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The South Australian Ornithological Association.

MONTHLY PROCEEDINGS.

—January, 1928.—

The monthly meeting was held at the Royal Society's Rooms on Friday, 27th January, 1928, at 8 p.m. The President (Mr. Edwin Ashby) was in the chair.

Shooting of Bustards.—Mr. Weidenbach reported that Wild Turkeys were being shot on Wardang Island. As this species is on the fully-protected list it was decided that the Hon. Secretary should inform the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game of the illegal shooting.

The Late Edgar R. Waite.—Feeling references were made to the death of Mr. Edgar R. Waite, Director of the S.A. Museum, on 19th instant, at Hobart, and it was resolved that a letter of condolence should be sent to his widow.

Bird Notes were handed in by Messrs. A. Crompton, J. W. Mellor, J. Neil McGilp, H. H. Newell, J. Sutton, and W. W. Weidenbach.

Galaha and Bare-eyed Cockatoos.—Mr. J. Neil McGilp reported that Galahs (*Kakatoe roseicapilla*) and Bare-eyed Cockatoos (*Kakatoe sanguinea*) had become great pests on out-back stations, as they came in great numbers to the troughs, bathed in the water, and so polluted it that stock refused to drink it. The loss of the water was a serious matter to the station-owners. He pointed out that whilst the White Cockatoo (*Kakatoe galerita*) was unprotected, these two—Galahs and Bare-eyed Cockatoos—were partially protected from 1st July to 31st January (both dates included). The Stockowners' Association had decided to ask the Minister of Agriculture to place the above-named two species on the totally-unprotected list. It was decided unanimously to follow a like course, and a letter is to be sent to the Stockowners' Association informing them of our decision.

Exhibits.—The following specimens of *Pachycephala rufogularis*, Red-throated Whistler, were exhibited:—By Mr. F. E. Parsons—♂, Karoonda, S.A., 14/4/1920; iris red, bill and feet black, total length $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches. ♀, Karoonda 22/4/1925; iris reddish brown, total length $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches. By Mr. Edwin Ashby—Adult male, full plumage, Wingamin, near Karoonda, 9/4/1913; iris red, feet and bill black, total length $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches, tarsus $1\frac{1}{8}$, wing 4 7-16, culmen $\frac{5}{8}$. This specimen was compared on 17/7/1918 with the type in the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, U.S.A., and is similar. ♂, juv., Wingamin, near Karoonda; iris purple brown, feet and bill black.

Amytornis modestus, Thick-billed Grass-Wren.—There are three specimens of this species in the S.A. Museum—one taken on Todmorden Station, 75 miles north-west of Oodnadatta, by Dr. A. Chenery, in July, 1896, not sexed; one, ♀, taken at Oodnadatta by J. R. B. Love on 20/1/1913; one, not sexed, taken at Fountain Springs by J. R. B. Love on 13/1/1913. Mr. Edwin Ashby has a ♀ taken at Fountain Springs by J. R. B. Love on 21/1/1913, and as this specimen has light underparts he sent it to the British-Museum for comparison with the types of *Amytornis goyderi*, Eyrean Grass-Wren. Fountain Springs are close to Hawker's Creek, which is a tributary of the Neale's River. The Springs are 58 miles south-west of Christmas Waters, on the Macumba, where *Amytornis goyderi* was obtained, 75 miles south-east of Oodnadatta, and 37 miles slightly north of west from the mouth of the Neale's River into Lake Eyre North. Under date of 15th November, 1927, Dr. Percy R. Lowe writes thus from the British Museum (Natural History):—"I am sorry to tell you that your *Amytornis* is not the long-lost *goyderi*. That, I think, is evident beyond doubt. I have compared it with all they have of the group at Tring (five only) and more especially with the type of *Diaphorillas modestus obscurior*, and it agrees with that bird very closely indeed, so that it seems certain that your bird belongs to the *modestus* group, and more particularly, as I have indicated, to the *obscurior* race. Apart from its colours (very bright), *goyderi* has a bill very reminiscent of *Paradoxornis*. That was the immediate impression I got of the bird as a whole, and Mr. Wells agreed with me. Your bird, therefore, you may be sure, is not conspecific with *goyderi*, the *modestus* group being quite distinct. . . ." The type of *D. m. obscurior* was obtained at Mount Arrowsmith, in the north-west corner of New South Wales, about 330 miles south-east of Fountain Springs.

Subject.—Mr. Edwin Ashby then gave a résumé of his visit to the Murchison and Nornalup districts in Western Australia.

—February, 1928.—

The monthly meeting was held at the Royal Society's Rooms on Friday, 24th February, 1928, at 8 p.m. The President (Mr. Edwin Ashby) was in the chair.

Prickly-pear-Land Commission, Queensland.— The following extracts from the Third Annual Report, being for the year ended 30th June, 1927, were read:—" The scheme was inaugurated on the 1st February, 1926, and since that date 57,392 Emus, 51,033 Crows, 8,247 Scrub-Magpies, and 52,573 Emu eggs have been destroyed. Particulars as to the numbers destroyed and the bonuses payable for the twelve months ended on 30th June, 1927, are given in the schedule below:—

	Number.	Bonus Payable.
Emus	48,951	£6,118 17 6
Crows	40,944	1,024 17 0
Scrub-Magpies ..	7,093	118 4 4
Emu Eggs	45,456	2,272 16 0
		<hr/>
		£9,534 14 10

There is no need here to dilate upon the necessity for the inauguration of the scheme for the destruction of certain birds that are spreading prickly-pear, as it was dealt with from all aspects in last year's report. Suffice it to say that the scheme had the support of the vast majority of landholders throughout the pear belt, and the members of the local authorities not only supported it but co-operated by acting as honorary receivers of the heads and eggs. . . . If a clump of pear were prevented from fruiting, that clump would not increase in size over a period of years. There is now no doubt that the cochineal materially retards, if it does not completely prevent, pear from fruiting, and with their wide distribution in the dense pear, in conjunction with the other cactus-destroying insects, the fruiting of prickly-pear will be completely controlled, and therefore the bird-destruction scheme should be discontinued as soon as can be arranged. The scheme has served its purpose well, and, allowing for full publicity which will require to be given, will cease to operate as from 1st December next, and all claims must be submitted for payment before the 1st January, 1928. . . . It is generally recognized that the Emu is a wide roamer; that the Crow will travel as far as 40 miles after feasting on pear fruit; that the Scrub-Magpie flies considerable distances. The vitality of the pear-seed is not destroyed in passing through the

digestive organs of these birds, but, on the other hand, the germinating powers of the seed are increased. How many additional pear plants, then, would otherwise have been brought into existence had the above number of birds not been killed? The answer is in millions, and shows how very necessary it was for the Commission to take the preventive action it did." The Scrub-Magpie is *Strepera graculina*, Pied Currawong (Bell-Magpie). The President said the slaughter was deplorable, but he was pleased to learn that it had now been stopped.

Unprotected Birds.—By a proclamation under the Animals and Birds Protection Acts, under date of 15th February, 1928, and published in the *S.A. Government Gazette* of 16th instant, the wild birds known as Corellas, Galahs, Blue Mountain Parrots, and King Parrots were transferred from Part II of the Third Schedule of the Animals and Birds Protection Act 1919 to Part II of the Fourth Schedule of the said Act, and shall be hereafter included in the list of birds unprotected. It was decided to inform the Minister that there are two species of birds known as Corellas—*Kakatoe sanguinea*, Little Corella (Bare-eyed Cockatoo), and *Kakatoe tenuirostris*, Corella (Long-billed Cockatoo). It was understood that the first named is the bird intended for the totally-unprotected schedule. The bird termed King Parrot is meant for the Musk Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta concinna*). The King Parrot is found in eastern Australia, and there is no record of its occurrence in South Australia. It was suggested that the scientific names should be given, so that no mistake could arise in the destruction of the bird, or leave room for escape in any prosecution by law.

S.A.O.A. Challenge Cup.—A letter was received from the Education Department enclosing a copy of the winning essays in the 1927 competition for the cup presented by this Association for perpetual competition amongst the schools. The winner was Thomas Tuckwell, of the Sandy Creek School.

Subject.—Mr. F. E. Parsons gave an account of "A Trip to the South-East of South Australia" made by Dr. Morgan, Mr. J. Neil McGilp, and himself in October, 1927, and exhibited specimens of some of the species referred to.