

This important work must now be nearing completion, having been commenced over 10 years ago, and as the last decade has been rich in Australian ornithological discovery, perhaps Mr. Etheridge will recommend to the trustees of the Museum, which he represents, the necessity of publishing an appendix to this "Special Catalogue." Mr. North must possess much that is new and of interest concerning species already dealt with by him in previous parts, or species not mentioned at all.

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### Correspondence.

#### MUNGOOSES AND RATS.

*To the Editors of "The Emu."*

SIRS,—Mr. C. Coles is credited in *The Emu*\* with having said—"The mongoose released in Fiji had already mated with the rats there, and the hybrid destroyed birds." I have lived in Fiji for four years, and have seen great numbers of mongooses and rats, but have never seen or heard of a hybrid between the two.

Is it likely that two such dissimilar animals would mate when they are both living under natural conditions? One might as well expect a dog to mate with a cat, or a lion with a cow. Readers of Mr. Coles's statement might infer that the mongoose itself did not destroy birds. This animal was brought to Fiji to kill the rats, but has failed to do so. It is a great pest amongst poultry, destroying chickens and eggs, and no doubt does the same with the wild birds.

It would be interesting to know where Mr. Coles obtained information about the rat-mongoose hybrid.—I am, &c.,

Rarawai, Fiji, 14/2/12.

A. F. SMITH.

[Mr. Coles's statement appeared in a report of the proceedings at the R.A.O.U. Congress at Sydney. The editors are not responsible for any opinion thus expressed. It is, of course, not possible for the mongoose to breed with the rat—one belongs to the Order Carnivora and the other to the Order Rodentia.—EDS.]

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### South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE usual monthly meeting was held in the Royal Society's rooms, North-terrace, when Capt. S. A. White presided. The secretary (Mr. J. W. Mellor) read a report from the Police Department, stating it had been unsuccessful in detecting the persons who killed Flycatchers lately at the Reedbeds. Mr. Mellor tabled a specimen plate on a work being compiled in Europe by Mr. Dyseman on the classification of the world's ornithology. Capt. White read extracts from letters written by a lady of Yorke Peninsula. These letters were forwarded by Mrs. Bunday, and contained some interesting descriptions of bird-life on the Peninsula. The practice of destroying bird-life on the River Murray by holiday-makers while passing

\* Vol. xi., p. 149.

up and down the river was again referred to, and it was thought advisable to request the authorities to keep a sharp look-out for law-breakers. Mr. E. Ashby showed specimens from the Lower Murray districts, and explained some interesting habits and distinctions in same. Among other specimens were the Little Eagle (*Nisaetus morphnoides*), Nankeen Night-Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*), Black Shag or Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Pied Cormorant (*P. hypoleucus*), Chestnut-backed Ground-Thrush (*Cinclosoma castanonotum*), the Shy Scrub-Wren (*Hylacola cauta*), and the eggs of the last-named bird. Mr. Robert Zietz (ornithologist to the Museum) stated that half a dozen Cormorants had been shot for scientific purposes, and that he had examined the contents of each bird's stomach, which were found to contain numbers of fresh-water crayfish or yabbies, with but one or two non-edible fish. That went to prove that the birds did more good than harm.

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### Bird Observers' Club.

THE monthly meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the residence of Dr. G. Horne, Queen's-parade, Clifton Hill, on Wednesday evening, 20th December, 1911. Twelve members accepted Dr. Horne's invitation to dinner, and two additional members attended the meeting. Before dinner the aviaries were inspected, a fine pair of young Maned Geese being the centre of attraction. A beautiful specimen of the Yellow-tufted Honey-eater was also much admired. At 8.30 o'clock Dr. H. W. Bryant, president, took the chair. A discussion took place in connection with the Gould League of Bird Lovers. On the motion of Mr. Chas. Barrett, seconded by Mr. O. W. Rosenhain, it was decided that fraternal greetings be sent to the committee of the New South Wales Gould League of Bird Lovers. Mr. L. G. Chandler, hon sec., said he had written to Major Semmens regarding the protection of Mutton-Birds at Cape Woolamai, and had not yet received a reply. Mr. A. J. Campbell thought that there was not the slightest danger of the rookery becoming deserted. The birds were late in arriving this year, but were as numerous as ever. Several members spoke on the subject, and it was decided that no action be taken in the matter until the secretary heard from Major Semmens. Mr. F. E. Wilson read an interesting paper on a trip to the Mallee. Mr. Wilson discovered a new Honey-eater, and Mr. F. E. Howe, F.Z.S., his companion, secured specimens of the undescribed female of the Mallee Emu-Wren. A series of bird-skins collected during the trip was shown, also photographs of the nests of the Scrub-Robin and the Mallee Emu-Wren. A long discussion on the paper followed. Drs. Bryant and C. Ryan, Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., and the hon. secretary were appointed as a sub-committee to meet a committee of the Game Protection Society to discuss the proposed game-bag limit. Mr. Mattingley stated that he had been informed that poison laid for rabbits in the Alexandra district had destroyed innumerable Great Brown Kingfishers and Magpies. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the host and hostess.

The first meeting of the Bird Observers' Club in 1912 was held at the residence of Mr. O. W. Rosenhain, "Koala," Balaclava-road, East St. Kilda, on Wednesday evening, 17th January. Mr. Rosenhain had invited members to dinner, and thirteen accepted the invitation. At 8 o'clock Dr. H. W. Bryant, the president, took the chair, and the hon. secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting. The hon. sec. then read two letters from Major Semmens, and reports from Inspector Rowson, of the Fisheries and Game Department, and Constable M'Donald, of Wonthaggi, regarding the Mutton-Bird rookeries on Phillip Island. A lengthy discussion took place, and it was decided that the birds should have some measure of protection. Mr. A. J. Campbell moved, and Mr. C. Barrett