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The South Australian Ornithological  
Association.

SEPTEMBER 27th, 1918.

The monthly meeting of the South Australian Ornithological Association was held in the Royal Society's room, North Terrace, on Friday evening, 27th September, 1918. Capt. S. A. White presided, and welcomed Mr. J. Neil McGilp, of Moolawatana Station, near to Lake Frome as a visitor. Many interesting bird notes were recorded. Mr. J. W. Mellor stated that the landrails were nesting on his property at Lockleys, and that a pair of wagtails had built a nest low down in a tree near to the house. A child who was visiting had interfered with the nest, and the birds pulled it to pieces and rebuilt it higher up. The same member exhibited a large bunch of gum leaves and twigs which had been nipped off by a shrike tit (*Falcunculus flavigulus*). This is a usual practice when they nest. Mr. Mellor also stated that the mudlark or Murray magpie (*Grallina cyanoleuca*) had nested in a Morton Bay fig tree quite close to his house. Mr. Welfare read several interesting press clippings. One was a statement made by Mr. H. L. White, of Scone, New South Wales, in which he said he had seen the Murray magpie picking tick from a sheep. Mr. A. Crompton reported having observed quite 500 cormorants on the Port River. They comprised two species—little black and little black and white. Master Alen Lendon said he had noticed about 150 white-faced herons near to the main road, between the Cross Keys and the River Light. Dr. Morgan reported that fairy martins were nesting on September 14 along the Sturt Creek. A discussion took place upon

the food of cormorants. It was admitted by all present that the Chairman and Dr. Morgan's work upon this subject clearly showed that the cormorant was not injurious to the seafishing industry. Mr. J. Neil McGilp was requested by the Chairman to give his experiences with the wedge-tailed eagle and the crow. Speaking of the first bird, Mr. McGilp said it was only troublesome during drought time, when they appeared in numbers. In his opinion, an eagle could not take a lamb from a healthy mother, for she would be more than a match for the bird, but he had seen five eagles attack and almost kill a large lamb. He considered crows very useful. The short-billed, or Bennett's Crow, was a wonderful bird on grasshoppers and other insects, and all species of crows were enemies to the blowfly. He had observed several crows turn over a dry carcass and dig into the ground for the fly larvae. A discussion occurred regarding the habits of birds, for which there seemed to be no explanation. It was stated that the bare-eyed cockatoo ring-barked a gumtree in which it had its nest. One reason seemed to be that the killing of the tree would cause more nesting hollows to become available. Mr. McGilp said a native had informed him that the cockatoos ring-barked trees because the cats could not be heard climbing up the green bark, but as soon as they struck the dead wood with their claws a scratching sound of warning was made. The Chairman stated that the Rufous Song-Lark (*Cincloramphus rufescens*) had put in an appearance for the first time this season at the Reedbeds on September 10, and that on the same day he saw a large flight of white-browed wood swallows (*Artamus superciliosus*) flying very high, and that the landrail (*Hypotaenidia philippensis*) was numerous at the Reedbeds this season. Some interesting notes from Mr. Bell-chambers, of Humbug Scrub, were read.

OCTOBER 25th, 1918.

Capt. S. A. White presided. Several members of the field naturalists' section of the Royal Society were welcomed as visitors. The Chairman said he had been addressing good audiences in several country centres, and also scholars of the public schools. He was much gratified at the interest shown in bird protection. Mr. J. W. Mellor stated that the pair of wagtails which he had reported at the previous meeting as having rebuilt their nest near to his home after having been interfered with, had become suspicious. They had pulled it to pieces, built it for the third time and on this occasion high up in a gum tree. Mr. Mellor said he had again witnessed

white-browed babblers pull young sparrows out of their nest and then drag the nest to pieces. Landrails were nesting at the Reedbeds. Mr. F. R. Zietz drew attention to the fact that boys were taking birds' nests and eggs in the parks. Mr. A. Crompton stated that he had seen great numbers of wattle birds at Second Valley lately. Mr. Hosking said a friend had observed a tussle between a snake and a kestrel; the snake at last escaped. The Secretary (Mr. F. Angel) stated that he had discovered an eagle's nest at Moolooloo, and had counted the remains of 39 rabbits, two cats, and a wallaby. The cats were an unusual change of diet, and it was said that the manager of the station was in favour of protecting the birds. Mr. Mellor gave an interesting account of a trip made into the mallee and pine country off the Paringa line, and showed a number of bird skins. He stated that the birds had nested early in that district this season owing, no doubt, to the spell of fine weather some few weeks back. The Hon. Secretary gave an account of a visit made by a small party of nature lovers to Moolooloo Station, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Lindo. Mr. Angel read a large list of birds observed, and gave useful notes upon them. Mr. Beck (a visitor) showed some nice photographs taken upon this trip.

NOVEMBER 29th, 1918.

Capt. S. A. White presided. The failure of the Government to pass the Bill for the protection of birds was discussed, also the constitution of "Flinders Chase." The time lost in carrying out these national works was much deplored. Two names were submitted as new members. Mr. J. W. Mellor reported that many bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) had visited Lockleys last month, and that he had seen magpies pulling sparrows' nests to pieces and carrying off the young birds. The same member reported that much bird destruction was going on in the Mount Lofty Ranges through school boys destroying nests and eggs. Mr. A. G. Edquist read an interesting letter from a member of the Bird Club describing how the writer had seen a grass parrot frequenting a hole in the ground, where most likely it would nest. This statement led to a discussion in regard to cockatoos nesting in rabbit burrows and upon the ground. Master Allan Lendon reported having noticed a brush bronzewing pigeon on the Lower Sturt Road. The Chairman said that he had seen two stubble quails' nests, one with five eggs and another with seven eggs—both at the Reedbeds; also several grass parrots in his garden. It was many years since these birds

had previously been noticed there. A landrail with a brood of five black chicks had also been seen; also a button quail. The remainder of the evening was taken up by an interesting account by Dr. A. M. Morgan of a trip taken by him to the South-east in October last. He gave a description of the country and birds seen, and collected and exhibited a series of fine specimens, two *Sericornis* and *Neonanodes chrysogaster aurantia* being of special interest. As many members intended to be out of town during the Christmas holidays it was decided not to hold a meeting in December.

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