

"Alfred John North, Ornithologist: an Appreciation," by G. M. Mathews. *Austral Avian Record*, vol. iii., part 6, p. 129.

"Flinders Chase: a Reserve for Fauna and Flora."

This pamphlet gives an account of the movement inaugurated by the Royal Society of South Australia to induce the State Government to set aside the western end of Kangaroo Island as a reserve under the name of Flinders Chase. A committee, consisting of Messrs. S. Dixon, J. M. Black, and S. A. White, has been appointed to conduct a campaign to secure this object. It is proposed to plant suitable trees, introduce members of the Australian fauna threatened with extinction, utilize the native plants and introduced trees, and form a holiday and health resort. Members of the R.A.O.U. will unite in wishing every success to such a laudable endeavour to utilize what is at present an unprofitable area of 1,000 square miles.

### Conversazione.

THE October conversazione of the R.A.O.U. was held on Wednesday, 3rd, at the rooms, Temple Court, Collins-street, and there was a good attendance of members, including Mr. J. A. Hill, of Lubeck, and Mr. H. Quiney, of Mortlake. Dr. J. A. Leach occupied the chair.

Mr. A. J. Campbell, on behalf of Mr. H. L. White, tabled an interesting collection of bird skins that had been made by Mr. S. W. Jackson in Central Queensland. A feature of the exhibit was the very excellent series of the Letter-winged Kite, showing all stages, from the nestling to the adult bird. Mr. Campbell said that these specimens had been procured not far distant from where his type clutch of eggs of this species had come from. These skins were accompanied by beautiful sets of eggs sent over by Mr. White to enrich local private collections, and three very handsome sets to be added to the R.A.O.U. collection. Other very interesting skins were those of the Desert Chats (*Ashbyia lovensis*), and a very striking *Malurus* of the *leucopterus* type—undoubtedly a good new sub-species, now named *M. l. diamantina*. Included amongst the skins were specimens of a Raven and Crow, and Mr. Campbell indicated the usual methods of distinguishing between these two birds. Mr. J. A. Hill said that, whilst these birds undoubtedly destroyed much insect life, yet they wrought so much damage amongst the sheep flocks, and in such a cruel manner, that he considered them as being most undesirable vermin. Mr. Quiney attributed his long run of successful fodder crops to his leaving these birds unmolested, whilst his neighbours' occasional failures were probably due to the fact that they persecuted them at every opportunity.

Mr. Mattingley said that the U.S.A. Fisheries Bureau listed Crows amongst the beneficial birds, as at certain times of the year

they visited the sea coasts and accounted for great numbers of star-fishes, which were known to prey upon oysters and whelks.

Mr. Gerald Hill said that he was very pleased to inspect such an interesting exhibit of skins, especially as some of them were very familiar to him. He stated that, whilst it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between Letter-winged and Black-shouldered Kites when at rest, when on the wing it is quite a simple matter.

Mr. Chubb called attention to the fact that the immature Kites were marked as to their sex, and said that in very young birds he had found it impossible to ascertain the sex. He wondered how Mr. Jackson had accomplished the feat. Other members testified as to the same difficulty with young birds.

Extracts were read from South Australian newspapers by the chairman, in which it was stated that Mr. Mathews's collection of bird skins was under offer to the South Australian Museum, and that to enable it to be purchased another £6,000 would have to be found. Several members expressed painful surprise that after the various State Governments had given permission for Mr. Mathews to procure skins of our birds to enable him to produce his work, and also that, as so many valuable skins had been presented to Mr. Mathews by Australian ornithologists, it should be necessary for Australia to buy this collection back again. It seemed possible also that if the money could not be raised the collection would be offered elsewhere. The types, at any rate, of Australian birds should certainly be Australian property, or at least lodged in Australia; yet it seemed possible that, as in the case of the Gouldian collection, they might be lost to us.

It was arranged that Mr. F. E. Wilson should furnish an account of the monthly conversaziones for *The Emu*.

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## Review.

### "JUNGLE PEACE."

["Jungle Peace," by William Beebe, Curator of Birds, New York Zoological Park, and Director of Tropical Research Station. Illustrated from photographs. New York: Henry Holt and Co. Price, 1.75 dols. net.]

"Of making many books there is no end," but no book made is like Mr. Beebe's "Jungle Peace." Mr. Beebe is known to Australians as an eminent ornithologist, and his society subscribes to *The Emu*, but they may not know that he had been an aviator in the Great World War, or that he has such an artistic and convincing way of writing his knowledge and observations gained in the field. Facts, especially nature facts, are often stranger than fiction, and it has not been overstated when a reviewer says Mr. Beebe's style "has a magic which transforms fact." So it is with his field observations in the jungles of British Guiana. The