SHORT NOTES

Infestation of the Pheasant Coucal by the acanthocephalan *Porrorchis hylae* (Edmonds)

Porrorchis hylae was described from specimens taken from a Pheasant Coucal in Townsville by Southwell and Macfie (1925, Ann. trop. Med. Parasit. 19: 141-184). The small intestines of two Pheasant Coucals *Centropus phasianinus*, collected on 14 June 1976 from Tamborine Mountain (27° 58'S, 153 ° 12'E) contained many acanthocephalans identified by Dr S. J. Edmonds as the above species. Johnston and Edmonds (1948, Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust. 72: 69-76) recorded the juvenile form of this species from the mesentery of a number of Australian frogs of the genera *Litoria* and *Limnodynastes*.

Because the Coucal has been recorded eating *Litoria bicolor* and *Litoria rubella* (Frauca 1973, Aust. Birdlife), probably these Coucals became infested as a result of eating frogs of the above genera containing such larvae.

B. M'ACKNESS, *National Parks and Wildlife Service, P O Box 190, North Quay, Q 4000.*
26 July 1976.

Eastern Golden Plover banded off Alaska and recovered in New South Wales

An Eastern Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominicus* was killed by a hawk on 27 March 1970 at Urunga (30° 30'S, 153° 00'E) on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The bird was banded with an United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service band, number 863-99641. It had been banded on 24 August 1966 on St George Island (56° 31'N, 169° 31'W), Pribilof Islands, Alaska, in the Bering Sea. The bird was at least one year old when banded, thus at least four and a half years old when killed. It was recovered about 9,700 kilometres from where it was banded. Details of the recovery are lodged with the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20811.

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31 August 1976.

Captive Brolgas and Sarus Cranes prey on wild mice

A pair of Brolgas *Grus rubicundus* and a pair of Sarus Cranes *Grus antigone sharpei*, housed in 20 x 20 metres breeding enclosures at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, were observed to prey on adult and young wild House Mice *Mus musculus*. Though the usual natural food of these species in Australia is bulkuru sedge *Eleocharis dulcis*, they also feed on insects, molluscs, spiders, crustaceans and frogs (Lavery and Blackman 1969, Qd agric. J. 95: 156-162). Walkinshaw (1973, Cranes of the World) has observed wild Brolgas feeding on mud-skippers *Periophthalmus vulgaris*.

On 23 July 1975 we observed the male of the captive pair of Brolgas jabbing its bill vigorously (75 jabs per minute) into grass, thirty centimetres high. The female ran to the same area with her wings three-quarters extended and began to jab (55 jabs per minute). At 09:31 the male lifted his neck to an angle of 70° and revealed what subsequent observation suggested to be a young *Mus musculus* impaled on his bill. The male shook his head ten times and the young mouse fell. He then seized it in his bill, lifted his head and neck to an angle of 80° and swallowed. The female remained stationary throughout. At 09:34 the female ran to a spot a metre or so from the male, lowered her head, turned it quickly from side to side and made a quick jab. She lifted her head and we saw an adult *Mus musculus* between her mandibles. She tossed the mouse lightly into the air and caught it in her bill. At 09:37, she swallowed it. This was the only predatory bout we observed; yet for the following four days the male Brolga spent eighty per cent of his time within half a metre of the area of capture; the female spent sixty-five per cent of her time there. Before 23 July and after 27 July, the male and female spent only ten per cent of their time there.

On 24 July at 15:40 we noticed the female of the pair of Sarus Cranes jabbing vigorously in grass, fifteen centimetres high. The male approached her slowly with his head lowered. The female lifted her head and neck to an angle of 75° and held an adult *Mus musculus* in her bill. She walked rapidly to a spot of bare ground and released the mouse. As it slowly crawled away, both birds followed it with their heads only eighteen centimetres above the ground. The female then lifted the mouse, tossed it half a metre above her head and let it fall. She repeated this three times before seizing and eating the prey. For the next one and a quarter hours both male and female 'circled' the area where the mouse had initially been located, probing repeatedly in the soil and pulling at grass panicles. This searching did not persist as it had in the Brolgas, but twice on 25 July we saw the female lower her head over the bare spot where she had eaten the mouse, and dig vigorously in the soil (70 jabs per minute). Before 24 July and after 25 July, we never observed this behaviour by the female.

This is the first report of Brolgas and Sarus Cranes taking mammalian prey in the wild or in captivity. Previous instances may have escaped notice because

suitable mammalian prey was scarce or because capture of it in the cranes' natural habitats expends too much energy. The captive birds appear to be using a predatory technique known as niche-hunting (Royama 1970, J. Anim. Ecol. 39: 619-668) in which the predator concentrates its efforts in those areas that have provided the greatest energetic return. However, field study of predatory behaviour is necessary, to determine if these cranes use a similar strategy in natural conditions.

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GEORGE W. ARCHIBALD *Director International Crane Foundation, City View Road, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913, USA.*
7 June 1976.

Sympatry in Hall's and White-browed Babblers in New South Wales

Hitherto the ranges of Hall's Babbler *Pomatostomus halli* and the White-browed Babbler *P.superciliosus* were not known to overlap (Cowles 1964, Emu 64:1, Ford and Parker 1974, Emu 74:180). Recently Hooper (1974, Aust. Bird-Watcher 5:195) reported *halli* from Mootwingee, Bynguano Range, which is well south of the only previous record in New South Wales (from Hungerford Gate on the Queensland border (Johnson and Cross 1968, Bird Obs. 445:8)), indicating that it may be sympatric with *superciliosus*, which occurs throughout north-western New South Wales (McGill 1960, Handl. Birds NSW).

In February 1976, N. Reid, A.Greensmith and I collected a series of specimens of *halli* and of *superciliosus* west of the Paroo River in north-western New South Wales. We collected *halli* near Mootwingee in the Bynguano Range, six kilometres west of Koonawarra HS in the Noonthorangie Range, eleven kilometres east of Nuntherungie HS in an unnamed range, five kilometres north-east of White Cliffs in the Warwick Range and on Perry Station eight kilometres north-east of Mandalay HS; and *superciliosus* at the first three localities. The babblers, especially *halli*, were not uncommon in similar habitat: dense tall mulga *Acacia aneura*, witchetty-bush shrub *A.*sp aff. *kempeana* and mixed mulga, witchetty-bush and *Callitris* scrub on low sandstone ranges. Mixed parties were never encountered and the specimens show no evidence of hybridization though the taxa were seen and collected close together at all three localities where each occurred.

Mayr (1971, J. Orn., Lpz., 112:303) questions whether *halli* and *superciliosus* are specifically distinct but this new evidence supports Cowles, and Ford and Parker that they are reproductively isolated. Speciation in these babblers is discussed by Ford (1974, Emu 74: 161-168).

This work was undertaken while I was the recipient of a Frank M. Chapman Fellowship of the American Museum of Natural History.

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20 September 1976.

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ITZN 59

The following Opinions have been published recently by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

Opinion No. 1056. (Bull. zool. Nom. 33 (1): 16)
Eudyptes atratus Finsch, 1875 Ex Hutton MS (Aves) suppressed under the plenary powers in favour of *Eudyptes sclateri* Buller, 1888 and *Eudyptes robustus* Oliver, 1953.

Opinion No. 1060. (Bull. zool. Nom. 33 (1): 27)
Diomedea leptorhyncha Coues, 1866 (Aves) suppressed under plenary powers in favour of *Diomedea irrorata* Salvin, 1883.

The Commission cannot supply separates of Opinions.