

Obituary

P. CROSBIE MORRISON

Philip Crosbie Morrison, born on December 19, 1900, died suddenly at his home at Brighton, Vic., on March 1, 1958. Well known to thousands of radio listeners, regular 'patrons' of his sessions, his death came as a profound shock to them as well as to his friends, associates and fellow-naturalists.

In 1925 Crosbie Morrison was on board H.M.A.S. *Geranium*, a survey vessel then engaged on the Great Barrier Reef. Working under a Melbourne University research grant, he gathered material for a thesis on marine biology that gained him his Master of Science degree. Five years later, when on the staff of the Melbourne *Argus*, he accompanied the MacKay Expedition to Central Australia, in the capacity of reporter and scientist. In 1944 he undertook a tour of the Darwin area, visiting and lecturing to troops at isolated defence posts in the Territory. This was under the auspices of the Army Education Service, in which he was an honorary lecturer for several years. In 1948 in such capacity he visited Japan.

In 1918 Mr. Morrison joined the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. He was Hon. Secretary for a short period in 1919 and President from 1941 to 1943. He joined the R.A.O.U. and the Royal Society of Victoria in 1938, becoming President of the latter in 1949-51. He attended the following R.A.O.U. camps—Murchison River, W.A., 1948; Lake St. Clair, Tas., 1949; Hattah, Vic., 1951; Palm Valley, Central Australia, 1952; Mt. Keira, N.S.W., 1954. He was the inaugural president (1952) of the Victorian National Parks Association, and in 1957, upon the establishment of the National Parks Authority, he was appointed Director of National Parks, a position with a potential for conservation and development of tourist resorts, reserves and primitive areas that, unfortunately, he did not live to assist to bring to fruition. In 1945 he was appointed a Trustee of the National Museum, becoming Vice-President, with Sir Russell Grimwade as Chairman, and, on Sir Russell's death, being elected Chairman, a position he occupied until his death. He was a lecturer in Natural History for the Workers Educational Association (now Council of Adult Education) from 1939 to 1950. In 1947 he was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion.

In 1946 Mr. Morrison wrote the descriptive account of the Botanic Gardens published, with assistance of a grant from the Maud Gibson Gardens Trust, as *Melbourne's Garden*, a book that captures the beauty of the gardens and helps to establish them in their proper place as amongst the best of their kind. At the time of his death he was engaged on a revision of Leach's *An Australian Bird Book* for a new (ninth) edition.

Crosbie Morrison's greatest impact on the public (excluding the matter of special interest to nature lovers mentioned in the next paragraph) was constituted by his radio broadcasts. These commenced in 1938 and have been continuous since. His wide general knowledge was displayed in the Information Please programmes, and these and his nature broadcasts and children's and school sessions presented information in such a manner that an enormous listening public of 'regulars' derived considerable pleasure, entertainment and education from his succinct answers and descriptive talks.

To naturalists Crosbie Morrison will doubtless be best remembered for his editorship of *Wild Life* of which the first part appeared in November 1938. From its inception the production was marked by quality, both of letterpress and pictures. It had no pretensions to scientific presentation, but it had the exactitude and authority that such would require, at the same time providing, for the natural-history-inclined, 'popular' accounts of mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, rocks, trees, flowers, the heavens, the earth and the seas—indeed every natural aspect of this living world around us. It endeared itself to thousands and it was a disappointment to a great number (mingled with disgust in many cases) when, following the death of Sir Keith Murdoch, the proprietors decided it was not an economic project and summarily ended its career. A large proportion of the contents of each number was the work of the editor, who wrote under several pen names as well as his own, and these indicate the catholicity of his interests.

Photography, including colour work, both cinematograph and 35 mm. 'stills', was a hobby of Mr. Morrison's, the results of which were extensively used in his educational work. In this connection he gave considerable public service in addressing organizations of all kinds, and was always ready to make available his knowledge and photographic materials for such purposes.

Mr. Morrison is survived by a widow and two sons to whom sympathy is extended.—C.E.B.

Prominent overseas ornithologists who have died recently, and references to obituary notices, are as follows.

Josselyn Van Tyne, died January 30, 1957—see *Auk*, vol. 74, p. 322, and *Ibis*, vol. 99, p. 509.

William Rowan, died June 30, 1957—see *Ibis*, vol. 100, p. 120.

Sir Norman Boyd Kinnear, died August 11, 1957—see *Ibis*, vol. 100, p. 121, and *Auk*, vol. 75, p. 119.

The date of publication was May 12, 1958.