

and yams and it is very doubtful if they touched saltbush seed. Through continual stocking of sheep the country has become almost denuded of small shrubs which once supplied the birds with seeds, and now, during bad seasons, when suitable seed-producing plants either do not grow at all, or make such poor growth that they are devoured by the sheep before they reach maturity and throw off seed, the Galah is forced to fall back on the saltbush for an existence. In good years, when a plentiful supply of other suitable seeds is available, I have not observed the Galah feeding upon the saltbush, and it is significant that when Mr. Ratcliffe made his examination of the arid lands of this State, drought conditions prevailed."

Charles Elton (*Animal Ecology*) refers to an investigation made by W. S. Cooper concerning the spread of the white pine blister rust in New England and the Adirondacks, showing that the distribution of fruit-eating birds affected, to an important extent, the distribution of various species of wild gooseberries on which the diseases occurred. Where the original forest had been cleared, the first succession stage comprised rank grass and weeds, followed by a shrub stage in which the species of gooseberries reached their maximum abundance. Then came a tree stage, accompanied by considerable changes in the bird fauna, and the number of gooseberry-eating birds was suddenly diminished. Although the gooseberry plants were able to survive in the latter stages of forest succession, they could not produce seeds in any quantity and were bound to die out eventually unless birds brought in new seeds from outside. Seton Gordon (*The Land of the Hills and the Glens*) refers to the small isle of Ernisgeir off the west coast of Scotland, which was once covered with long, green grass, sufficient to nourish eight sheep throughout the year. To-day scarcely a blade of vegetation can be found on the island owing to the fact that Puffins have burrowed extensively all over the island during the past twenty years.

(To be continued.)

IXth International Ornithological Congress

The Congress will be held at Rouen, France, from May 9 to 13, 1938. The President is Professor A. Ghigi, and the Congress Secretary Mons. J. Delacour.

The provisional programme indicates numerous excursions and section meetings. Visits to monuments and museums in Rouen, conducted by representatives of scientific and art societies, will be organized during the hours not occupied by the meetings and excursions of the Congress.

Further excursions and receptions are listed for Paris between May 14 and 19.

The Sections will be as follows: (1) Taxonomy and zoogeography; (2) Anatomy, physiology, paleontology and embryology; (3) Biology (ethology, ecology, migration, oology, etc.); (4) Applied ornithology (economic ornithology, taxidermy, observations and experiments on birds in captivity).

In addition to representatives of governments, museums, scientific societies, etc., all persons interested in ornithology will be welcome as members of the Congress. The fee for each member is £1 and if accompanied by a lady 10s. extra. Names and addresses of those wishing to become members of the Congress should be sent to the Secretary as early as possible in order to receive the final programme with full information concerning hotels, excursions, etc.

All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary: Monsieur Jean Delacour, Chateau de Clères, Clères, Seine Inférieure, France.

Stray Feathers

Birds of Wilson's Promontory.—Two lists have appeared in *The Emu*—volume XIX, page 288, and volume XXIX, page 297, recording the number of native species observed as about 140. During a week's walking tour recently I was able to add another ten, namely: Fairy Prion (*Pachyptila turtur*), Red-capped Dotterel (*Charadrius ruficapillus*), Australian Goshawk (*Astur fasciatus*), Spotted Owl (*Ninox novæ-seelandiæ*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Flame Robin (*Petroica phoenicea*), Pink Robin (*P. rodinogaster*), Striated Field-Wren (*Calamanthus fuliginosus*), Brown-headed Honeyeater (*Melithreptus brevirostris*), Bell-Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*) (introduced), and Beautiful Fire-tail (*Zonæginthus bellus*).

The Lyrebird is stated to have been introduced in 1910-12 when seven birds were liberated. A rough calculation will show that, theoretically allowing ten young as the progeny of a pair of birds and not allowing for accidents, there should be a population of Lyrebirds numbering about 140. But I neither heard nor saw any sign whatever. However, two lads who know the birds told me they heard one singing at Sealer's Creek in September last.

There are not many spots left where the birds could find seclusion and food. The forests of the west coast are gone and the forests of the east are doomed owing to the ravages of fire, which have reduced these natural assets to a minimum. Even common sorts of birds are nowhere plentiful and the abovementioned lists will in another twenty years'