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## The South Australian Ornithological Association.

### MONTHLY PROCEEDINGS.

—Meeting held on 16th December, 1921.—

Professor J. B. Cleland in the chair. Miss H. Lilius Sanderson, † of Killingworth, Strangways Terrace, North Adelaide, was nominated for membership. The matter of holding the Egg Collection in trust for the S.A. Museum was discussed, and it was decided to let the matter stand over until the next meeting. Mr. J. Sutton handed in an interesting note recording a Fan-tailed Cuckoo being fed by Blue Wrens in the National Park. The remainder of the evening was taken up in inspecting the eggs of the late Dr. Angove's collection.

—Meeting held on 27th January, 1922.—

Mr. F. M. Angel in the chair. Miss H. Lilius Sanderson, who was nominated at the last meeting, was duly elected as a member. A clutch of eggs of the White-eyed Duck (*Nyroca australis*) taken at Moorara Lake, 100 miles north of Wentworth, N.S.W., on 20th September, 1921, by Dr. A. Chenery was presented by him to the Association per Dr. Morgan. The Hon. Secretary was requested to thank the donor. After some informal discussion a resolution was carried "That, should the Association become defunct, the egg collection and cabinet shall be handed over to and become the property of the South Australian Museum." Mr. A. M. Lea, who was present by invitation, informed the meeting of the situation with regard to the publishing of his researches into the contents of birds' stomachs. He has already details of some 1,000/1,200 stomachs, with 300/400 still to examine. The particulars will run into 300/400 pages and the summaries a further 100 pages of a publication the size of the "Ornithologist." The publication may be done by the Board of

Governors of the Museum. Mr. Lea read some of his notes and appealed to members to send him information with regard to "snake" and "fruit" eating birds. He mentioned that although the White Eye (*Zosterops lateralis*) was known to be very partial to grapes, in 38 stomachs examined he had found only one containing grape seeds. He also stated that he had not yet secured the stomach of a Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Uroaetus audax*). Captain White and Mr. E. Ashby congratulated Mr. Lea on his work, and the Chairman also commented on the value of the work and felt sure our members would only be too pleased to help him with notes, information, and stomachs of birds. Dr. A. M. Morgan exhibited a skin of the Bristle Bird (*Sphenura broadbenti*) taken at Robe, S.A., in December, 1921. The skin was that of a young bird. Mr. F. E. Parsons exhibited the nest of a Black and White Fantail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) built at the base of the middle prong of a broken three-pronged fork. The broken fork was stuck into the fascia board in a verandah at Findon, and when Mr. Parsons saw the nest first it contained three young ones, so he waited for a fortnight for the young to leave and then secured the exhibit. Mr. Edwin Ashby showed skins of four birds taken by himself recently at Kilsyth, near Mount Dandenong, Victoria—one of a Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*); a male Rufous-breasted Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) (with this bird he brought for comparison a specimen of similar birds from the Northern Territory, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, and they showed marked difference in colouration); an Olive-backed Oriole (*Mimetes sagittata*); and a Square-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis pyrrophanus*). Mr. Ashby pointed out that this last-named bird was very like a Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*), but its call was more like that of the Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*), but ran down the scale, whereas the call of the Pallid Cuckoo runs up the scale. Mr. A. M. Lea also produced some pellets from a bird for identification, but the members present were not in agreement on the point. Captain White exhibited three specimens of the Australian Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)—one from Adelaide, the second from Nullabor Plain, and the third from Sturt's Creek. The third bird he thought was between the Adelaide and Nullabor birds, and was a good sub-species—the colour on the back was a much darker brown, and the black markings were also darker. He also showed a Red-chested Quail (*Turnix Pyrothorax*) which had been shot recently at Yankalilla and handed to him by Mr. B. Marshall. This was thought to be the second noted instance of this par-

ticular bird in South Australia. Captain White also stated that the injudicious opening of the quail shooting season earlier this year than usual had proved his own contention that there would be too many young birds about. Mr. B. Marshall had told him that recently he had been out after quail, and after the fifth shot he had put his gun back in the motor, as he found he had shot birds with many young left in the nest or "running about like a lot of spiders." At the Captain's own place he had had a wearisome time in trying to stop illicit duck shooting, which shooting he attributed to the announcement in the daily papers, emanating, he thought, from the Fisheries Department, that fine bags of gante were being got. These so-called sportsmen had been shooting plover and magpies as well. Captain White then gave a fine lecture on the Yanco Settlement, N.S.W. (aided by a good map), and of the birds there. Last year he had partly investigated the question of the usefulness or otherwise of the birds to be found there, and he completed the enquiry recently, travelling over 400 miles by motor. He noticed a great alteration in the number of birds to be seen, especially where the timber had been and was being destroyed. There were still great numbers of "Starling" (the local name for Wood Swallows). He had pointed out what would be the final result if this deforestation was continued in such a wholesale manner, and had recommended the establishment of several sanctuaries and the fencing of them in so as to give the young trees a chance to grow. He was informed that a species of Lyre-bird was to be found in the McPherson Range. He had taken a rapid census of the number of birds seen to the square mile on each of his trips and mentioned the different figures. He exhibited the skins of the following birds taken by him for stomach investigation:—Peaceful Dove (*Geopelia placida*), Rose-breasted Cockatoo (*Cacatua roseicapilla*), Blue-faced Honey-eater (*Entomyzon cyanotis*), Regent Honey-eater (*Zanthomyza phrygia*), White-face (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), Caterpillar-eater (*Campophaga tricolor*), Brown Tree Creeper (*Climacteris picumna*), Rufous Song Lark (*Ptenoedus matthewsi*), Red-tipped Diamond Bird (*Pardalotus striatus*).

Mr. Edwin Ashby, in congratulating Captain White on his work in endeavouring to get sanctuaries established, said he thought that not much value could be placed on the census of birds on fast motor journeys, and instanced trips in Western Australia on which no birds were seen, yet before dawn many birds could be heard singing. The Chairman thanked Captain

White for his very interesting lecture, and the meeting closed at 10 p.m.

Messrs. J. W. Mellor and J. Sutton handed in bird notes for the month.

—Meeting held on 24th February, 1922.—

Mr. F. M. Angel in the chair. It was reported that Mr. F. R. Zeitz was seriously ill, and a motion expressing sympathy was passed, and the Hon. Secretary was instructed to convey that to him by letter.

A letter was received from Mr. A. C. Minchin, Director S.A. Zoological and Acclimatization Society's Gardens, advising with regard to the paragraph in the "Ornithologist" of January, 1922, on the shipment of Australian animals and birds by the Australian Zoological Control Board, that there was no such Board in existence, nor was his Society in any way "connected with the shipment referred to." Members were pleased to have this contradiction. Dr. A. M. Morgan exhibited photographs of Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) and their nests taken at the Baudin Rocks, about six miles from Robe, S.A. In two instances two eggs were in a nest—a very unusual occurrence. Bird notes for the month were handed in by Messrs. R. C. Beck, J. W. Mellor, and J. Sutton. Captain White mentioned having seen at Fulham during this month the Sordid Wood Swallows (*Artamus sordidus*) with young. Professor J. B. Cleland then gave a very interesting lecture on the subject of the taking of a "Bird Census." The method he adopts is to note down, just as one scores the runs at cricket, the numbers of each kind of bird as one sees them whilst travelling along by motor, coach, or buggy or whilst walking. The reliability of the method depends on the ease with which any species can be recognized. The distance on each side of the track over which the birds can be identified will vary with the type of country and the species of the birds. Nevertheless the results may be taken as the *minimum number* of certain species over certain areas. The census taken in South Australia (chiefly) by the lecturer covers journeys from Adelaide to Mt. Compass (via Willunga), Encounter Bay, Waitpinga, Strathalbyn, Wellington, Point McLeay, Milang, Finnis, Goolwa, Renmark, Morgan to Cobdogla, Monash, Berri, Barmera, Quorn to Pichi Richi Pass, Parachilna, Blinman, Wirralpa Station, Port Augusta, Iron Knob. The journeys covered a distance of about 1,318 miles. The number of species of native birds seen was 140, and the individuals more than 11,249, about nine

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per mile. In addition five introduced species, totalling 4,754 individuals, were also noted. The lecturer had taken a previous census of birds in journeys in New South Wales (chiefly) over a distance of 1,339½ miles, an account of which has already appeared in the "Emu," and a comparison of the numbers of some of the same species will prove interesting. The figures in brackets are for New South Wales; the first ones in each instance represent the birds seen in South Australia. Peaceful Dove, 23 (118); Kestrel, 46 (37); total Hawks, etc., 138 (96); Rosella, 91 (236); Red-backed Parrot, 84 (417); Laughing Kingfisher; 63 (126); Welcome Swallow, 644 (595); Fairy and Tree Martin, 1,722 (2,919); Brown Flycatcher (Jacky Winter), 25 (237); Willie Wagtail, 177 (317); White-fronted Chat, 324 (92); Magpie Lark, 179 (765); Noisy Miner, 283 (793); Ground Lark (Pipit), 410 (285); Crow, 1,128 (168); Magpie, 920 (565). Captain White, Mr. J. W. Mellor, and the Chairman thanked Professor Cleland for the lecture and pointed out the great amount of detail required to compile the figures quoted, and hoped that the address would be printed *in extenso*.

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