

to shooting, lessens their usefulness for they become shy and take to flight at any approach of man. It is imperative that something be done, as each year our troubles are increasing, and the loss of our birds may yet bring famine to Australia. —WM. H. SLOANE, Bonnie Doon, Vic., and Savernake, N.S.W., 3/1/38.

**Strange Nesting Site of Magpie-Larks.**—A friend recently told me of an unusual nesting site chosen by a pair of Magpie-Larks or "Pee-wees" (*Grallina cyanoleuca*). The mud nest was built on one of the cross arms of a telegraph pole at Crow's Nest, North Sydney. The pole supported numerous wires and also overhead tramway and electric light cables. Four sets of tramway lines passed the base of the pole and nearby were two more. Over all these lines trams moved every few minutes during the day and less frequently throughout the night. Actually five main streets radiate from the pole and in consequence thousands of motor cars and other vehicles pass the spot daily. Crow's Nest is the shopping centre of a densely-populated locality and the streets are often crowded with pedestrians, especially on Friday nights when a brass band dispenses music to late shoppers. Regardless of these strange surroundings, for Magpie-Larks at least, and the many noises incidental to a populous area, the birds built their nest and were observed by me almost every day during the greater part of October. I was unable to ascertain whether the young birds eventually left the nest, although from the actions of the adults it seemed that they were feeding nestlings. A photograph was taken, in which although the images are small, one bird on the nest and the other adult nearby are to be seen. Several years ago I remember a pair of Magpie-Larks building in a similar situation; this was at Willoughby, some two miles from the present site and in an environment not so densely populated, although on a main road.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Willoughby, N.S.W., 11/11/37.

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## Correspondence

To the Editor

Sir,—In the obituary notice of T. P. Austin, appearing in your issue of October 1, 1937, it is stated that his collection of eggs was offered to the R.A.O.U. about ten years ago, and that "when confiscation of eggs in New South Wales, a year or so ago, was threatened, Austin's collection found its way into the Australian Museum."

The truth is that the collection was bequeathed to the Australian Museum by a will dated about twenty years ago, so that it could scarcely have been offered to the R.A.O.U. about ten years ago. When action was being taken regard-

ing collections of eggs which had been obtained and were being held illegally (which did not apply to the Austin collection), Mr. Austin decided to make over the eggs to the Australian Museum in his life time.

There was no question of "confiscation" so far as the Austin collection was concerned.

I should be glad if you would publish this letter in a future issue of your journal, so that the real facts may be known.—Yours, etc.,

C. ANDERSON,  
*Director, Australian Museum.*

Sydney,  
December 1, 1937.

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As the author of the obituary I am pleased that, if any members consider, as Dr. Anderson evidently does, that the words "Austin's collection found its way into the Australian Museum" were indicative of the collection's being held illegally, this opportunity of correcting the impression is given. Actually those words were chosen to cover the position whether or not Austin's was a "licensed" one, as the true facts could not be quickly ascertained at the time, and were certainly not intended to suggest that the collection was subject to the action referred to. My informant regarding Austin's offer to the R.A.O.U. has since advised me that the offer was of skins, not eggs, which I have confirmed by reference to minutes of meetings of the Council of the Union.—C.E.B.

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## Reviews

[*B.A.N.Z. Antarctic Research Expedition, 1929-31, Reports, Series B, vol. II: "Birds,"* by R. A. Falla, M.A. Issued August 20, 1937, Adelaide. Quarto, pp. i-xiv + 1-288, 4 col. pls., 216 figures in text.]

This fine publication has been printed in Adelaide and the numerous text figures are excellent reproductions of beautiful photographs.

This report includes an account of the birds collected by the 1911-1914 Mawson Expedition, an expedition which has not been accorded its just due owing to the overwhelming interest in a world war. Otherwise the great work performed by the members of the earlier expedition would have been history before this date and this report would have been supplementary thereto. On the former trip there was no accredited ornithologist, various members taking notes, and it was to have been the work of some local worker to collate such notes and furnish a readable account. Fortunately delay after delay occurred until the 1929 venture was in view and then it was concluded that