn's closest friends.

Dr. D'Ombraïn was educated in Victoria at Scotch College and, after graduating at Melbourne University, he studied in England and Vienna. After his return to Australia in 1910 he settled in Sydney and began practice as an eye specialist. He was the oldest practising ophthalmic surgeon in New South Wales and was an honorary doctor at Sydney Hospital for eighteen years. He was also one of the foundation Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Australia. He pioneered several surgical operations, particularly in collaboration with the late Dr. Cyril Shepherd, inventing an instrument for the removal of the tarsal plate in trachoma.

Dr. D'Ombraïn's interests, apart from his love of birds,

were varied. He was, for many years, associated with the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, and was a member of council of that body from 1917 to 1931, subsequently being elected an Honorary Member. He was also a member of the Wild Life Preservation Society of New South Wales and the Linnean Society of New South Wales, and was keenly interested in native flowers.

We mourn the passing of a foundation member of our Union, a keen bird-lover, and a genial companion, whose presence at several camps held by the R.A.O.U. added much to the pleasant recollections of such occasions.—K.A.H.

Contributions (other than short notes) to *The Emu*, by the late Dr. E. A. D'Ombraïn:

- 1905 'Field Notes on Some Birds of the Casterton District (Victoria)' vol. 4, pt. 3, January, pp. 124-9.  
1905 *id.* (part 2), *ibid.*, pt. 4, April, pp. 161-3.  
1906 'Visit to an Ibis Rookery,' vol. 5, pt. 4, April, pp. 185-9, pl. xiv.  
1918 'Bird Notes from New South Wales,' vol. 17, pt. 3, January, pp. 153-5.  
1921 'A Trip to the Watercourse,' North-West N.S.W., vol. 21, pt. 1, July, pp. 59-67.  
1922 'A Trip to the Northern River-Scrubs of N.S.W.,' vol. 22, pt. 2, October, pp. 117-124.  
1926 'The Vanishing Plain-Wanderer,' vol. 26, pt. 1, July, pp. 59-63.  
1929 'Annual R.A.O.U. Congress and Camp-out, 1928, Narrative,' vol. 28, pt. 3, January, pp. 236-9.  
1929 'Collecting and Non-Collecting,' *ibid.*, pt. 4, April, pp. 255-263.  
1933 'Notes on the Great Black Palm Cockatoo,' vol. 33, pt. 2, October, pp. 114-121, pl. 26.  
1934 'Lotus-birds found Breeding on Hawkesbury River, N.S.W.' 'The Chick—Description and Remarks,' *ibid.*, pt. 4, April, pp. 304-5.  
1934 'Further Remarks, Measurements, etc., on the Lotus-bird,' vol. 34, pt. 1, July, pp. 45-7, pl. 4.  
1936 'A Comparison between the Eyes of Birds and of Man,' vol. 35, pt. 3, January, pp. 233-7.  
Portrait: *The Emu*, vol. 28, January 1929, pl. 46, opp. p. 236.

Recent deaths of overseas ornithologists of note include Harry Forbes Witherby (Dec. 11, 1943), Dr. C. E. Hellmayr (Feb. 24, 1944) and Dr. E. C. Stuart Baker (Apl., 1944). A biographical sketch of Witherby, by A. Landsborough Thomson, appears in *The Ibis*, vol. 86, Apl. 1944, p. 208.

## Reviews

The Birds of Timor and Sumba—Dr. Ernst Mayr's paper of this title (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, vol. 83, July 1944, pp. 123-194) follows an examination of the 1354 and 608 skins collected on Timor and Sumba respectively by the Georg Stein expedition. In the face of the aggregation of material available in America and our Antipodean seclusion, this 'review' of the paper is necessarily no more than a comment upon it, with a reference to matters with an Australian flavour. And see Dr. Mayr's article in this current *Emu* on Timor/Australia relationships.