

TRUSTEES

ASSETS

Savings Bank Credit	£4 15 11
Commonwealth 4% Stock, due 1938/1961 ..	1,070 0 0
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	£1,074 15 11

CLARENCE L. LANG,
Hon. Treasurer.

Stray Feathers

Land Birds at Sea.—When the passenger-ship *Ormiston*, which makes regular summer trips between Queensland and Tasmania, was in Devonport on January 8 last, Captain Loriard stated that he had had a very interesting experience when on his way down the coast from Brisbane. On the way to Sydney, when about four miles off the New South Wales coast, the ship ran at night into a dense haze of bush-fire smoke, and was presently visited by thousands of land birds, which perched on the rigging and the deck, and even congregated in the chart-room. They were so tamed by the abnormal condition of the atmosphere that some of them even accepted food from the hands of passengers. The birds included Doves (species not stated), Magpies, Sparrows, and Swallows, which had been driven off the land by the strong westerly wind laden with smoke, and, seeing the lights of the vessel, had taken refuge aboard. They stayed on until daylight and then left. It is to be hoped that the poor, bewildered little creatures were able to find their way ashore once more, and that other companies driven off the land found vessels which gave them an equally hospitable reception.—H. STUART DOVE, Devonport, Tas., 3/2/39.

The Night Parrot (*Geopsittacus occidentalis*).—As a result of the note in the last number on skins of this rare species in existence, Dr. Serventy has sent me some information which he collected as a result of his visit to the British Museum in December, 1937, and his subsequent visit to the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Mr. Sutton listed (*vide* Mr. Wilson's article in *The Emu*, vol. XXXVII) four skins in the British Museum, as catalogued in 1891. Some changes have occurred since 1891 in the distribution of those skins as one of the Salvin-Godman skins passed into the collection of G. M. Mathews. Thence it went to Lord Rothschild's collection, and it is

ACCOUNT

LIABILITIES
Nil.

£1,074 15 11

Audited and found correct.

H. E. D. STEVENS.
August 27, 1938.

now in the American Museum of Natural History. Dr. Serventy describes the type specimen (*ex* Gould Collection) as being a loose skin not made up in the form of a study skin, and its condition readily suggests that it might well have been collected on the Austin Expedition by a non-taxidermist.

The specimen in the British Museum which was received from Dr. Müller through the Zoological Society is a mounted bird, not a study skin. Regarding the specimen listed by Mr. Sutton as being in the Mathews Collection, it is now in the American Museum of Natural History and Dr. Serventy mentions that it is the type of *G. o. whitei* Mathews. In December, 1937, the "Rowley" specimen was neither in the British Museum nor in the American Museum of Natural History.—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 5/2 39.

Boie, 1882, *Tagebuch* and *Isis*. —In *Isis* for May, 1822, heft v., col. 545 onwards, Boie has an article on Classification. In it about a score of new generic names are introduced and many are used and quoted as of that entry. However, in column 562, in a footnote, is a reference to *Tagebuch auf einer Reise durch Norwegen*. Examination of this latter publication shows that four of the genera usually quoted from *Isis* must be quoted from *Tagebuch*.

Calamohorpe Boie, *Tagebuch Reise Norwegen*, 1822, before May, p. 348, haplotype *Sylvia pragmatis* Bechst.

Tadorna Boie, *ib.*, p. 351, haplotype *Tadorna familiaris* = *Anas tadorna* L.

Aythya Boie, *ib.*, p. 351, haplotype *Anas marila* L.

Melanitta Boie, *ib.*, p. 351, logotype *Anas fusca* L., Eyton, *Monog. Anatidae*, p. 52, 1838.

In the "International Rules" Code of Ethics it says that "names of the same origin and meaning shall be considered homonyms if they are distinguished from each other only by *ei*, *i*, or *y*. So *Aythya* and *Aithia* are the same. In the "Appendix" of the Rules it says that *ai* equals *ae*, so that *Aethia* and *Aithia* are the same. Is *Aythya* 1822 pre-

occupied by *Aethia* 1788 and can they be pronounced differently?

Boie's *Aythya* has been corrected to *Aithya*, *Aethya* and *Aithya*. Boie's name is older than *Nyroca* and *Fuligula*.—GREGORY M. MATHEWS, Winchester, England, 9 2 39.

The Singing Honeyeater.—Has anyone heard the Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*) really singing? On one occasion I flushed the species from a thick tree from which a remarkably sweet "whisper-song" was issuing; but, as I have not at any time since had a similar experience and the song sounded similar to that of a Silvereye, I concluded that there must have been a Silvereye in the tree also. The bird has a few abrupt but pleasing notes, and there is certainly nothing in the common calls that justifies the name of "Singing."

Usually, one or two pairs frequent my orange grove and rear a few pairs of young each year. A few years ago one pair was posted missing after eating termites that had been poisoned with paris green. The species is very trustful, and, unlike many of the Honeyeaters, is not difficult to photograph. The bird lives largely on an insect diet, but it is the only species that I have seen sucking the juice of mandarin oranges. The oranges had fallen on the ground and were split. Possibly new items of diet are added to a bird's menu in this manner, and after a lapse of time the bird would learn to pierce the oranges on the trees.

The young appear to be fed entirely on insects, and both adult birds make frequent visits to the nest. Moths figure frequently in the food supply. One pair of birds that had a nest near my house visited a flowering lantana again and again, and on each visit captured a vine moth (*Agarista* sp.).—L. G. CHANDLER, Red Cliffs, Vic., 28 10 38.

A member of the Union has received from Dr. Nicholas Vasvari, of the Royal Hungarian Institute of Ornithology, Herman Otto ut 15, Budapest 11, Hungary, a request for pellets of the Barn-Owls (*Tyto*), with times, dates and localities, required in connection with research into the food-ecology of the group. Will members forward any available material. "Zoological objects from Hungary" are offered in exchange.

Mr. E. F. Stead (*Trans. Roy. Soc. of N.Z.*, vol. 68, pp. 100-101) criticized J. H. Fleming's erection of the genus *Xenonetta* and even the establishment of a new species. Stead considered the bird referable to *Nesonetta aucklandica* and doubted the evidence of Campbell Island as its origin, Captain Fairchild allegedly having taken it there. In *The Ibis* of July, 1938, pp. 590-591, Fleming publishes a letter from Captain Donne, who received the bird from

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PLATE 74



Singing Honeyeater at nest in orange tree,

Photo. by L. G. Chandler.

Fairchild, explaining his retention of the skin "for nearly half a century until you (Fleming) received it. . . . You may rest assured that you possess a Duck that was secured on *Campbell Island*. Captain Fairchild was definite on this fact."

Annual Congress—1939

This year's Congress and Camp-out will be held in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, New South Wales, a district noted for water birds. The Riverina sub-branch of the Union, which has been in existence for a little more than 12 months, will undertake the organization of these functions, with the assistance of members of the New South Wales branch.

Provisional arrangements provide for the Congress to be held at Leeton, commencing on September 16—a time considered by sub-branch officers to be the most suitable for breeding birds. The Camp-out will follow the Congress, and a site will be selected along the Murrumbidgee River, about ten miles from Leeton, and within easy access of breeding areas. The business meetings will be held at the Hotel Hydro, and the Congress will be opened by the local Member of Parliament, Mr. Hankinson.

It is hoped that members will plan their holiday leave to coincide with this period; and the chairman of the Riverina Sub-branch, Mr. R. Lindsay Black, Leeton, is anxious to know as soon as possible of the approximate numbers that will be present. From Melbourne, Leeton is reached through Wagga. The following fares are approximate, on account of a proposed increase in rail fares in New South Wales: Sydney to Leeton (return), 1st class, £5; 2nd, £3/10/-. Melbourne to Leeton, *via* Wagga (return), 1st, £5; 2nd, £3/17/6. Brisbane to Sydney (return), 1st, £7/7/-; 2nd, £5/10/-.

The arrangements also provide for a civic reception to visiting delegates and a public lecture at Leeton, during which lantern slides of birds will be screened. Members bringing their own camping gear by train will be transported to the camp site by local members. Those who will be without tents or sleeping gear are requested to advise Mr. Black. *Please notify him at once if you are going.*

Of birds there is no scarcity on the Irrigation Area, as well as in the adjacent forest country. The billabongs are the breeding places of innumerable Duck and Teal and other water-fowl. The forests support a large resident bird population, including several Parrots and birds of prey. The area itself is also fascinating from a scenic point of view. Further details of the meeting will be published in the July number of *The Emu*.