

Report of State Secretary for Western Australia for 1929-30

From an oological point of view, the most interesting item of news to be chronicled from this State is the discovery of what appear to be well-authenticated eggs of the Banded Stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*). The Curator of the Western Australian Museum (Mr. L. Glauert) has received more than two dozen eggs of the bird from Kukerin, a wheat-belt township, 155 miles south-east of Perth, and but 52 miles north-east of Broome Hill, and the centre of much ornithological research in the past. Photographs of the birds nesting at the place, and an examination of a fully-developed chick in one of the eggs leave little doubt that the eggs are actually those of the Banded Stilt. They are distinctly larger, and quite different in colour pattern from those of the White-headed Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*), the eggs of which have evidently been hitherto described in error for those of the Banded Stilt in certain of our standard books of reference. These Kukerin eggs have the long axis, varying from 53 mm. to 65 mm., and the short axis, from 30.7 mm. to 40 mm. The ground colour is white, the shell being boldly ornamented with black blotches and scribbled lines. Three to five eggs appeared to constitute a clutch. The eggs were first exhibited to the public at a meeting of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club on September 26, and later at the annual exhibition of that body at the Perth Town Hall. A full description of the eggs and the circumstances of the find are contained in a paper read at the meeting of the Royal Society of Western Australia on October 14 by Mr. L. Glauert and Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins, of the Museum staff.

Birds as Pests.—Mr. C. J. Craig, Chief Inspector of Rabbits, who administers the Vermin Act, has given me the following note on the Ishmaels of the feathered fauna:—"Wedge-tailed Eagles have shown a marked increase, as is evidenced by the number paid for during the last twelve months, 10,000 having been paid for during the twelve months ended June 30, 1930, as against 4900 in the previous year. Emus have not been so numerous as in past years. This is due to the fact that better seasons have obtained northwards, and the birds have migrated thereto, and have not been confined to a small area, as in the previous year. I have not had any report regarding Cockatoos (i.e., the White-tailed Black Cockatoo in the apple districts), as to whether they are increasing or otherwise. With reference to Crows, the opinion regarding them has changed somewhat. They are now looked upon as being beneficial and not as a pest."

Export of Birds.—Mr. H. Bird, Acting Collector of Customs for the State, has, on request, kindly furnished the following report:—"I desire to inform you that no seizures of birds being illegally exported were made at Fremantle during the period July 1, 1929, to June 30, 1930. In several cases members of ships' crews were found in possession of birds for which no permit had been issued, but on application being made permission was given in these instances for the men to take away the birds, limited to one per person. Permits have been granted during the period for the export of the following birds:—Galahs, 14; Rosellas, 18; Cockatoos (various), 9; North-west Smoker Parrots, 5; Butcher Bird, 1; "Twenty-eights," 3; Zebra Finches, 4; Canaries, 6; Port Lincolns, 2. In addition, the Director of the Zoological Gardens exported to London, under permit, four Black Swans."

A regulation under the Game Act, in February, 1930, places the Gnow (*Leipoa ocellata*) on the totally-protected list throughout the State.

Local naturalists are looking forward to the return of Mr. O. H. Lipfert, R.A.O.U., taxidermist of the Museum, who has been absent for the greater part of the year on an extensive inland collecting trip. He is accompanying the well-sinking party sent out by the Government to reopen the long-disused Canning Stock Route from Wiluna to Hall's Creek.

D. L. SERVENTY,
State Secretary.

It has been the custom to publish with the Presidential address each year the photograph of the President for the preceding twelve months. Unfortunately, Col. Le Souef's portrait did not come to hand until too late for publication in the January part. It is here given in the most appropriate position—with the report of his own State, Western Australia.

Members desirous of having the current volume of *The Emu*, or other volumes, bound, should forward their volumes, together with title page and index, to the Hon. General Secretary not later than May 30. If a large order is given, a Melbourne bookbinder will do the work at the following rates:—Covers, 2/9 each; covers and binding combined, 7/- per volume.