

The belief that *Archboldia* is related to *Amblyornis* is strengthened by the discovery of a golden-crested male *A. papuensis*. It is considered that the three males collected by Rand may be sub-adults. Whether the nominate race also has a golden-crested fully-adult plumage like *sanfordi* remains to be discovered. However, it is noteworthy that the male in one species of *Amblyornis* (*A. inornatus*) does not possess the ornamental crest adorning the other three members of the genus.

It might be of interest to mention that a specimen of this new race of *Archboldia* was recently received for display at Taronga Park Zoological Gardens, Sydney.—A.R.M.

Galahs as Seed Eaters.—The following is an abstract of a paper by G. H. Allen, entitled, 'Birds as a Biotic Factor in the Environment of Pastures, with Particular Reference to Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*)', *Jour. Australian Inst. Agric. Sci.*, 16 (1), 18-25, 1950.

As a result of field studies of Galahs or Rose-breasted Cockatoos (*Kakatoë* = *Cacatua roseicapilla*) during varying seasons it was found that button grass (*Dactyloctenium radulans*) formed the main food source, with Flinders grass (*Iseilema* spp.) and Mitchell grass (*Astrebla* spp.), common pepper grass (*Panicum whitei*), bindyi (*Calotis hispidula*), lamb's tongue (*Plantago varia*) and other herbage seeds (Compositae and Chenopodiaceae) being eaten when plentiful. Seeds of trees (*Acacia*, etc.) are eaten during droughts. Examination of parts of the digestive tract of field and caged birds disclosed that the daily intake of seeds comprised 5-6 per cent. of the body weight of birds, that the crop contents at the end of the day indicate less than 50 per cent. of the whole daily intake, and that no intact seeds are returned to the soil. It was estimated that 5,000 birds could consume 25-35 tons of seed per annum. The conclusions drawn were (1) loss of seed is of considerable economic importance, especially during drought, or on deteriorated pasture land; (2) extension of agricultural projects (i.e. grain culture) into grazing lands of Queensland might have to be accompanied by a control of the spread and breeding of seed harvesting birds.—Abstract by M. S. Brown in *Biological Abstracts*, 25 (2), 3769, Feb., 1951.

Correspondence

THE LENGTH OF THE INTESTINES IN CROWS, BOWER-BIRDS AND BIRDS-OF-PARADISE

To the Editor,
Sir,

Many years ago, in skinning a Regent Bower-bird that had died in captivity, I was much struck by the shortness of the intestines, which consisted of a broad tube only nine inches long, making, if I remember rightly, just one turn up and down in the abdominal cavity. In November, 1922, I measured the intestines of a Crow shot at Kinchina, South Australia, and found that they were thirty inches long and many-coiled, as usual. If the intestines are very short and broad in other bower-birds and in birds-of-paradise, and not so in the Crows, then such an anatomical difference would, I consider, be of importance in considering whether the crows were closely related to these other two families or not.

Could any one having the opportunity measure the intestines of these birds and describe them and their course in the abdominal cavity and furnish your columns with the

results? The above measurement and statement concerning the Regent Bower-bird should be checked in case of possible mistake. Recently I have had measured for me the intestines of a Blue Bird-of-Paradise, which were 360 mm. (14 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches) long, and showed the small intestines coiled as usual. The carcass was larger than that of a Blackbird and about the size of that of a Jack Snipe.

Yours, etc.,

J. B. CLELAND.

University of Adelaide, S.A.
April 11, 1951.

DOES PLATYCERCUS ELEGANS OCCUR AT WAGGA?

To the Editor,

Sir,

In a letter to me, Dr. A. J. Cain, Department of Zoology, University Museum, Oxford, points out that in the American Museum of Natural History collection are two skins of *Platycercus elegans* labelled 'Wagga, Aug. 11, 1914,' collected by me and which I had sent to G. M. Mathews. He adds, "I had regarded Wagga as being in the territory of *P.e. flaveolus*. Can you possibly tell me whether the two breed together at Wagga (with or without hybridizing), or were the *P. elegans* only strays? It would seem that *P.e. flaveolus* behaves towards *P.e. elegans* like a good species, but there are few records from the critical areas, and it appears to be uncertain whether they actually meet during the breeding season."

The birds mentioned above were not collected by me personally, but were received at the then Bureau of Microbiology, Sydney, during the progress of an enquiry into the Food of Birds. They are recorded in the results of this enquiry in 'The Food of Australian Birds' Science Bulletin, no. 15, July, 1918, Department of Agriculture, New South Wales, p. 49, Wagga, July, 1914. It is possible, of course, that some mistake has been made and the wrong locality recorded. Can the occurrence of these parrots at Wagga be confirmed? I see that North in his *Nests and Eggs of Birds found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania* quotes several correspondents as finding *P. flaveolus* there, but the locality is not mentioned under *P. elegans*. Also can any one furnish Dr. Cain with the information he desires?

Yours, etc.,

J. B. CLELAND.

University of Adelaide, S.A.
April 11, 1951.

The date of publication was October 12, 1951.