

## Review

[*Les Oiseaux de l'Indochine Francais*, by J. Delacour, R.A.O.U., and P. Jabouille. 4 vols., 8vo., pp. 1259 + cccii, Paris, 1931.]

One of the most important and useful additions, not only to the library of the R.A.O.U. but to ornithology generally, are the four beautifully-illustrated and painstakingly-written volumes of MM. Delacour and Jabouille's *Birds of Indo-China*. Works on that locality are of extreme importance to students of Australian ornithology, the region covered being obviously the place of origin of many Australian forms. An examination of the birds included (alphabetical and systematic indices make reference simple) shows that about sixty-five birds are common to the provinces dealt with by the authors and Australia (sub-specific differences, of course, occurring), whilst forty-five additional genera included in the work are represented in Australia. Of the birds common to both countries, it is significant that twenty-two are of the *Charadriiformes*, and the potentialities for learning more of an almost unknown aspect of bird-life, the Austral-Asian migration, should, indeed, be great in Indo-China and neighbouring localities situate on the flight-lines of migrating birds.

Examining the contents of the four volumes in detail, it is soon apparent that the first, containing the *Colymbiformes*, *Procellariiformes* (represented by *Puffinus leucomelas* only), *Lariformes*, *Pelecaniformes*, *Ardeiformes*, *Anseriformes*, *Charadriiformes*, *Gruiformes*, and *Galliformes*, is the most interesting to Australian ornithologists, as forty-five of the sixty-five species common to both countries are described in that volume. One hardly expects such doubtful Australians as *Erolia subminuta*, included provisionally in our *Checklist*, to have Australia referred to in its distribution in works of this nature, but there are a few species, the range of which, without doubt, extends to this country, that are not shown as extending this far south; for example, *Tringa hypoleuca*. The authors are in many cases obviously confining their area of distribution to the particular sub-species being described. The Grey-tailed Tattler is accorded only sub-specific rank—(*Tringa incana brevipes*).

The second volume deals with Pigeons, birds of prey, Parrots, Cuckoos, Woodpeckers, Trogons, Nightjars, Swifts, and the *Coraciiformes*, and in that volume also many birds with Australian affinities occur. The last two volumes deal with the *Passeriformes*.

Sixty-seven plates by Gronvöld, figuring 120 forms (and often both sexes), adorn the work. Remarkable plumage differences occur in some cases between the sexes. Plates of heads of several related species are included. The publica-

tion is the result of five ornithological trips by the authors to the localities dealt with, during which 20,000 specimens were collected.

Maps are included, and from these also the importance of the area, in its relation to the Australian region and in connecting Malaysia and China, is apparent. An historical account of the exploration of Indo-China, geographical notes and a bibliography precede the ornithological treatise. Each bird is dealt with under the headings of description, measurements, habits and distribution. Synonymy is included. When it is considered that the authors claim to have discovered 125 forms new to science and 205 new to the avifauna of the locality, it will be recognized that this publication under review is indeed a notable contribution to ornithological literature and knowledge.

The work was published in connection with the Exposition Coloniale Internationale, Paris, 1931.—C.E.B.

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## Report of Bird Observers Club

The Club visited Toolern Vale on September 4. Nests were numerous, and members had a good day's outing in pleasant surroundings. Stubble Quail were noted with young chicks.

The October outing was held at Castlemaine. Two old pupils of the Barker's Creek State School, formerly under the control of Mr. H. A. C. Leach, R.A.O.U., showed the members where a number of species were nesting, and proved that they had a good knowledge of the local birds.

On November 6 the outing was to South Morang. Amongst other nests the Rufous Whistler's was observed, and the change of shifts between the sexes for incubating was watched. The leader had prepared his route so that objects of interest were found without being sought by the other members. Although the weather was uncertain, the day ended with the calling of a good list of species.

The October meeting was an open night, six members reading short papers, which proved successful in providing an interesting evening. The innovation of encouraging younger writers (with a sprinkling of more experienced observers) should result in further similar efforts being included in the syllabus.

At the November meeting the "Birds of Wilson's Promontory" were reviewed by Mrs. Blanche E. Miller, R.A.O.U. The published lists from various sources were critically examined and combined with her own observations during four visits. The result was a graceful contribution to our knowledge of the National Park. The census now stands at 132 species, besides a doubtful list.

At the Museum meeting for November Mr. Campbell dealt with the related birds of eastern and western Australia, and with various other groups such as those found in east and west and not in Tasmania. Mr. Campbell pointed out that only three of the birds common to Australia and Tasmania had no representative in the west; no reference to their ancestors had been traced. The meetings for the season were duly concluded with hearty appreciation of Mr. Campbell's painstaking lectures and his preparation of species keys. The courtesy of the Director in making special provision for Club visits was also acknowledged.