

## BIRD SANCTUARIES AND RESERVES

By MAJOR M. SCHNEIDER.

I am entirely with the Ornithological Association's efforts aimed at preserving our unique fauna and have given the problems that face animal and bird lovers some little thought. I have also had a little experience with the reserves you have in mind.

To briefly summarise, I have come to the following conclusions:—

(1) Reserves such as the Ornithological Association have in mind are not the solution of the problem, although I agree they are a step in the right direction. But it is a small step only. I say this because in spite of the proclamation of the sanctuary on my property on the River Murray, and in spite of suitable notices on the area provided by the Chief Inspector of Game and Fisheries, shooting is still carried on. To my knowledge, and this is written without prejudice, shooting is also done on the more remote southern extremity of the bird sanctuary on the Coorong. An inspector appointed under the Act is resident on the River Murray area, but he cannot police it effectively owing to his duties as a station manager. Furthermore, the apprehension of trespassers bearing arms would involve attendance at police courts and quarrelling with neighbours—a most unpleasant and undesirable state of affairs for a landowner or his manager in remote country districts. So that, in my opinion, landowners or managers resident on reserves are not suitable as special inspectors. And, in any case, legislation prohibits the use of firearms on another man's property without the owner's consent, and we know how this is disregarded.

(2) More supervision of sanctuaries and reserves should be provided. At present this is chiefly done by police officers who have many other duties and cannot possibly patrol them effectively. The only effective way of controlling sanctuaries in my opinion is by the appointment of salaried full time officers who would patrol them regularly.

(3) Personally I would aim at much greater issues than the proclamation of sanctuaries or reserves. I think you will agree

with me that firearms cause most of the destruction of our fauna. At present there are restrictions on their possession and use. Why not extend these restrictions by State Act of Parliament when those enforced under National Security Regulations lapse? I would suggest that the possession and use of firearms be prohibited other than by:

- (a) Landowners and their employees.
- (b) Members of authorised rifle clubs.
- (c) Members of registered sporting clubs.
- (d) Any other persons deemed fit by the Chief Inspector of Game and Fisheries, who would also control the registration and activities of sporting clubs.

(4) Next in importance to human agency comes the destruction attributable to foxes. Something could be attempted here also. A scalp fee of say £1, similar to that on dingoes, would help considerably, and an approach to the C.S.I.R. might be useful. The C.S.I.R. might be induced to investigate the control of foxes because of their ravages amongst young lambs.

(5) And finally, has sufficient emphasis been placed on our Education authorities to inculcate a love of our native creatures in school children? I believe there is much less wanton destruction by youths armed with pea rifles to-day than, say, twenty years ago, but the incidence could be lessened still more.

(6) Whilst on the question of reserves, I would also like to see a large area in the upper South-East set aside as a National Park, in which flora as well as fauna could be preserved. There is a large area held under Miscellaneous Lease south of Coonalpyn and astride the Woods Well to Keith road. It is of very little value at present, but before many years elapse will be alienated from the Crown and converted to pasture. Why not make an effort now to obtain, say, 30,000 to 50,000 acres and set it aside as a National Reserve?