

## News and Views.

### *Personal.*

Information recently received states that Captain D. W. Brummitt, A.A.M.C., who is overseas with the A.I.F., has been dangerously ill.

The following members of the Association have now joined the fighting forces, viz.:—A. H. Lendon (A.A.M.C.), K. Viner Smith (A.A.M.C.), A. F. Lashmar (2nd A.I.F.), Robert F. Brown (R.A.N.). The good wishes of the Association for their safety is extended to these members at all times and wherever they may be.

### *New Member.*

Mr. H. H. Gray, of 2 Bindarra Road, Brighton, and Wattle Flat, near Yankalilla.

### *Ground Parrot.*

We learn that the Adelaide Zoo has obtained another Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*) from the south-east of this State. Previously there had been two in the collection, these being the only known examples in captivity.

### *"Bird Lore."*

Members will be pleased to learn that the Adelaide Public Library now receives this well-known American Bird Journal, which is published quarterly by the National Association of Audubon Societies. In the March-April issue of this year is an interesting account on Bird Photography by Roger T. Peterson, the well-known bird illustrator and ornithologist. It is of interest to note that the author maintains that miniature cameras are not suitable, except in special cases. A remarkable

fact is that most birds are not frightened by the use of a flashlight, although they may be readily alarmed by a sudden movement or sound.

#### *The Extermination of Birds by Rats.*

It has often been said that the Rat is "the greatest enemy of Man," and to this may be also added, "and Birds." K. A. Hindwood, in his exhaustive account, "The Birds of Lord Howe Island" (Emu, XL, part 1, July, 1940), relates the dismal story of the havoc wrought by introduced Ship Rats (*Rattus rattus*) among the birds of this island paradise situated in the south-western Pacific, 450 miles north-east of Sydney. Already uncertain as regards their future, owing to the depredations of man and his pets, the doom of many of the smaller birds was finally sealed when the s.s. Makambo grounded on one of the beaches in June, 1918, and the ship's rats scurried ashore. In a few years the rats were everywhere, destroying everything. By 1922 the situation was so serious that an attempt was made to control the rats by the introduction of owls from Australia. During the following eight years almost 100 owls of the following species were introduced, viz.:—*Ninox boobook*, *Tyto alba delicatula*, *T. a. pratincola*, *T. novae-hollandiae castanops*. Despite these efforts, 17,803 rats were trapped by the islanders in 1930, this number being, of course, only a small proportion of the total rat population.

How much is known of the relationships of our Australian birds to the introduced Norway, Fruit and Alexandrine Rats? It is true that the extermination of birds by rats has usually taken place on islands, such as Tristan da Cunha, Mauritius, etc., from which the birds were unable to escape, but this should nevertheless serve as a warning to all vigilant Australian ornithologists.

#### *A New Variety of Pied (Yellow-faced) Cormorant.*

Although a widely-spread and common species, the Pied Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax varius*) has generally been regarded as being the same in all parts of the Continent. Dr. Serventy (Emu, XL, part 1, July, 1940) draws attention to the differences of the Abrolhos Islands (Western Australia) birds, which he has named *Phalacrocorax varius nitidus*. In these birds the base of the mandible is not pallid flesh colour as in all other races, but *light red*, which changes to a yellow in the dried skin. The face patch in front of the eye is said to be deep yellow, as in birds from other parts of Australia.

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*Attracting Birds.*

A short pamphlet bearing this title has just been issued by the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey at Washington. It is called Conservation Bulletin No. 1, and indicates how far wild life conservation has progressed in North America. While Australian executives apparently still entertain some doubts as to the usefulness of many birds to men, the Americans are concerned rather with methods of attracting *all* birds while pointing out the disadvantages in some instances of this practice *to the birds themselves*. Chief of these disadvantages appears to be the danger of disease transmission among large numbers of birds continually frequenting the same spot. Another is that an unnatural increase in numbers may result in a shortage of food, especially for the young. We fear it will be many years before a publication of this class can be hoped for for Australia, although the principles involved are the same.

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