

EDITORIAL JOTTINGS

NATIVE BIRDS AND "THE TRADE."—For many years the "pet trade" has been riding the waves of the rising tide of aviculture and thousands upon thousands of native birds have entered (or passed through) the cages of the bird fanciers both here and abroad. Fortunately, the numbers of individuals and species handled by the trade has been kept in check by government controls. The Department of Fisheries and Game has now issued "Some General Provisions relating to the keeping and trapping of Protected or Partly Protected Birds and Animals" for the guidance of dealers and others. The circular gives the main points of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1919-1958; then follow some special provisions. Paragraph 11 states

"With regard to permits to trap birds, as from 1st July, 1960, the following policy has been adopted:—(a) permits to trap birds will not be issued during the period September, October and November of any one year. (This measure will be in force for at least three years commencing 1st September, 1960)."

Listed under Section (b) of paragraph 11 are the following species for which, it is stated, no permits will be granted for commercial purposes:—Night, Ground, Princess and Orange-bellied Parrots. Finches, all species except the Zebra. Mallee Fowl. Bustard. Brolga. Bower-Birds. Cape Barren Geese. Cockatoo (Glossy Black only). Stone Plover. Plain Wanderer.

The departmental direction then goes on to give the *annual quotas* which may be taken of a number of species. Here are the figures:—Scarlet-breasted Parrot (30); Blue Bonnets (500); Bourke Parrots (100); Mulga Parrots (750); Rock Peblers (150); Red-rumped Parrots (1,000); Blue-winged, Rock and Elegant Parrots (300—combined total for the three species); Ringneck Parrots (1,250—combined total for the two South Australian species); Pink Cockatoos (300); Yellow-tailed or Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (100); Plovers, all species (200); Pigeons (all species, excluding the Crested Pigeon, for which there are no restrictions, total 100); Doves, all species (100); Kookaburras (30); Kingfishers (20).

Obviously, the birds listed above are those which are bearing the brunt of present day commercial exploitation of the native fauna. It must also be assumed that the full number in each quota is taken out, although it may be pointed out that the "quotas include eggs, live or dead specimens or any part thereof."

Unprotected birds listed in the Fourth Schedule of the Act may be taken under permit, with no restrictions on numbers. It is interesting to note that some further kinds have been added to those listed by the Act in this category. They include emus, quails, bald coots, mutton birds, pelicans, crested pigeons, greenshanks, snipes, silver gulls, black swans, cockatiels, honeyeaters and magpies, for all of which there are, apparently, ready markets.

ILLEGAL TRAPPING.—Responsible observers are satisfied that illegal trapping of protected native birds is still rampant. Reports from Sydney indicate that, from time to time, the market of that city is "flooded" with certain kinds of South Australian parrots selling at special "cheap" rates. Readers should report all violations of the Protection Act they may encounter with a view to assisting our local authorities in meeting this problem.

DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS BY SHOOTING.—About a year ago a complaint appeared in the newspaper, *The Advertiser*, for July 30, regarding the shooting of native birds. It began, "At what age is a boy supposed to be before he is allowed a slug gun? They have them in this district from eight years old, to fire at everything and into one's place. Magpies are dead everywhere."

Another newspaper correspondent, referring to adults, said, "The duck population is getting smaller and smaller every year, and therefore the shooters shoot everything on sight."

At regular intervals photographs appear in the Press, showing eagles and other birds of prey strung up along fences in country districts. However necessary this slaughter might be, and its effectiveness is often doubtful, such pictures can do nothing but foster

the belief that any bird of prey, protected or otherwise, is at all times "fair game" for the trigger-happy shooter.

FLINDERS CHASE, KANGAROO ISLAND.—It has been announced (G.G., March 9, 1961) that the following have been appointed to the Flora and Fauna Board, which administers Flinders Chase:—Hon. A. J. Melrose, M.L.C. (Chairman), W. R. Boxer, Prof. J. B. Cleland, C.B.E., M.D., Ch.M., Prof. A. A. Abbie, M.Sc., Prof. W. P. Rogers, Ph.D., H. B. S. Womersley, Ph.D., M.Sc.

SLAUGHTER OF DUCKS.—Under this heading D. Cremer, President, Southern Duck Shooters Association, writes in the newspaper *Sunday Mail*, April 14, 1961: "... Too many shooters do not play the game. To shoot 100 or more ducks in a closed area in the closed season is considered by them something to be proud of . . . We are opposed to further sanctuaries being proclaimed. If sanctuaries are not policed, they merely become the happy hunting grounds for men with leisure, who can pay a fine if they are caught."

DUCK SEASON.—"Nimrod," quoted in *The Chronicle*, February 23, 1961, "thinks the season should be opened at the end of March and closed at the end of May to give the young birds a chance to grow up and the new generation a good chance to settle down and have two or three broods of their own. Our duck population would then show an immense increase. It is time consideration was given to this duck season farce of opening the season so early." He says, "That was O.K. when Sturt came down the river."

A NEW "THEORY" ON BIRD MIGRATION.—The following appeared in the Adelaide newspaper *Chronicle*, March 2, 1961: "The snipe come from Siberia, Japan and the Philippines to the same place in Australia every year . . . They apparently send out the courier bird first early in September to ascertain if everything is right. The old birds return and bring the new ones with them. They apparently go through the South-East to Glencoe (South Australia—Ed.), eventually get up to New South Wales. They generally arrive about mid-October, stay for six to eight weeks, and then move on." We have been assured that the author of this statement is NOT a member of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme!

MIXED LUCK FOR DUCK SHOOTERS.—Adelaide *Advertiser*, February 15, 1961:

"The S.A. duck shooting season opened yesterday with mixed luck for the hundreds of shooters who waited for dawn to break.

"Naracoorte police alone issued 800 licences, 560 of them on Monday afternoon.

"Fifty shooters at Little Bool Lagoon all shot their legal bag of 12 ducks, and reports from other lagoons in the Naracoorte area indicated good shooting . . . At Narrung there were reported to be 'more shooters than ducks'.

"Renmark reported a successful opening, but shooters commented on the predominance of ducklings too small for shooting.

"A Fisheries and Game Department official took the names of a number of duck shooters near Goolwa yesterday.

"The official said that one shooter had 37 ducks—25 over the maximum of 12 ducks. This shooter would be charged and would be liable to a fine of £125, for the standard fine was £5 for every duck over 12."

NATIVE BIRD PROTECTION.—From the Adelaide *Advertiser*, February 14, 1961:

"Protection in S.A. of native birds was now satisfactory, Professor Emeritus J. B. Cleland, a member of the Fauna and Flora Board, said yesterday.

"He said the question of protection would be studied very carefully now that a wild life section had been formed in the Department of Fisheries and Game . . . Professor Cleland was commenting on a Melbourne report that the Victorian Government was drafting legislation to provide greater protection for native birds."