

humid conditions, and that the present-day cycle represents a slight recession into drier conditions.

Dr. Gentili has kindly commented as follows—"The maps published in *The Emu* show the likely pattern of climates at different times past. It would be wrong to assume that changes from any one of these patterns to the following one took place smoothly and continuously. The existence of several former sea-levels, the remnants of tiers of river terraces, the relics of separate soil layers within old sand-dunes, all point to oscillations and reversals within the major climatic changes that have taken place in the past. Pleistocene glaciations, as well as the Great Aridity, should be expected to have reached a climax through spasms, pulsations and recessions, rather than through a smooth crescendo. Obviously this greatly complicates the pattern of speciation and would permit, without doing any great violence to my original hypothesis, to accommodate within its general framework the modifications suggested above by Dr. Serventy. Detailed studies by taxonomic specialists of other Australian bird groups will undoubtedly reveal similar patterns".

Unidentified Egret.—A. Graham Brown's note in *The Emu*, vol. 49, pt. 1, p. 25, regarding an unidentified egret has prompted this belated note on the same subject. Early in December, 1948, Mr. R. W. McKechnie, honorary secretary of the Avicultural Society of South Australia and a competent field observer, told me that on two occasions he had seen a white egret on the West Beach aerodrome, which had some reddish markings on its plumage. At that time our interest in the Cattle Egret had been stimulated by the report of its discovery in Arnhem Land, and we were both familiar with a bird of that species in the Adelaide Zoo at that time. On the afternoon of Monday, December 13, we visited the site of the new aerodrome about 5 p.m. and soon found the bird in question feeding with a number of White-fronted Herons on a swamp; it was not easily approached, but it appeared to be about the same size as the White-fronted Heron and as far as could be ascertained it had some reddish buff markings on the back of the head and neck.

On Thursday, December 16, about midday, Mr. H. T. Condon and the writer visited the same area and saw the bird again, but on this occasion only in flight, and thereafter it was not seen again.

It seems possible that the bird seen in Victoria in January, 1949, was the same individual.—ALAN LENDON, Adelaide, S.A., 22/7/51.