

Doubt is cast on whether some of the New South Wales records might correctly refer to the closely-allied Wandering Tattler, but birds recorded in near-breeding plumage agree more closely with the 'barred breasts and flanks only' of the Grey-tailed rather than the 'barred breast and abdomen' of the Wandering Tattler.—A.R.M.

**The Flight of Birds.**—Practically the whole of the modern science of aerodynamics has been developed since Pycraft published his work on the flight of birds, which marked the beginning of a new era in the study of the mechanics of bird flight. Other work on the subject has been published since, but *The Flight of Birds*, by John H. Storer (Cranbrook Institute of Science, Michigan, U.S.A., Bulletin no. 28, price \$2.50) marks the next epoch. The author, who is obviously well informed on the principles of aerodynamics as applied to human flight, has devoted some years to the study of the details of the flight of birds by the use of the 'slow' motion picture camera (to some degree a misnomer since its virtue lies in taking pictures at an unduly fast rate—up to 200 a second instead of the customary 16—and then projecting them at the normal speed so that rapid motions may be slowed down sufficiently to analyse them). The results of his photography have been examined in the light of the known principles of aerodynamics, and the result is very favourable indeed to the bird. It shows for the first time the reasons behind the power-efficiency, the manoeuvrability, and the adaptability of the bird in flight.

The book begins with a very clear exposition of the fundamentals of aerodynamics, admirably illustrated with pictures of wing sections in wind tunnels, with parallel streams of smoke making the flow of the air visible; turbulence and pressure effects are shown remarkably clearly by this method. The author proceeds then to examine the bird's flying equipment in the light of these principles—the inner wing serving as a practically fixed plane of ideal aerofoil section to give lift, whilst the portion from the wrist outwards serves as a variable-pitch propeller to give drive, or helicopter, or glider, or parachute action, at the will of the bird. The role of the rotation of individual feathers is examined and explained; slots, trailing edge flaps, and the other refinements of modern aircraft are identical in the bird's anatomy, and altogether the text and its many admirable photographic illustrations is a revelation to the student of birds.—P.C.M.

## Correspondence

THE BIRDS OF PELSART ISLAND, HOUTMAN'S ABROLHOS, W.A.

To the Editor,

Sir,

The statement made by Mr. H. E. Tarr in the previous issue of *The Emu* (page 276) that the only detailed account of the birds of Pelsart Island (*alias* Long Island) previous to his is that of Mr. P. T. Sandland in volume 37, is so much at variance with fact that I send herewith a list of previous accounts of the bird-life of the island.

1843 John Gilbert. *The Inquirer* newspaper. Reprinted in *The Emu*, vol. 41, 1941-42.

1890 A. J. Campbell. *Report of the Second Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science*.

1890 A. J. Campbell. *The Australasian* newspaper.

1897 W. Saville-Kent. *The Naturalist in Australia*.

1898 Richard Helms. *Producers' Gazette and Settlers' Record*, W.A. Reprinted in *The Journal of Agriculture*, W.A., 1902.

1900 A. J. Campbell. Many notes in *Nests and Eggs*.

1902 R. Hall. *The Ibis*.

1907 A. W. Milligan. *The West Australian* newspaper.

1908 C. G. Gibson. *The Emu*.

1916 C. P. Conigrave. *The Ibis*.

1922 W. B. Alexander. *Journal of the Linnean Society of London*.

1941 V. N. Serventy. *Gould League Notes*, W.A.

1942 V. N. Serventy. *Wild Life*.

1943 V. N. Serventy. *The Emu*.

1948 Many notes from personal observation by Dr. D. L. Serventy in *Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia*.

*Sailors' Ghosts*, that popular work published by Malcolm Uren in 1940, also contains many references to the birds of Pelsart Island.

Attention must also be drawn to Mr. Tarr's reference to Pelsart as Long Island—"originally Pelsart Island." The correct and official name is Pelsart Island; 'Long Island' is a local fisherman's name used when speaking of the islands of the Southern Group of the Abrolhos. There is a Long Island, officially known by that name, in the Wallaby Group.

As to Mr. Tarr's various ornithological 'records' from Pelsart Island, I prefer not to comment in this letter.

Yours, etc.,

H. M. WHITTELL.

Mt. Pleasant,  
Bridgetown, W.A.  
June, 1949.

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#### BOOK WANTED

Mrs. E. Comrie-Smith, Gellibrand St., Clayfield, N.2, Queensland, desires to obtain a copy of *Realities of Bird Life*, by Edmund Selous, and is willing to offer copies of *The Emu* in exchange for it.

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