

Rosenegk.) "Ninth Report of the Committee on the Nomenclature and Records of Occurrences of Rare Birds and on Changes in Nomenclature in the B.O.U. List." [*Circus macrourus* added to British List, several changes to specific names, generic name *Pluvialis* considered feminine to conform with Brisson's opinion, with consequential change of *dominiens* to *dominica*.] "A further Note on Structural Diversity in Charadriine Genera correlated with Differences in Colour-pattern," P. R. Lowe. "On the Name of the Boobook Owl and on the Genera *Emblema* and *Paranectris*," G. M. Mathews.

*The Auk*, Vol. L, No. 2.

*The Magic Voice*, by R. T. Littlejohns. See review in this part.

*A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China*, by J. D. D. La Touche, Vol. II, part IV. See review in this part.

*Bibliography of Australian Entomology, 1775-1930, with Biographical Notes on Authors and Collectors*. By Anthony Musgrave. Published by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales. [This painstaking work contains much of interest to ornithologists—many of the workers included being general naturalists—the dates of publication of various works being especially valuable.]

## Reviews

[*The Magic Voice*. By R. T. Littlejohns. Published by the Ramsay Publishing Pty. Ltd., Melbourne.]

To refer to this booklet as an ornithological treatise would probably militate against its author's recorded desire to "provide for members of the public some permanent reference" concerning our mimetic marvel, yet to call it a popular account of *Menura* appears hardly to do justice to the pertinent remarks and detailed observations gathered between its covers. It is an artistic brochure of 33 pages, illustrated with Mr. Littlejohns's admirable bird pictures, and redolent of the fern gullies, where its author has for many years patiently observed the birds. We know that every statement made is a fact, because Mr. Littlejohns has always been insistent on strict accuracy in recording observations, and he writes of Lyrebirds as he knows them from his bountiful personal experience.

Mr. Littlejohns opens by expressing an opinion that the Lyrebird is a potential tourist attraction, and then proceeds to tell of the family life of the bird, its display, its song and mimicry as evidence in support of his statement. Chapters are devoted to the Lyrebirds of Sherbrooke and to the broadcast of the birds' songs, with which so many are now familiar. A "time-table" for use with the Lyrebird gramophone

phone record is appended. Here is a means of advertising Australia abroad.

The booklet is well put together and obviously aims at explaining for the novice some of the facts concerning the life of *Menura* with which only those so closely associated with it as Mr. Littlejohns has been, are familiar: such, for example, as the fact that the Lyrebird can, and does, imitate not only the alarm notes of the Crimson Rosella but the rustling of that bird's feathers, a whisper of sound that is for the ears of the patient bird-watcher only. Throughout the style is descriptive yet concise. The last words are typical. The bird's approach to a mound is described—the bird "stands still, his tail folded and almost touching the ground. His head is inclined for a moment. He listens and is satisfied. Immediately the finest song which the Australian bush has to offer echoes through the forest."—C.E.B.

[A *Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China*, by J. D. D. La Touche, Vol. II, part IV, pp. 229-400, 3 pls. Taylor & Francis, Fleet Street, London. Price, 7/6.]

Another part of this interesting publication is to hand, and the contents of this part make it of special interest to Australian ornithologists. It contains the families *Jacacidae*, *Rostratulidae*, *Gruidae*, *Otididae*, *Dromadidae*, *Glareolidae*, *Stercorariidae*, *Lariidae*, *Sternidae*, *Rhynchopidae*, *Charadriidae* and *Scolopacidae* (part).

The Pheasant-tailed Jacana, the only member of the sub-order *Jacane* in China, is found on the numerous ponds and morasses along the Yangtse and other rivers. The first egg is laid on the bare surface of a lotus leaf, but, as other eggs are laid, the female accumulates water-weed and dead leaves, with the view of keeping the eggs in place. *Rostratula benghalensis benghalensis* is referred, following Mr. Stuart Baker's classification, to the sub-order *Rostratula*. It is recorded that the females fight for the males, as in the Hemipodes, the males undertaking care of the young, the females being polyandrous. Description is included of the method of catching Bustards by decoys on the Chihli plains, during migration.

Detailed descriptions are given in some cases, including progress descriptions of young birds—for example, the Black-naped Tern.

Perusal of the dates of records of various of the *Charadriidae* is illuminating because it shows that whilst there are records of many species passing through at varied times of the year, indicating that stragglers, sometimes in large numbers, follow the main bodies of migrating birds in more or less desultory manner, nevertheless the autumn and spring movements of the waders along the coasts are on the whole sharply defined—April and May figuring largely

as the time of the northwards movement, and August to October as the period of the journeying south.

The numbered birds already dealt with now total 651—others included (un-numbered) are sporadic or other similar records.—C.E.B.

## Correspondence

To the Editor

Sir,—There has been a good deal of controversy lately with regard to scientific collecting. It must be admitted that a lot of harm is done by some collectors, but we must not lose sight of the other side of the question. The gaps in our knowledge, even of the commoner species, are very considerable, and many of them can be filled only by collecting specimens.

I would suggest that, while collecting as a whole be discouraged, those who do collect should concentrate on the least-known phases of our bird life. Everyone knows, for instance, that there is a red mutation in the eggs of the Silver Gull, or that two Lyrebirds sometimes lay together in one nest, but nevertheless, I have no hesitation in saying that there are some habits of all our birds that are practically unknown. Usually a supply of patience will repay a naturalist much more surely than a dexterity with the skinning-knife or collecting box.

There are some who claim that there is no need for an ornithologist to be a collector at all. Be that as it may, how many prominent field-workers are there in Australia who have not been collectors at some period of their career?

In the life of every collector there are several stages to be gone through. The schoolboy knows little about birds, but he often plunders every nest he finds for the sake of the eggs. After a time the novelty wears off, and he either drops his hobby altogether, or takes it up in earnest. In the latter case he will take a great deal of trouble in collecting and preparing specimens, under the impression that he is acting in the interests of science. After a while he realizes his error; he has been wasting his time as far as discovering new facts is concerned, but he has acquired a habit of accuracy which is invaluable. He will now turn his attention to some particular branch of ornithology, and, benefiting by former mistakes, will become a valuable worker. As such he is worthy of encouragement. While we deplore the existence of the schoolboy collector, we must remember that he is the ornithologist of the future. The worst enemy of our birds is the vandal who tries to make money out of them, or who kills and robs for the mere sake of killing and robbing.—Yours, etc.,

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