

V.

*From HARRY S. SWARTH, Esq., Curator of Birds, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, Cal., U.S.A.*

29/5/23.

I have just read your communication in "The Emu" for January, 1923, regarding private collectors and private collections (and also comments of some of your opponents, in the April "Emu"), and, if you will pardon the liberty on the part of a stranger, I would like to assure you of my entire sympathy with you in your position. The situation in Australia seems to be extraordinarily similar to what it is here in America. Scientific workers in ornithology go ahead in their labours, saying little

or nothing in reply to the vituperation that is levelled at them by "bird-protectionists." The latter, with a few exceptions, ignore the fact that bird-protection started with the scientific men; they give the latter no credit for the possession of the least bit of knowledge as to what may or may not be proper protection, and they are always willing to avail themselves of the information the scientist can give them—and then revile him for obtaining such information in the only way it can be secured. I am a "professional" ornithologist, but I began—as I believe was the case with practically every other "museum ornithologist," if I can use the term—as a private collector, a boy who could shoot birds as he chose, and who emphatically did *not* abuse the privilege. If the present generation of boys is not permitted to "collect," there will be no working ornithologist worthy of the name to carry on serious study of the subject. Collecting does not exterminate species. In fact, shooting of any sort is not a serious factor with most small non-game birds, as far as I can see. "The man with the plough" is the one responsible for extermination of species, not the man with the gun.

I must stop before boring you too much with truisms that you know already, and which you can express better than I if need be. I merely wished to thank you for your able defence of the ornithologist of the future, who certainly will need a champion if he is *permitted* to accomplish that work which he should be *urged* to carry on.

---