

complete the proposed draft for the printer. Fifty copies of the proposed draft list are to be printed and distributed for criticism and comment. Such will be fully considered by the committee, and it is hoped that the second edition of the "Check-list" will be finalized at the Sydney congress next year.

NOTES ON THE SUPPOSED "EXTINCT" BIRDS OF THE
SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

By EDWIN ASHBY, F.L.S., M.B.O.U., WITTUNGA, BLACKWOOD,
S.A.

FOLLOWING on the R.A.O.U. Congress at Perth and Yallingup, the president of the Union (Mr. C. A. Barnard), Mr. J. W. Mellor, and the writer proceeded to Ellensbrook, on the coast, half-way between Cape Naturaliste and the Leeuwin, this being the type-locality for Mr. Milligan's *Sphenura littoralis* (the Lesser Bristle-Bird), also an old habitat of *Psophodes nigrigularis* (the Black-throated Coachwhip-Bird). It also is not far from one of the recorded localities for *Atrichornis clamosa* (the Noisy Scrub-Bird). While many interesting birds were noted during our three days' stay in that charming locality, none of the species named was met with. Nevertheless, information was obtained respecting the causes of their disappearance and the localities where they should now be looked for.

At Ellensbrook the hills slope steeply from the elevated forest country down to the coast, and that portion fronting the Indian Ocean for half a mile or more back is more or less sandy and covered densely with low bushes, one of the commonest being a pink *Pimelea*, which forms a low, dense cover. We were informed that in years gone by this scrub used to be about 4 feet high, but the continual fires put through with a view to improving the herbage for sheep have effectually reduced the scrub to the height of 18 inches or 2 feet. Large patches of sedge and rushes are still to be found on the flats. Miss Bussell showed us the spot, close to the homestead, where Mr. Milligan obtained the type of *Sphenura littoralis*. Being close to the house, on the side of the creek, a little patch of unburnt scrub still remains, and it was in this surviving patch of low bush that Mr. Milligan obtained the bird, called by Miss Bussell the "Rain-Bird." Evidently it must be searched for in low coastal scrubs not swept by constant fires. The same applies to the Black-throated Coachwhip-Bird, which frequented the same spots as the Bristle-Bird. No doubt such unburnt country exists between Ellensbrook and the Leeuwin, but it is probably difficult of access. We learnt that such bush exists about Cape Naturaliste. We saw something of it during our stay at Yallingup, and have reason to believe that the Bristle-Bird is in the immediate neighbourhood.

Another interesting fact is that *Leipoa ocellata* (the Mallee-Fowl) is to be found at Cape Naturaliste. My informant had seen the birds and found the nests quite recently. This bird needs in-

vestigating in this locality. It seems almost certain that the *Leipoa* living in this apparently isolated and certainly wet locality will show some specialized differences; one would expect that, at least, it will prove to be a new sub-species.

I met one resident living back from the coast in the forest who evidently knew the Noisy Scrub-Bird. He described its loud ascending whistle and its build and colour most accurately. He said he had heard it occasionally in the big timber, close to the spot where we were talking, within the last 18 months. He said it kept to the thick under-bushes in the karri country, and would sometimes, when disturbed, fly up a few feet and cling to the rough bark at the base of the tree-trunks, apparently to enable it to take stock of the intruder, but otherwise it kept close to the ground or in the low bushes. I feel confident that this bird still exists in these extensive untouched forests. Probably it should be searched for at the pairing season, when it will be calling; otherwise the finding of it in these immense forests is next to impossible.

BIRDS OBSERVED DURING THE VISIT OF THE R.A.O.U.
TO THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT—OFFICIAL
REPORT.

BY S. A. WHITE, C.M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U.

THE period over which the following observations were made ran into barely a week. The area worked extended from Cape Naturaliste in the north to the Margaret River (although observations were made down to Cape Leeuwin). Our field extended from the sea on the west for some distance inland to the east. The country varied much in character. First there were sand dunes in places facing the ocean, and at other times rugged rocky coast-line, at the back of which was invariably a narrow belt of dwarf vegetation characteristic of such an exposed situation. Further back, undulating country covered in forest trees and undergrowth. In places deep ravines extended to the very coast-line, and here and there down these ravines small streams found their way to the sea. The rainfall in the winter months is very heavy, and during our stay the days were bright and often warm; yet there was not one night that rain did not fall, but not a sign of water lying about could be seen next morning. But this can easily be understood when it is seen that the country consists mostly of a light sandy soil over a very porous limestone, with in places a network of caves underneath.

The vegetation was striking, for there were big forest trees stretching over vast areas of country—first of all the jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), karri (*E. diversicolor*); but the most widely distributed tree is the so-called "red gum" (*E. calophylla*), the latter bearing a wealth of white blossoms. The undergrowth consists of a wonderful growth of flowering shrubs and plants, forming much food for bird-life. First of all the banksias play a