

Bird Observers' Club.

THE monthly meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the Mia-Mia Tea Rooms, Collins-street, Melbourne, on Wednesday evening, 21st February, 1912. Mr. J. A. Leach was the host for the evening. Dr. H. W. Bryant, the president, occupied the chair. Mr. L. G. Chandler, hon. sec., stated that the sub-committee appointed to deal with the question of game bags had fixed the limit to be proposed at 20 and 15 brace respectively for Quail and Duck. Mr. T. H. Tregellas read extracts from a letter which he had recently received from a friend living near Kerang. It was stated that several "big guns" were in use in the swamps around Kerang. In March, 1911, Cygnets were ruthlessly shot on the lagoons by visiting sportsmen. The hon. secretary read a report of the interview with Mr. Graham (Minister for Agriculture) on the subject of the close season for Quail. Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc., stated that he had since conferred with Dr. Cameron and Major Semmens. Dr. Cameron was much impressed with the views put forward by the deputation. Mr. C. Cole said that at Heidelberg on the opening day of the season there appeared to be a number of young and half-grown birds about. Mr. J. A. Leach referred to the great success of the Gould League of Bird Lovers. He praised Messrs. H. W. Wilson and C. Fenner for their excellent work in connection with the League. Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., moved that a sub-committee consisting of Messrs. J. A. Leach, H. W. Wilson, F. E. Wilson, C. Fenner, Charles Barrett, and L. G. Chandler, be formed to conduct the business of the League. The motion was seconded by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., and carried. It was unanimously decided that the money be placed in a trust account, to be called the B.O.C. Gould League Trust Account. Mr. C. Barrett then read the report of the sub-committee appointed to deal with the Gould League essays. The report was adopted. Mr. D. Le Souëf read the report of the sub-committee which was appointed to suggest a means whereby the Mutton-Birds on Phillip Island might be preserved. After some discussion, Mr. A. J. Campbell moved that the following suggestions be added to the list of recommendations:—"(1) That there should be a fee per head for campers, or toll on every dozen eggs; (2) that no burrows should be opened by hand or by the aid of any implement whatever." The motion was seconded by Mr. F. E. Wilson, and carried. On the motion of Mr. Leach, seconded by Mr. H. W. Wilson, the report was adopted.

The March meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the residence of Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., Zoological Gardens, Parkville, on Thursday evening, 21st March, 1912. Dr. C. Ryan and Mr. Le Souëf were joint hosts. Before dinner a tour was made of the gardens. A fine specimen of the White-plumed Egret (*Herodias timoriensis*), domiciled in the large flight aviary, was greatly admired. Mr. Le Souëf stated that when the Duck season opened a number of birds made the gardens a sanctuary. At 8 p.m. Dr. Ryan was voted to the chair. Mr. C. Fenner was unanimously elected a member of the Club. Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley proposed that Mr. H. W. Wilson be made a life member of the Club, in appreciation of his past services. The motion, which was seconded by Mr. E. Brooke Nicholls, was carried unanimously. Messrs. C. Barrett and E. Brooke Nicholls were re-elected as the B.O.C. representatives on the committee of the National Parks Association. Mr. Le Souëf read a paper on the Mutton-Birds' rookeries at Phillip Island and elsewhere. At one rookery on Phillip Island he saw sixteen birds which had been cut open. Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley said he thought that it would be a good idea to put rings on the legs of a number of Mutton-Birds. An offer of rings made by Mr. Dyer was accepted with thanks. Dr. Chas. Ryan offered to give £1 towards the expense of buying rings. It was finally decided to make a trip to Phillip Island. Mr. Mattingley read a paper entitled "Birds

in Ancient Medicine." Mr. C. Cole mentioned that he had seen the Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroeca phoenicea*) at Hawthorn (Vic.) on 20th March. Mr. J. Ross stated that a fisherman friend of his had seen, on 20th March, a pair of Flame-breasted Robins pass over the boat, near Queenscliff (Vic.) The birds were flying north, and were about 8 miles from land.

The monthly meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the residence of Dr. H. W. Bryant, "Tarella," Toorak, on Wednesday evening, 17th April. The host occupied the chair. The chairman read a letter received from Mr. O. W. Rosenhain, dated from Egypt. Mr. Rosenhain described several species of birds which he had met with in the valley of the Nile. He also forwarded two specimens of Quail shot in that country. Mr. Laidlaw was unanimously elected a member of the Club. Mr. L. G. Chandler read a brief paper on the Mistletoe-Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*), and a discussion arose regarding the habits of the species. Mr. T. H. Tregellas exhibited three specimens of the Mistletoe-Bird. Mr. Chas. Barrett showed a photograph of an Emu, taken at Wilson's Promontory. Mr. F. E. Wilson exhibited nest of the Mistletoe-Bird, and Mr. L. G. Chandler photographs of young Mistletoe-Birds and nest.

FIELD OUTING : RINGING MUTTON-BIRDS.

Several members of the B.O.C. spent a very profitable and enjoyable week-end on Phillip Island from the 20th April to 22nd April, 1912.

The party drove from Cowes to the rookery at "The Narrows." Much useful information was elicited from our driver concerning the habits of the Mutton-Bird (*Puffinus brevicaudus*). One interesting statement was that the young birds do not go straight out to sea on their first flight, but make several short journeys, and return to their burrows for a day or two before finally leaving the locality.

At "The Narrows" the members of the party got to work with wire crooks, but it was difficult to draw the nestlings from the burrows, and only 13 birds were ringed. The rings were numbered and dated, and had the inscription "B.O.C., Melbourne," stamped upon them. A wooden stake was driven into the ground at the entrance to each burrow containing a ringed bird, and a brass tag, dated and numbered to correspond with the ring, was affixed to it. By this means the Club hopes to determine next season whether the birds return to their birthplace to nest. Three young Mutton-Birds were caught in the surf; they had probably been driven in by the heavy wind which prevailed on the previous night. Rings were placed on their legs, and they were then liberated. As it was the first visit to Phillip Island of several members of the party a visit was made to Cape Wollomai. Birding had evidently been going on, as a number of heads of young Mutton-Birds were noted. A certain amount of cruelty is involved in drawing a young bird from its burrow. An egg-crook is used, with the wire cut so as to form two prongs at the end; this is worked behind the bird, which is dragged out with the spikes digging into its body. The remains of several old birds were found entangled in the barbed-wire fences at Wollomai. This wire probably causes the death of a large number of birds. It was noticed, too, that cattle had broken through the soil into many of the burrows. At Wollomai the party met Inspector Rowson, of the Fisheries and Game Department.

The party returned to "The Narrows," and, after tea, sat down and waited for the young birds to leave their burrows. The first bird appeared at about 7 p.m.; it was captured and a ring placed on its leg. Altogether 42 birds were ringed during the trip. Of course, the burrows could not be marked in the evening. The first bird caught in the evening was one of the ringed ones that had been taken from the surf earlier in the day. The old birds had evidently deserted their nestlings, as none was seen.

It is hoped that if any of the ringed birds are picked up dead in any part of the world information will be forwarded to Mr. L. G. Chandler, the hon. secretary of the B.O.C., 56 Dixon-street, Malvern, Victoria.

South Australian Ornithological Association.

A MEETING of the South Australian Ornithological Association was held on the evening of 23rd February, Mr. M. Symonds Clark presiding. Mr. J. W. Mellor reported having noted the Ground-Thrush (*Oreocichla lunulata*) at the Reedbeds lately, where it had not previously been seen. He thought perhaps the fires in the Mount Lofty Ranges had something to do with its appearance on the plains. Mr. F. R. Zietz showed a collection of Finches, the property of the Museum, 19 species in all. Mr. J. W. Mellor gave an account of the re-discovery of the Spotted-throated Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis osculans*) in the Mount Lofty Ranges in September last. He also gave an account of his securing a specimen of the Darker Turquoise Wren (*Malurus whitei*), which had not been shown since it was named by Mr. A. J. Campbell, of Melbourne, after the late Mr. Samuel White, of the Reedbeds (S.A.)

The thirteenth annual meeting of the Association was held at the Institute, North-terrace, on the evening of 29th March, Captain S. A. White presiding. There was a good attendance. The honorary secretary (Mr. J. W. Mellor), in his annual report, stated that exceptionally good work had been carried out by the Association during the past year, notably the lease to the Association of the islands in the Coorong for the purpose of protecting the native birds and allowing them to breed there. For the purpose of preventing them being molested by so called sportsmen and other visitors, a custodian had been appointed, who knew the locality thoroughly. Another notable work had been the placing of Mallee-Fowl (*Lipoa ocellata*) on the National Reserve at Cape Borda, Kangaroo Island, where they were free from the ravages of the fox, which was fast exterminating these remarkable birds on the mainland. It was hoped that the residents of the island would all act as special custodians to see that the birds were rigidly protected wherever they might roam, as in years to come, when the birds were extinct on the mainland, the island would be a novelty to the world, and a place of exceptional interest to visitors. New members had joined the Association, and the general interest now displayed in the study and protection of native birds was on the increase. Amounts in connection with the Mallee-Fowl fund, to place them on Kangaroo Island, had come in satisfactorily, and donations were still welcomed. The honorary secretary read a letter from Mr. A. H. Anderson, of Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, urging the protection of the much-abused Cormorant, and giving interesting details relative to his observations upon the habits of these birds, whose chief food consisted of many of the enemies of the fishes' spawn. It was resolved to move in the matter, and the honorary secretary was deputed to interview the authorities. The sudden death of Dr. W. T. Angove, of Tea-tree Gully, which occurred in London, was referred to, and it was decided to write a letter of condolence to his widow and family, and also place on record his good work done during his connection with the Association. Mr. F. E. Parsons, of Adelaide, was elected a member. Mr. J. W. Mellor tabled a specimen copy of a work entitled "The Game-Birds and Water-Fowl of South Africa," now being written by Major B. Horsbrugh. The work was favourably commented upon by those present, the coloured plates being excellent. Captain S. A. White drew attention to the first issue of a new periodical being published in England upon Australian bird-life, and edited by Mr. G. M. Mathews, F.R.S.E., ornithologist, and entitled *The Austral Avian Record*. Captain White also showed several birds secured near Meningie,