

News and Notes

CONGRESS AND CAMP-OUT, 1961

It has been decided that the Congress and the Camp-out for 1961 will be held at Grafton, northern New South Wales, during the first two weeks in October, 1961. Full details will be given in a later issue of *The Emu*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A number of members have still not paid their 1960 subscriptions. With the increased cost of printing, postage, rent and all types of expenses, it is imperative, if the Union is to remain financial, that subscriptions be paid promptly.

Would all members whose subscriptions are outstanding please assist the work of the Honorary Officers by sending in their subscriptions immediately.

Members are also reminded that subscriptions for 1961 become due on January 1, 1961. Again it would be appreciated by the Honorary Officers if members would remit their subscriptions promptly.

INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS

The thirteenth International Ornithological Congress will be held at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, U.S.A., from June 17 to 21, 1962. The president is Professor Ernst Mayr.

The International Ornithological Congresses are scientific meetings which have been held at intervals since 1884. Since 1926 a four-year cycle has been maintained except for a twelve-year interruption caused by World War II. The previous Congresses have been held in continental Europe and England.

Persons wishing to receive further announcements, and membership application forms, for the Thirteenth International Ornithological Congress, should send their names and permanent mailing address to the Secretary-General, Professor C. G. Sibley, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, U.S.A., before February 1, 1962.

Reviews

"Ibis" Centenary Celebrations Number.—The grand manner in which the British Ornithologists Union celebrated its centenary testifies to the pride the present membership has in the achievements of their society and the firm hope that they will continue. The event was marked by expeditions, preparation of a new dictionary of birds and two separate issues of the *Ibis* containing matter of an altogether noteworthy character. The first number, of a historical nature, was noticed in the *Emu*, vol. 59, p. 150. The "Centenary Celebrations Number" of the *Ibis* comprises numbers 3 and 4 of volume 101, a massive publication containing a very readable account of the centenary meetings of the B.O.U. at Cambridge and London last year, with a complete coverage of the papers presented at the various sessions of these meetings.

The brightly written accounts of the centenary celebrations in Cambridge and the centenary banquet in London will appeal to many bird people overseas, as did the previous historical number of the *Ibis*, who are interested in ornithologists as well as in ornithology. The Cambridge meetings were held at the home of the chief founder of the B.O.U., Alfred Newton, and as one of the participants who knew him, Sir Philip Manson-Bahr, said: "This present celebration has been a veritable *Newtonia*, with his paternal and genial spirit brooding over us." Wit and learning permeated all of the speeches and our friend Ernst Mayr delivered himself of a gem on the choice of names for famous bird journals. He said: "So now we have this quite miraculous situation that the two national journals are named in the most appropriate manner: the British one is named for that well-known British bird, the Ibis, and the other journal is named for that North American species, the Great Auk. If I may for a moment continue in this frivolous mood (which really does not belong to this subject) I would like to say I think the Australians really missed the boat. They had an opportunity to combine the unique features of the title of the American journal and of the British journal, and name their own national journal for an exotic bird that was extinct—and call it the Dodo."

The bulk of the volume consists of the scientific meat of the proceedings—reviews of the modern situation in the main fields of ornithology by the leading masters in these subjects. There are 22 papers grouped under systematics, behaviour, migration and orientation, population ecology, and breeding biology and physiology, forming virtually a textbook on the subject. The R.A.O.U. delegate to the centenary celebrations, Professor A. J. Marshall, contributed a paper on "Internal and environmental control of breeding".—D.L.S.

Heard Island.—The literature on birds of the Antarctic regions grows rapidly. M. C. Downes, E. H. M. Ealey, A. M. Gwynn and P. S. Young now make a contribution in "The Birds of Heard Island" (*ANARE Reports Series B, Vol. 1, Zoology, Antarctic Division, Melbourne, Nov. 1959*), introduction pp. 7-13, species notes pp. 14-131, references pp. 134-5, 69 photographs and one map.

This is, to the reviewer's knowledge, the only substantial literature on Heard Island ornithology since Dr. Falla's reports of the 1929-31 Antarctic expedition. This alone gives the present paper considerable importance. It is also the work of people who, in most cases, had other duties to perform and who gathered their facts with hard work under unpleasant conditions. Some criticism, chiefly concerning editorial aspects, is necessary. With full sympathy for the authors in the delays which inevitably occur, one must regret that this paper, covering the period 1949-55, was not published earlier. This is the criticism of praise for it would have provided recent workers at Macquarie Island with useful comparative information. Again, workers on Antarctic birds are apt to credit their readers with a familiarity with the previous data that they themselves possess. This holds to some extent in the present case, for whilst the introduction serves well to place Heard Island in "ecological perspective" and makes valuable comparisons between it and Kerguelen and Macquarie Islands, there is no concluding summary to list clearly the new species, breeding grounds, etc., discovered, or to point to the future to indicate important avenues for later work. Also, without detriment to any separate systematic account that is planned for publication, it might have been a good idea to indicate under each species whether specimens were collected, as that would safeguard awareness among workers that such specimens do exist. The nomenclature is carefully chosen but it must be mentioned that the spelling of scientific names and the use of common names in text and map is by no means consistent. The opportunity to use the appropriate "Antarctic Fulmar" in preference to other names was not taken.

Twenty-eight species are dealt with, at lengths varying from a few lines to several pages, with additional information often given in the very useful map. Nineteen of these species are illustrated by photographs. Wherever possible the notes follow a logical sequence on Distribution and Numbers, Breeding, Feeding Habits, etc. This is a paper of much important basic information together with varied and interesting observations, for example the attempted colonization of the island by both the King and Chinstrap Penguins, the latter's behaviour among nesting Gentoos, the excellent account of Macaroni Penguin breeding behaviour with its feasible explanation regarding "three-egg clutches", the notes on Giant Petrel feeding habits, and the plumage description of Antarctic (Wreathed) Terns. New records included are for the Black-bellied Storm-Petrel and the Adelie Penguin.

Many problems await further attention. One, as indicated by the writers, concerns the distribution of the Antarctic Tern during the winter. Two others, if the reviewer may be permitted to suggest them in the light of later work, are the need for details of the plumage phases of *Phoebastria palpebrata* for comparison with those of *P. fusca*, and an account of courtship and display in *Sterna vittata* of Heard Island for comparison with that found in the Macquarie Island race.

This paper is a most welcome and important basic reference for future workers on Heard Island's bird life.—A.McE.

"The Waterfowl of the World."—Volume 3 of this work by Jean Delacour completes, with diving and perching ducks, his species survey of the world's Anatidae. It has 270 pages and 19 plates and deals with 56 species (40 in monotypic genera, 38 subspecies in the remaining 16). The volume, like its predecessors, is illustrated by Peter Scott with full-colour plates and with facing-page identifying outlines, showing in groups each species and subspecies, male and female in breeding plumage, eclipse plumage (where apparent) and downy young (where known) of each species. Publisher is Country Life Ltd., London; price £6/6/- stg. There will be a fourth volume, for over-all treatment of morphology, anatomy, biology, history, sport, conservation, care and breeding; it will also contain additions and corrections to previous volumes. At its completion Delacour's and Scott's *Waterfowl* will be the most comprehensive work ever published on the world's Anatidae, and will be essential for further work by others.

Six Australian species are dealt with in volume 3:—White-eyed Duck (tribe Aythyini, pochards); Blue-billed Duck and Musk Duck (tribe Oxyurini, stiff-tailed ducks); and Maned Goose, White-quilled Pigmy-Goose and Green Pigmy-Goose (tribe Cairinini, perching ducks). These last, which are "more arboreal than any others" and have other common characteristics to varying degree, comprise 12 species of no less than 7 genera, widespread throughout much of the world. The perching ducks are a peculiar group of the smallest to among the largest of the Anatidae, first assembled in the main by Salvadori (1895). Appraisal by Delacour and Mayr (1954) confirmed Salvadori's grouping with only one deletion and two additions. The Maned Goose was one addition—a classification niche which appears appropriate.

Distribution texts and maps for the six Australian species are awry, some maps substantially so, compared with published information (including the localities map of R.A.O.U. *Checklist*). Some tints and accents of colour illustrations are strange in the reviewed copy (a criticism also of some non-Australian species when plates are compared with text), but not disturbingly so; however, bill colour of the female Blue-billed Duck is noticeably greenish in life, not stated in text and the plate-colour is nondescript.—J.J.