

## Report of Bird Observers Club

At the September (1934) meeting, several members provided short papers and the evening was filled with interesting matter. The Club hopes to be before long able to put into operation a further objective, namely addresses on bird lore to schools and other educational bodies. An outing to Beaconsfield was a great success, due to the careful preparation of the leader in locating a score of nests.

Another outing was to Coimadai Road, near Anthony's Crossing. This connected up with former outings when the edge of an extraordinary belt of mallee was touched upon. A phenomenal fall of six inches of rain had filled the main watercourses with surging torrents and temporarily transformed the usual dry appearance of this tract of country. Incidentally considerable damage was done among nesting birds, but conditions should favour extra-late broods. The Bee-eater was seen, and this is actually the nearest to Melbourne recorded by us. Eight species of Honeyeaters were observed during the day and an Owlet-Nightjar was found perched on a cliff-face. There may be other birds of northern habitat here, for the mallee occupies a tongue of sandy detritus of arid nature, running down one side of otherwise rich volcanic plains. As it leads back in the direction of Toolern Vale Sanctuary, which lies about seven miles to the north, we must now trace the connection between the two.

The October meeting was "In the Antarctic." Capt. Doorley, who was with the relief ship *Morning*, sent in search of the *Discovery* in 1902, gave a lively account of the natural history of the region, illustrated with a splendid series of slides.

The Museum programme of meetings finished with the subjects Currawongs and Butcher-birds, by Mr. G. Mack, and Birds of Prey, by Mr. D. J. Dickison.

A visit to Eltham gave a bird list of 45 species of birds, including among those nesting, Regent Honeyeater and Speckled Warbler.

At the next meeting (November), Mr. S. Mitchell delivered an illustrated lecture on "The Australian Aborigine," treating the subject as an item of natural history and introducing a great deal of early folk lore.

The Leach Memorial Club held a Centenary Outing to the You Yangs on November 4, at which addresses were given on the "Historical Association" by Mr. Chas. Daley, and "Fauna and Flora" by Mr. A. G. Campbell. Over 100 persons attended. The party followed the footsteps of Flinders to the highest peak, whence a glorious panorama of bay and plain and mountain was obtained. The public is fortunate in having 5,000 acres of this curious granite country set aside as a park. A census of its natural inhabitants has not yet been made, but we obtained a list of 54 species of birds on the day of the visit.

This year (1935) excursions have been continued as follow:—Leach Memorial Club—February, Arthur's Seat; March, Lerderberg Gorge. The B.O.C. has visited the new Australian Section of the Zoological Gardens, where many interesting exhibits of local fauna are now available.

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Several enquiries from members of the Union as to the effect on birds of poisoning grasshoppers have been received by the Council. Whitehead's experiments, referred to elsewhere in this issue, may not be entirely applicable to Australian conditions, and in any case care in distribution appears to be a condition precedent to the prevention of bird mortality from such poisoning. The Council would welcome definite evidence of birds affected by poison baits.