

one may be pardoned for imagining that the Brisbane Goldfinches had 'spread' from the south.

Personally, I have identified the species in various suburbs as far apart as Stafford and Moorooka. Due to its peculiar habits, its dependence upon thistle, sunflower, and other composite plants, it is not a 'common' bird, and has not made the spectacular progress that is so characteristic of some introduced species. However, 1950 being a wet year and a good year for birds generally, I noticed an increase, and quite a few flocks of up to twenty were in evidence. In some suburbs, including my own, Paddington, it is an occasional garden visitor to such plants as sunflowers when they are in seed. Evidently it moves about a good deal.—N. JACK, Paddington, Brisbane, Qld., 3/11/51.

News and Notes

OUT OF PRINT *Emu*

Whilst the Council likes to think that members retain *The Emu* and do not willingly part with copies, nevertheless the Council wishes to obtain several copies of vol. 52, part 1, which is already out of print. If any member not desirous of retaining his copy is willing to dispose of the same, will he please send it to the Hon. General Secretary.

CAMP-OUT 1951

The account of the birds noted at the 1951 Camp at Hattah, Victoria, is still not to hand from the author at the time of this part's 'going to press'.

BOOK BINDING

One of the youngest members of the Union, Mr. Harry Dunn, of Warragul, Vic., recently offered to pay for the binding of the Union's copy of G. M. Henry's *Colour Plates of the Birds of Ceylon*, an offer accepted by the Council with appreciation. The Union has a number of unbound ornithological works, and assistance towards binding would be most acceptable. Why not 'sponsor' the binding of a book or a series?

Review

Birds of the Recherche Archipelago.—This account by V. N. Serventy, part 2 (part 1 not yet published) of the reports of the Australian Geographical Society's Expedition to the islands in 1950, goes beyond a list of birds then observed, for previous records are included.

The introductory remarks contain some items of general interest. The dearth of cormorants and terns and the absence of the Gannet as a breeding species suggest unproductive local waters. Aerial surveys have established that the larger sea-birds do not nest in the group.

The list of Recherche birds published by Basset Hull in *The Emu*, vol. 21, contained 24 species. Serventy includes 57 species of which

41 were recorded by his party. There are, however, several included (and thus acknowledged) without positive identification, from beach-drifted specimens or because the habitat conditions suggested such and such a species, for example a bird likely to be the Hoary-headed Grebe "and not the two others" of Western Australian grebes. Despite small sandy beaches on most islands, only the Sooty Oyster-catcher occurs and not the Pied species.

'Total protection' for the Cape Barren Goose is not rendering it safe, and 'poaching' apparently takes place. The author considers the most noteworthy results of the Expedition concern the additional data gathered on the breeding of petrels, particularly *Pterodroma macroptera*.—C.E.B.

Correspondence

HISTORY OF THE R.A.O.U.

Sir,

In Mr. Dickison's history of 'The First Fifty Years of the R.A.O.U.', *The Emu*, vol. 51, 1951, at p. 263, it is stated that "Dr. Serventy announced that through enthusiasm and persistence he had induced Sir David Rivett, one of the Trustees of the National Museum, Melbourne, to permit specimens in the H. L. White Collection of skins to become available to scientific workers in other States".

I would like to assure readers that I was not guilty of the bombast suggested in this quotation. The text of the relevant part of the letter I sent to the Council of the R.A.O.U. regarding the H. L. White Collection, and dated January 7, 1942, was as follows:

I am very happy to inform the council that at long last a very satisfactory solution has been effected regarding this matter and the restrictions on loans from this important collection have now been removed.

After the R.A.O.U. council decided not to take further action in the matter (item 8, June, 1940 minutes), I got in touch with Sir David Rivett, one of the National Museum trustees, and acquainted him with the whole position. Largely through his enthusiasm and persistence, in spite of difficulties which repeatedly threatened to vitiate all efforts at overcoming them, the trustees have agreed to mitigate the restrictions. Sir David has written to me, under date December 30, 1941—"The necessary formal authority has now been incorporated in the minutes permitting the Director of the Museum, at his discretion, to make material available to scientific workers outside; so at last everything is settled."

Unfortunately the new trustees who took office in 1945 declined to abide by the decision of their predecessors. On further advice from the Crown Solicitor they decided to adhere strictly to the letter of the original restrictions.

Yours, etc.,

D. L. SERVENTY.

27 Everett Street,
Nedlands, W.A.
28/2/52.

The date of publication was August 1, 1952.