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## The South Australian Ornithological Association.

### MONTHLY PROCEEDINGS.

—Meeting held on 30th June, 1922.—

The President (Professor J. B. Cleland, M.D.) was in the chair.

The following correspondence was dealt with:—

From the Hon. Secretary British Ornithological Union and the Editor "The Auk," advising that they had given instructions to the publishers of their magazines ("The Ibis" and "The Auk" respectively) to forward copies as issued in exchange for "The South Australian Ornithologist." A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to both authorities.

Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science.—Letter from Professor J. R. Wilton, the local State secretary, covering one from the local secretaries, Wellington, N.Z., intimating that the next meeting is to be held at Wellington, N.Z., on Tuesday, 9th January, 1923, and we were approached for the names of our delegates and reminded that offers of papers to be read at the meeting should be sent to the local State secretary as early as possible. Professor J. B. Cleland and Captain S. A. White were appointed as delegates.

A letter was received from Mrs. F. R. Zietz and Mrs. A. Zietz thanking the members for the letter of sympathy in their bereavement. It was decided by this meeting to purchase the complete set of "The Emu," offered to us by Mrs. F. R. Zietz, at the price of £4 10/-.

The following new members were proposed:—Messrs. H. J. Brewster Jones and Eric S. Paterson.

Swallows.—The President drew the attention of members to an article in the June number of the Medical Journal of Australia by John Dale, M.B.B.S., Medical Officer of Health,

W.A., entitled "Flies on a Sanitary Site and Typhoid in a Boys' Home:"—"On 9th March, 1920, at about 12 noon, a visit was paid to a municipal sanitary site where the contents of a number of pans, (about 500) are buried each night. The soil consists of pure sand. . . . On the occasion of the visit there was a moderate breeze from the north, the sky was occasionally overcast, and heavy showers were falling at intervals. On arriving at the site it was noticed that a quadrilateral patch of ground was literally black with Swallows. It was found that this patch of ground corresponded to those trenches the contents of which had been buried from eight to 12 days before. On examination of the surface from which the Swallows were turned away, a large number of freshly hatched flies were seen crawling about. On closer examination numerous small holes of a diameter of about two millimetres were seen on the surface of the sand, and it was presumed that these holes were made by the emerging flies. This was easily confirmed, and in certain situations it was possible to see flies emerging at the rate of several per minute from a patch of sand six inches square. The flies emerged very rapidly; almost as soon as the frontal sac on the top of the emerging fly's head was recognized breaking through the surface, the fly hopped out. The showers of rain had caused the surface of the sand to "set" tightly, otherwise the channels made by the emerging flies would not have been preserved. The disturbed Swallows returned almost immediately and settled within a few feet of the observer, devouring the flies eagerly. Apparently no other species of birds were availing themselves of the feast. . . . The flies were nearly all house flies (*Musca domestica*). A few larger "blow" flies were also seen emerging. . . . The countless flies which hatch out of the excreta trenches are brought there, of course, as eggs or maggots in the pans from the premises of the individual householder." It was decided to write to Dr. Dale to ascertain which species of Swallow he referred to.

The President also mentioned that during his recent trip to New Zealand he had observed the flight of two kinds of Albatrosses—the Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) and the Black-browed Albatross (*Diomedea melanophrys*). In starting the first impetus was obtained by flapping the wings, then the flight is affected by gravity in coming down rapidly to the food in the water, and thirdly by the wind force. He suggested that our next monthly meeting should be jointly with the University Science Club on the subject of "The Flight of Birds," and it was left to him to try to arrange this meeting

through Professor Kerr Grant. He also thought that he might get Professor A. G. Strong to inform us of the allusions to bird flight in poetry.

The birds discussed by the Vice-President, Mr. F. E. Parsons, were the Artamidae seen in South Australia. The specimens exhibited were shown by Messrs. J. W. Mellor and F. E. Parsons and the Museum, per Dr. A. M. Morgan. White-breasted Wood Swallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*)—Breast, abdomen, and rump, white; dark slate head, back, throat, and tail. This bird is never far from water, and is seen in the big timber on the Murray as far down as Wood's Point. Migratory. White-browed Wood Swallow (*Artamus superciliosus*)—Dark slate on back; white eyebrow; abdomen, rich chestnut; tail, tipped white. These birds are seen everywhere in South Australia. Migratory. Masked Wood Swallow (*Artamus personatus*)—Dark slate back; black throat, with white edge, underneath grey. Migratory, and comes south in the breeding season, in company with the White-browed Wood Swallow, and both those species consume great numbers of the young locusts. Black-faced Wood Swallow (*Artamus cinereus*)—A smaller bird, black face; grey breast; abdomen, darker grey; tail, tipped white. A Central Australian bird, but migratory, and has been noted in this State as far down as Port Augusta and Renmark. Wood Swallow (*Artamus cyanopterus*)—Chocolate-brown head; back and underneath and wings black, with white outer edge, tail tipped white. A very interesting note on this particular species, which may be seen about the Adelaide Plains and the Hills at the present time, was handed in by Mr. A. Crompton, of Upper Kensington (vide notes). All the young of the Wood Swallows are striped underneath and on the back, but the wings are a blackish colour.

—Meeting held on the 25th August, 1922.—

Mr. F. M. Angel in the chair (in the unavoidable absence of the President and Vice-President).

The new members proposed at the June meeting, Messrs. H. J. Brewster Jones and Eric S. Paterson, were duly elected, and Mr. J. W. Goodale was duly proposed and seconded for membership.

The following donations were notified and a vote of thanks was passed to each of the donors:—Mr. H. L. White, of "Bell-trees," Seone, N.S.W., forwarded a copy of "Index to The Emu," volumes 1 to 20, and Mr. Robert Hall, of Bellevue, Tasmania, presented a copy of his latest work, "Australian Bird Maps."

Correspondence laid upon the table.

A letter dated 8th July, 1922, was received from Dr. John Dale re "Swallows and Flies:"—"I was pleased to note that your members were interested to hear about the Swallows. The 'episode' took place over two years ago, soon after I arrived in Australia, and the account was written and forwarded to the Journal forthwith. As far as I remember—(1) Estimated size of patch—40 to 50 ft. x 20 to 30 ft. (2) Number of birds—Several hundreds, say 300. The Chief Inspector, Mr. Greenhill, who accompanied me, estimated the number at 500. (3) Species of Swallows—I have the impression that it was the Red-throated bird (the Welcome Swallow), but I am not certain. Mr. Greenhill tells me he has seen similar flocks on the Perth depot since we were together. I will keep your letter and try to verify the species."

Letter from the President and member of the Kangaroo Flat Bird Club advising the S.A.O.A. that Thomas Mitchell, aged 10 years 5 months, in 5th Grade at the school, was the winner of the Bird and Tree Competition for 1922; and thus his school is the holder of the S.A.O.A. trophy for that year. The school thanks us. It was decided to ask Mr. Edquist to let the Association see each year the six essays from which the prize-winner is selected.

Letter from the Field Museum of National History, Chicago, informing us, in reply to our request, that the name of our Association is on the Museum publication list to receive all issues of the Ornithological and Report Series. It was decided to send our thanks for this courtesy.

Exportation of Native Birds from Australia.—After some discussion it was proposed by Captain S. A. White, seconded by Dr. A. M. Morgan, and carried unanimously, "that our Association will support the R.A.O.U. in any action it may take in this matter."

Captain S. A. White then gave a description of some of the birds seen by him on the recent trip, by motor to Darwin and back, and exhibited some of birds taken. Brown Hawks (*Jeracidea berigora*), Desert Chats (*Ashbyia lovensis*), and Mrs. Morgan's Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius myrtae*) were seen up to the MacDonnell Ranges. Above these Ranges, in the grass-country, the birds changed. The country had deep creeks and heavy timber. In the big waterholes Spoonbills, Egrets, and White-fronted Herons were numerous. The birds were very tame. The Wild Turkeys walked into their camps. Many Native Companions were seen. In one flock there were over 100 birds, and they saw 20 to 30 dancing on one occasion. Emus

ran alongside the motor cars, and kangaroos merely moved out of their way. Right up to Darwin the Crimson-winged Parrots (*Psephotus pulcherrimus*) were plentiful. From Sturt Plain to Daly Waters Finches were very thick. At Barrow's Creek he obtained the Long-tailed Finch (*Poephila acuticauda*), Painted Finch (*Emblema picta*), Grey-headed Honey-eater (*Meliphaga keartlandi*), Grass Wren (*Amytornis textilis*), and White-fronted Honey-eater (*Glyciphila albifrons*)—its furthest north. The Banded Finch (*Lonchura bichenovii*), at Daly Waters. The Redthroat (*Pyrholaemus brunneus*) and Horsfield's Bush Lark (*Mirafra javanica*), in the MacDonnell Ranges. The Rufous-breasted Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) was found from Oodnadatta to beyond Daly Waters; the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo (*Chalcites basalis*) near Daly Waters, and also the Queensland border; the Little Wood Swallow (*Artamus minor*) from Oodnadatta to Darwin, also the Yellow-throated Minah (*Myzantha flavigula*). The Harmonious Shrike Thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), and the Black Tree Creeper (*Climacteris melanota*) were also observed; the Red-breasted Babbler (*Pomatostomus rubeculus*) from Crown Point up to Darwin. The Apostle Bird (*Struthidea cinerea*) were very common. The Pratincole (*Stiltia isabella*) were in hundreds on the grass plains from Newcastle Waters to the Queensland border. Naked-eyed Partridge Pigeons (*Geophaps smithi*) were very thick in the high grass in the Territory. The Flock Pigeons (*Histiophaps histrionica*) were found on the plain between Newcastle Waters and the Queensland border, and came to drink at the water pools in the evening in flocks of 500 to 600. Bronzewing Pigeons were numerous in the ranges. The White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike (*Graucalus hypoleucus*) and the Oriole (*Oriolus sagittatus*) were seen right through to Darwin and specimens of McGillivray's Parrot were obtained in Queensland. A Mopoke (*Ninox boobook*) was found on the plains between Newcastle Waters and Anthony's Lagoon. Cormorants—the four species—were in thousands at Newcastle Waters, and Pelicans were also very numerous there. White Egrets (*Egretta alba*) were plentiful there. Jabirus (*Xenorhynchus asiaticus*) were seen in the tropics. Rails were noticed in Darwin and numbers of quail were observed between each camp of the party. He had great difficulty in keeping any specimens taken because of the destructive hordes of ants everywhere in the north.

The Chairman, on behalf of the members, thanked the lecturer for the interesting evening.