

Observations at Ooldea.

To the Editorial Committee,
South Australian Ornithologist.

Dear Sirs,

In the S.A. Ornithologist for July 1st of this year Mr. A. S. LeSouef still holds that he was correct in his observation of the Ooldea birds, but states that he is likely to visit the locality again and will obtain specimens. What need was there for this when my work, extending over several months, has been published as far back as January, 1919. Four Ornithological trips to the Nullabor Plain, 1st in 1917, in *The Emu*, Vol. XVIII. Part 3.

The specimens were taken and identified by the writer, yet Mr. LeSouef contradicts this. Mr. LeSouef says under *Malurus melanotus*, Black-backed Wren—"I did not collect a specimen, I put them down as *M. melanotus* from locality and field observations." Now the Black-backed Wren is not found in any such locality for all Ornithologists know this species (*M. melanotus*) is confined to the mallee belts of the Murray. Since Mr. LeSouef wrote the letter quoted above, he visited Ooldea and on his way through Adelaide left skins of *Malurus calainus* with Mr. Zeitz, Ornithologist to the S.A. Museum, evidently for identification, thus showing he did not know the bird when he handled it, for they are all *M. calainus*. Speaking of the Owls, Mr. LeSouef says, "On looking into the hole I was surprised to see two large dark owls and not the cave or light form of the masked I was expecting. The birds were only in sight for a few seconds, but they were dark brown with absolutely no white on them, certainly darker than any phase of the masked that I have ever seen." Now I took an owl from the very hole that Mr. LeSouef named and it is *Tyto novaehollandiae* which is much whiter on the breast than the Masked-or-Barn Owl. The whole of the under-surface being white with the absence of almost any markings.

S. A. WHITE.
