

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.

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.

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

the results would be better incorporated with the new conclusions, especially as a trained ornithologist was to accompany the later trip. For this purpose the New Zealand ornithologist, R. A. Falla, was selected and the account now issued shows the value of the conclusion. Now we have an excellent picture of Antarctic birds as studied in life, coloured by later impressions gained from examination of dead material. Consequently Mr. Falla's work becomes the most valuable addition to the literature of Antarctic ornithology yet made, and will be welcomed by every worker throughout the world. The scientific data recorded is of the greatest value and the field notes are beyond criticism. There can be nothing but praise for the whole report, as Mr. Falla has carefully refrained from any dogmatism on the systematic side, merely writing down his opinions formed from the somewhat small material available and allowing other systematists with larger and more representative collections to judge. Thus every word must be given full value, as it can be seen at once that no prejudice has entered into any of his conclusions.

I did not intend to offer any detailed criticism but Mr. Falla has suggested that I might add some constructive items, as I have worked at the taxonomy of Antarctic birds for many years. There are many minor points which might be discussed, but this does not seem the place for any such discussion. However, attention may be drawn to a couple of oversights. Falla has pointed out that the Heard Island Prion was at first thought to be a new species but was afterwards left unnamed, as the specimens appeared to show intergradation with the typical form of *desolatus*. It was recorded, however, that the specimens showed a slightly wider bill with slightly more swollen contour, and the measurements show a definitely longer tail—whatever that is worth. As there is already a name in existence for the Heard Island bird that may here be stabilized. Reichenow had named it *Prion dispar*, and Vanhoeffen (*Journ. für Ornith.*, 1905, p. 505) had printed it without any description. This name may now be utilized in a sub-specific sense, the differences pointed out by Falla being sufficient for that value, and the Heard Island Prion may be called *Heteroprion desolatus dispar*.

The other oversight seems more unfortunate as Falla has described the Macquarie Island Wreathed Tern as *Sterna vittata macquariensis* on account of the specimens differing from the Kerguelen type in "their longer bill, shorter wing and paler colouration [*sic*]." For the bird breeding on the sub-Antarctic islands of New Zealand (including Macquarie Island) Mathews and I (*Ibis*, 1913, p. 244) had proposed *Sterna vittata bollonsi*, noting the shorter wing and paler coloration above and below. I do not think that Falla had intended to discriminate the

Macquarie Island bird from the one already named. On a matter of taxonomic detail Mathews has since rejected *boltonsi* in favour of *bethunei* Buller.

Excluding such hypercriticisms, as above noted, the work has been well done, especially from the field-worker's viewpoint, which is a very important one to-day. Cabinet criticism may suggest emendations, but the brunt of the work must be done in the field, and this work will be of the greatest value in every manner. The more I look at it the better pleased I am as in nearly every case Falla has correctly pursued the middle course. It is noteworthy that a few new sub-species are introduced, although generally a very conservative view has been taken with regard to such forms. Finally, congratulations to all the members of all the expeditions and to the author of this record.
—TOM IREDALE.

[*The Australian Zoologist*, vol. 9, pt. 1.]

This part includes "The Last Letters of John MacGillivray," by Tom Iredale. After service as naturalist on several surveying ships MacGillivray became a professional collector of botanical and zoological specimens. It has been considered that his early brilliant career "ended on a low rung," but these letters aid in dispelling the stigma. The letters are to the late Dr. E. P. Ramsay, for whom MacGillivray was working, and show care, zeal and enthusiasm in the labours written about. A sentimental touch occurs in reference to birds coming from the bush to drink near his camp. "The *Chalcophaps* was my favourite, and seemed a thirsty sort of bird, paying oft-repeated visits, as I would not shoot it *there*."

Illuminating is the discovery of *Atrichornis rufescens*. From the first reference in December, 1865—"the most remarkable one is an *Atrichia* which may not be *clamosa*"—there is an insistence of difference, against Ramsay's initial disagreement, which ultimately proved correct. Ramsay described the eastern form in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* in 1866.

A comment following upon the receipt of Gould's "*Handbook*" is entertaining, especially considering how some, deprecating the later multiplication of names, display Gould as a pattern. MacGillivray writes: "The number of new names is positively alarming, especially those of the New Genera."—C.E.B.

Attention is drawn to the Articles of Association of the Union printed on the back cover. Only Articles that have been amended will appear—from time to time. Members desirous of doing so may make a note of the amendments and may obtain a copy of the Articles from the Hon. General Secretary for the purpose.