

terus) containing three eggs which, instead of having the usual array of dark spots on a creamy background, were pure white. The nest was placed on a fragile scrap of bark jutting from the side of a eucalypt, at a height of about 6 feet, and it was only by chance that I lifted the eggs out and saw their astonishing colour. Unfortunately, all three eggs were lying broken below the nest on the following day. As the bark appeared too fragile for a Raven (or even a Grey Thrush) to perch upon, and as the nest was not disturbed, the idea occurred that the owner itself had ejected the eggs because of my slight handling of them, though, in fact, I have not known this to happen previously with any wood-swallow.—A. H. CHISHOLM, Sydney, 12/2/62.

White-backed Magpie in south-eastern Queensland.—On September 12, while travelling along a road four miles south of Jandowae, a dead magpie attracted my attention. The bird had been shot. This magpie had a white back with white under the body extending from the tail to a line just above the knees. Other markings were similar to those of the Black-backed Magpie, which is very common in this particular area. The bird, a male, was skinned and sent to the Queensland Museum.

After finding this bird I searched an open, lightly-timbered paddock nearby and located two more white-backed birds. Both had markings similar to those of the dead one. They were feeding with a flock of 16 Black-backed Magpies on insects and grubs turned up by a tractor and plough cultivating the paddock.

White-backed Magpies have been recorded from such localities as Cecil Plains, Oakey and Murphys Creek in south-eastern Queensland. The late Mr. E. A. R. Lord had a White-backed Magpie in his area at Murphys Creek for 15 years, and it paired and bred with a black-backed bird.—LLOYD NIELSEN, Jandowae, Qld., 17/11/61.

Review

Rediscovery of the Noisy Scrub-bird.—The past 12 months have been notable for outstanding discoveries in Australian ornithology. An American expedition has unearthed a large fossil (late Tertiary) flamingo at Lake Eyre, the Western Australian Museum has announced the finding of an egg of a gigantic emu-like bird, larger than the largest moa, and reports were made of the sighting of three Australian birds thought to have become extinct: the Eyrean Grass-Wren, the Night Parrot and the Noisy Scrub-bird. Preliminary reports on the last-named have been published by H. O. Webster (*W. Aust. Nat.*, Vol 8, 1962, pp. 57 and 81), and a detailed account is being prepared for *The Emu*.

Webster's original find was made in a remarkable situation. A male bird was heard singing in a densely vegetated, swampy thicket alongside a holiday hut at Two People Bay, a few miles east of Albany, and the bird appeared oblivious of motor cars traversing its territory, children playing nearby and the other distractions of a popular holiday

resort. Subsequently, following an excursion by Dr. G. F. Mees of the W.A. Museum, Mr. Webster located upwards of 30 singing males in thickly vegetated ravines on Mt. Gardner, in the near vicinity of the original find. The vigorous vibrant song was tape-recorded and broadcast throughout the continent by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The bird is not shy, in the usual sense of the term, but extraordinarily elusive and a satisfactory view of it is most difficult. However, at the site of the original discovery it may be readily heard singing, and fleeting glimpses obtained. The Western Australian Government has placed a complete ban on collecting specimens for two years and steps are being taken to proclaim the area as a sanctuary.—D.L.S.

News and Notes

A HANDBOOK OF AUSTRALIAN SEA-BIRDS

Glossy bird photographs of good contrast that are pin-sharp are needed for the above work by D. L. and V. N. Serventy and John Warham to be published by Oliver & Boyd. Species required are Black-naped, Gull-billed, Whiskered, Little, Lesser-Crested and White-winged Black Terns; Little Black Cormorant; Brown-headed and Gould Petrels. All photographs used will be credited and paid for and should be sent to John Warham, c/o Barclay's Bank Ltd., Retford, Notts., England.

TEN-YEAR INDEX TO *The Emu*, VOLS. 51-60

Copies of the above index, published as a supplement to *The Emu*, Vol. 61, pt. 4, are available from the Hon. Librarian at a cost of 7/6 (8/- posted).

NEW CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Nature Conservation Society of South Australia—a private body that owes no responsibility to the Government—was formally constituted on June 8, 1962. Dr. H. G. Andrewartha, Reader in Animal Ecology, University of Adelaide, was elected president. The broad aim of the Society is to work for the preservation of representative samples of nature, both organic and inorganic, chiefly by research and the dissemination of knowledge—an approach that should win the support of all genuine conservationists.

CORRECTION

In Vol. 62, pt. 1, page 9, line 27, (Figure 6, v) should read (Figure 2, v).

ANNUAL CONGRESS, 1962

The attention of members is drawn to the detailed notice, published in Vol. 61, pt. 4, pp. 326-327, concerning the 1962 Annual Congress and Field-outing in New Zealand. Please note that the closing date for bookings has been extended to August 31.

The date of publication was August 10, 1962.