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# South Australian Ornithologist.

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## The South Australian Ornithological Association.

Owing to the majority of members being out of the city for the holidays no December Meeting was held.

January 26th, 1917.

A monthly meeting was held. Dr. A. M. Morgan presided. The Hon. Secretary stated that the matter of introduced Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) travelling along the East-West Railway, into Western Australia should be finally dealt with. A long discussion took place. Some of the leading Ornithologists expressed their belief that the sparrows would not follow the line, and others said it would only be the matter of time when they would reach the Western State. The majority of the members present recommended that the authorities should be advised to instruct all station masters to destroy sparrows at sight. Capt. S. A. White opposed this on the grounds that pipits, which he had found to be very numerous along the East-West Railway lately, would fall victims to this order, and that more harm than good would be done by destroying useful insectivorous birds. A specimen of the Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) was shown by Capt. White, who stated that this imported bird had been sent to him for identification by Mr. L. G. Folland, who stated that the bird was doing damage among the gardens in the hills. The opinion was expressed that the Greenfinch would soon rank next to the Starling as an imported pest. It was a much more wary bird than the Sparrow, and possessed a larger and stronger bill. Mr. F. R. Zietz stated that the first of these birds to get their

liberty in South Australia, escaped, owing to a fire taking place next door to a bird fancier's shop in Adelaide. A window was broken, and the cages containing the birds fell out and opened. Since then he had seen these birds nesting in the pines in the Botanic Park. Some late nesting of native birds this year was recorded. The remainder of the evening was given up to Mr. Ashby, who spoke upon "Some Tasmanian Birds and Eggs." This speaker mentioned the eggs of the Spotless Crake (*Porzanaidea plumbea immaculata*) describing how artfully the nest is placed amid the grass and rushes, growing in the swamps, the eggs of the Tasmanian Spotted Ground Bird (*Cinclosoma punctatum dovei*) were also shown, with a clutch of the South Australian form (*C.p. neglectum*) for comparison, the latter having very unusual markings. Skins of *Acanthornis magnus* were shown, and it was explained that they were taken from a district hitherto unassociated with this bird. Other birds exhibited were the Tasmanian Tit (*Acanthiza ewingii*), the Brown Rumped Tit (*A. pusilla diemenensis*), the Streaked Field Wren (*Calamanthus fuliginosus*), the Tasmanian White-bearded Honey Eater (*Meliornis novachollandiae canescens*) Mr. Ashby stated that he found the latter bird very plentiful amidst the low bush in the great Lake district. The speaker showed a fine specimen of the Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor tregellasi*) and stated that strange as it may seem these birds were numerous among the trees in the city of Hobart at the time of his visit, but not one example did he see in the surrounding country. At this stage the remaining material was held over for next meeting.

February 23rd., 1917

A monthly meeting was held, Dr. A. M. Morgan presided. The Chairman welcomed the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game (Mr. Bruce), and said he hoped that gentleman would be a constant visitor to the meetings. A discussion again took place in reference to the sparrows following the East-West Railway into Western Australia, but upon a member stating that he was in communication with the executive of the Council for Science and Industry, as to making use of his services in the matter, the Chairman and others said that would settle the question, for nothing better could be done.

Mr. J. W. Mellor gave some interesting notes upon late nesting of native birds upon his property in the Mount Lofty Ranges, and pointed out what a number of birds had taken ad-

vantage of artificial nesting places which he had placed about his property for them.

Captain White showed some specimens of Arctic Skuas (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), and stated that the stomach contents of these birds largely consisted of grasshoppers or plague locust (*Chortoicetes terminifera*), and the beaks of *Cephalopods* (Cuttlefish, Octopus, etc.); he also exhibited a specimen of the Flesh-footed Petrel (*Hemipuffinus carnceipes*) stating that this was a record for South Australian waters. John Gould having described this bird from Western Australia in 1844. Capt. White also explained that these birds were secured through the kindness of the Messrs. Rymill. Mr. F. E. Parsons exhibited a specimen of the Stubble Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*), Southern Crested Honey-eater (*Phylidomyris pyrrhoptera indistincta*), and the Grass Parrot (*Neonanodes elegans*). Mr. Ashby then continued his description of Tasmanian birds from last meeting. He exhibited a number of specimens of many species, and gave an interesting account of the conditions under which they were taken. The Grass Parrots *Neonanodes* inhabiting Tasmania were discussed, and the speaker pointed out the great rarity of some of these species, where they were once very numerous. He also drew attention to the strange call of the black Crow Shrike (*Strepera fuliginosa*).

Some honey-eaters were shown, and among them the Strong-billed Honey-eater (*Melithreptus validirostris*), the Black-headed Honey-eater (*M. affinis*, Gould's *melanocephalus*), and the beautiful Yellow-throated Honey-eater (*Nesoptilotis flavicollis flavigula*), and attention was drawn to its wonderful series of pleasing notes. Mr. Ashby explained how all the birds varied with the great range of altitude:

Mr. F. R. Zietz (Museum Ornithologist) exhibited a number of birds from the Museum collection for comparison.

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