

*Obituary.***Obituary.**

William David Kerr MacGillivray, 1867-1933.

W. D. K. MacGillivray was born at Kallara Station, Darling River, N.S.W., in 1867, the son of Aberdeenshire emigres, of the MacGillivray clan. When three years old his father took up Eddington Station on the Flinders River, Q., and from then to the age of ten years he lived in an absolutely unspoilt country for the naturalist. His earliest associates were aboriginal children, and he picked up from them all that could be learned in the university of nature as an observer and hunter. Very early he formed a museum, and collected insects, animals, stones, and fossils. His interest became concentrated on oology, and this branch of natural history always remained his favourite study. Thus, with the help of friends, who supplied him occasionally with books and materials, the first ten years of his life were passed in ideal surroundings, but often in a certain amount of danger from the aborigines, who were at that time very wild. His first experience of school was at Townsville College, in 1885, at 18 years of age. Later he went to Melbourne and matriculated from the St. Kilda Scotch College. Oology occupied his leisure during his school days, and he collected widely in the vicinity of Melbourne. His medical course was entered on in 1886, and one of his first teachers was Baldwin Spencer. As a student he formed a close friendship with Dr. Ernest D'Ombrain, which lasted all his life, at the university in Victoria, and in New South Wales. As a schoolboy he joined the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club, and while a medical student was on its committee. After graduating he made full use of his opportunities for ornithological observation in Victoria and Tasmania whilst acting as *locum tenens*, or travelling as medical referee. Marrying in 1895 he first practised at Coleraine, being close to D'Ombrain at Casterton. He kept notes on the birds, mammals, and reptiles, which were added to when he moved to Hamilton in the same district. In 1901 MacGillivray went to Broken Hill, N.S.W., and there most of his active life was passed, and his marked humanitarian instincts made him the universal friend of rich and poor alike. Occupied by a prodigious practice, he yet found opportunity to explore the surrounding country for bird life, and there most of his best work was done. His son, now Dr. Ian MacGillivray, accompanied him from his earliest years, and the father has left a worthy successor in the field of ornithology. By a great stroke

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of luck W. M'Lennan came to Broken Hill, with an introduction from D'Ombrain, and he and MacGillivray made week-end trips, obtaining a great amount of material, including the Black-breasted Buzzard's (*Hamirostra melanosterna*) eggs in 1907-8-9, and also those of the Falcons—Grey (*Falco hypoleucus*), Black (*F. subniger*), Black-cheeked (*F. peregrinus*), and Little (*F. longipennis*). Every year the two and Ian made an excursion lasting a month, taking everything in their stride—animals, plants, minerals, and the native remains in the old aboriginal camps scattered over that vast area. In 1909 he sent M'Lennan to Cloncurry in the Gulf country to collect birds and eggs, and joined him in North Queensland in 1910, visiting Raine Island and Somerset, and exploring the scrubs. M'Lennan remained, and from the Pascoe River sent him two new Parrots, an *Eclectus* (now *Lorius*) and a *Geoffroyus*, a Honeyeater (*Glyci-chaera*), and a Finch (*Erythrura*)—thus adding four genera new to the Australian avifauna. In 1913 MacGillivray and his son, with Kershaw from Melbourne, joined M'Lennan, and again explored Raine Island, and made the trip to the Claudie River, N.Q., described in *The Emu*. When M'Lennan came back from the Northern Territory in 1916, an expedition was made to Cooper's Creek, and a great deal of work was done on the birds. In May, 1916, MacGillivray enlisted, and left for the front. On the journey he made notes on the sea-birds. He was stationed at Tidworth, and visited Mathews with M'Lennan. He later went to France with the No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Wimereux, and No. 3 Casualty Clearing Station at Soullens. He returned with the rank of Major. Whilst in France he obtained interesting notes from M'Lennan on the nests and eggs obtained by him whilst in the firing line. Back again in 1920 he took another trip to Cooper's Creek, and from Nappa Merrie Station visited the extensive floodwaters for water-birds. Next year we find him with Dr. Chenery, of Wentworth, at Callabonna Lake, and at the Bowilla floodwaters and Cawndilla Lake on the Darling River. Here he visited the great Pelican rookeries, and made extensive collections of plants and ethnological objects. In 1923 he was off to South-West Queensland after the Charleville Scrub-Wren, of which a good account is given in *The Emu*. The Capricorn Islands were visited for the first time in 1925, and on this trip and subsequent ones he got the materials for papers on the plants and birds of the Capricorn Group written for the Great Barrier Reef Committee. His data for the notable papers on the Albatrosses contributed to *The Emu* were obtained on a

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boat trip to Thursday Island in 1926. In 1927 he was once more at the Capricorns, and in 1928 he set off on a long motor-trip from Broken Hill to the Gregory River on the Gulf of Carpentaria. There he visited Eddington Station, where he had spent his boyhood, and was greeted by an old aboriginal, who was one of his co-workers fifty years before. He was back at the Capricorns in 1930 and 1932, and his last excursion was made in 1933 to the upper part of the Barrier Reef, where he unfortunately wounded his foot on the coral, an injury from which he had barely recovered at the time of his death. Right up to this he was writing a book on the Birds of Australia as a text-book for pupils and teachers of schools. He left to his son his large collection of eggs and birdskins and full notes of all his excursions from 1896 to 1933.

The writer knew MacGillivray for twenty-five years, but it was only in the last nine years that he was privileged to accompany him on excursions in the West Darling country. He was a most lovable man, and an incomparable naturalist. He was so "tuned in" to nature that nothing escaped his eye, and even when travelling at a rapid pace he picked up every little detail of plant and animal life. He had a critical knowledge of the flora of the West Darling, and as regards the birds he sensed their movements in an uncanny way. He was a fighter for bird protection, and during his life he saw that the sanctuaries he had been instrumental in establishing were kept inviolate, in spite of constant pressure by sportsmen. At his home in Broken Hill he had a wonderful menagerie of birds, kangaroos, and native bears, which, although in captivity, lived a very happy life under his constant care. A big man with a big heart he has left his mark on Australian ornithology, and it will endure for ever.

—R. H. Pulleine.
