

by the Government Chemical Laboratory. In the units employed by Dr. Serventy as quoted by Mr. Jones in his paper in the July, 1945, *Emu*, this proved to be 21.3 parts per thousand, thus being saltier than sea-water. The northern portion of Lake Grace — which is the one crossed by the Wagin to Lake Grace Road, by means of a causeway — proved to be even more salt, namely 29.7 parts per thousand. It is separated from the southern section of the lake by a high bank.

The Cannons told me that the brine shrimp was present in millions when the Stilts were about, but it seemed to have disappeared when I arrived on September 19, and the same applied to the Stilts. The water was much deeper than I had previously known it, the depth in the north lake being well above my knees three miles from shore. The rainfall was phenomenally heavy in the South-west during 1945, that for Perth reaching the record total of 52.67 inches, compared with an average of 34.85 inches. That for Lake Grace does not show such a disparity; the registered total for 1945 was 16.86 inches, compared with the average of 14.83 inches. The total for 1930, the year of the previous nesting, was 15.84 inches.

I was fortunate in securing a series of eggs which had been blown and kept for me by members of the Cannon family.

This part is an extra part of *The Emu* issued in order to reduce the considerable amount of material in the Editor's hands, though in fact only slightly easing the position. Donations towards the cost of publishing this additional part will be appreciated.

The legend of plate 4, fig. 8, in the July, 1946, *Emu* should refer to 'Adult and immature Black-backed Gulls'. On page 58 the symbols shown in columns 2 and 3, for *Pardalotus ornatus*, in the Table, should be shown in columns 3 and 4.

The correct name of the waterhole referred to on p. 67 as Alexandria is evidently Alexandra.

Hawk Robbing Grebe's Nest.—Many are the hazards that the wild bird has to contend with during the critical period of the hatching of its eggs and rearing of its young. A variety of ruses are adopted in an endeavour to conceal and protect the nest, eggs, or young. The habit of the Grebe in covering its eggs when leaving the nest is a case in point. In spite of this protection disaster sometimes occurs, as the following note indicates.

On October 13, 1945, when passing a lagoon near Seymour, Victoria, by car, a commotion was noticed in the water. A

bird of prey, not definitely identified, but probably the Marsh Harrier, was seen to be standing on the nest of a Black-throated Grebe, repeatedly dipping its bill to the nest and feeding on something, presumably the eggs. The pair of Grebes were dashing about in a great state of agitation within a foot or two of the nest. They thrashed about in the water, frequently diving and reappearing with much splashing, in an unsuccessful endeavour to divert the attention of the nest-robber. Although they made a considerable commotion the hawk took no notice of them. It quickly flew off, when I stopped the car, before I was able to have a good view of it.—NORMAN CHAFFER, Roseville, N.S.W., 5/11/45.

Review

A New Working List of Australian Birds.—A 'Checklist' of birds of any country may be termed the foundation and authority upon which ornithologists base their observations and compile their records. During the past few decades the waters of nomenclatural stability have been agitated continually and the student of taxonomy finds difficulty in keeping abreast of the ever-changing tides. Since the publication, in 1931, of Gregory Mathews' *A List of the Birds of Australasia*, the author has frequently published accounts concerning changes and additions to nomenclature, a number in the pages of *The Emu*. His latest publication, *A Working List of Australian Birds including the Australian Quadrant and New Zealand*, Shepherd & Newman, Sydney, 1946, price 21/-, brings his version of the nomenclature of Australian birds up to date. Birds of Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands and the Antarctic Quadrant have been included in the general arrangement as Australian, but not the New Zealand birds, as "they constitute a very distinct series."

Comparing this present work with the author's previous 'List,' the general impression is given of strict retention of small genera. One's reaction to any systematic list depends largely on one's leanings towards large or small genera. Most recent taxonomic work supports the former, but Mr. Mathews has long favoured the small generic group. In the Australian section 764 species are included in 491 genera, with 51 further sub-generic names, inclusive or exclusive of which the average is considerably less than two species to a genus. Whilst admitting the scope of the author's investigation and research during the preparation of his large work and several lists, his exhaustive examination of specimens, and his close scrutiny of relevant literature, nevertheless a list that apparently disregards the present tendency to subjugate the generic unit suggests that same 'individual caprice' of which Leach complained in his review of the *Systema Avium Australasianarum* nearly 20 years ago.

The absence of complete synonymy, general index and record of extra-limital range may class the present list as inferior to that of 1931, though mention is made that that publication should be used in conjunction for reference. "The present list only records sub-species which can be accepted by workers using the small, imperfect collections available at present in Australian Museums." This may be cause for comment, but stresses the difficulties confronting enthusiastic Australian taxonomists. Local ornithologists are exhorted to "concentrate upon the elucidation of life-histories and distribution . . . *The Emu* . . . is the best periodical of its kind in the world, the many