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# South Australian Ornithologist.

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## The South Australian Ornithological Association.

25TH JANUARY, 1918.

The Monthly Meeting was held at the Royal Society's Rooms, North Terrace, Adelaide, on Friday evening, 25th January, 1918. Mr. A. G. Edquist presided.

Dr. A. M. Morgan reported that a pair of Black-throated Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) had nested in the Botanic Gardens. These birds had built a new nest, but unfortunately it had been interfered with and had floated away.

Mr. Edwin Ashby commented upon the great numbers of Shell Parrots (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) at Blackwood, and he believed they were nesting. The appearance of such vast numbers of these birds this year was discussed. Capt. S. A. White remarked that it is over 35 years since such numbers were seen on the Adelaide plains.

Mr. J. W. Mellor stated that he had seen two male birds Blue Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus leggei*) helping to feed the young birds.

Some interesting notes forwarded by Mr. T. P. Bellchambers of Humbly Scrub were read. Those upon the Wood Swallow (*Pseudartamus cyanopterus*) caused discussion owing to Mr. Bellchamber's statement that he had found these birds, which as is well known, eat numbers of bees, would only consume the drones. As these were always in excess of the numbers required, he contended that the birds were not doing any harm.

It was reported that a number of G. J. Broinowski's coloured plates of Australian birds were for sale in the city, and it was suggested that they might be of use to the Education Department. Mr. Edquist said he would look into the matter.

Mr. F. R. Zietz, the Museum Ornithologist reported a new record for South Australia. A pair of birds had appeared at Mylor in the Adelaide hills, which were not known by any of the residents. One specimen was secured, and forwarded to the S.A. Museum, and was identified as the Australian Roller (*Eurystomus orientalis pacificus*).

The rest of the evening was devoted to an account of the excursion undertaken by Dr. Morgan and Capt. White to Lake Victoria and the River Murray. Eight days collecting and bird-observing was done among the lakes and swamps around Lake Victoria, then they descended the river to Renmark with two boats, working the country ornithologically all the way down, and in all over 140 specimens were identified. A number of skins and eggs were exhibited also a number of interesting photographs. Although nothing new had to be recorded, many useful notes as to distribution and habits were obtained.

#### 22nd FEBRUARY, 1918.

Mr. A. G. Edquist presided at the usual monthly meeting held on Friday evening, 22nd February, 1918.

Capt. C. H. A. Lienau and Mr. J. H. Welfare were proposed as new members.

The Secretary read a letter from the Brisbane Crows and Flying Foxes Destruction Board, asking the opinion of the Association as to whether the imported starling should be destroyed. An interesting discussion followed in which all the speakers strongly condemned the starling, and expressed the opinion that no effort should be spared to combat this pest. It was pointed out that the damage these birds do to the fruit and young wheat is enormous, besides which they are driving out our useful insectivorous birds. Mr. Mellor remarked that it is almost hopeless to keep them in check, and stated that he had shot 7 or 8 adult birds at a nest, but that did not prevent the young from being brought up. Capt. White instanced a similar case where 16 adult starlings were shot at a nesting hollow, and yet the young birds reached maturity. It was resolved to leave the matter in the hands of the Executive Committee to forward a recommendation from this Association.

Mr. J. W. Mellor drew attention to the numbers of Purple-crowned Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta porphyrocephala*), that were visiting the Adelaide plains. At Lockleys they were feeding upon the blossoms of the Tasmanian blue gum, and from the number of dead birds seen under the trees it would appear that the honey from these flowers was too strong for them.

The evening was set aside for consideration of the birds as Mr. Mathews' hand list Nos. 550/558 (*Ashbyia lovensis*), Desert Chat was exhibited and Capt. White gave a description of the habits and habitat of these birds.

*Conopodera australis* (Southern Reed Warbler). All present deplored the fact that the ranks of these lovely songsters were being depleted each year.

*Cisticola exilis* (grass warbler). The different sub-species of this bird were discussed.

*Poodytes gramineus* (Grass Bird). Each sub-species was debated, and Capt. White described the strange habit of placing curved feathers (invariably those of the bald coot, which are blue in colour) over their nests to keep out rain and sunshine.

*Bremiornis carteri* (Desert Bird); *Origina solitaria* (Rock Warbler); *Clithonicoila sugittata* (Little Field Wren). Skins of these birds were exhibited from the Museum Collection by Mr. F. R. Zietz, and by Capt. White from his private collection. Several specimens were also shown by Mr. Frank Parsons.

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