

Stray Feathers

Northern Territory Place Names.—Mr. J. D. Somerville, of King's Park, S.A., has kindly drawn attention to two errors in the spelling used by me of place names mentioned in the text of my 'Northern Territory Bird Notes' in the previous volume. 'Strangeways River' should read 'Strangways River' and 'Finnis River' should read 'Finniss River.' Furthermore, he states, 'Leichhardt Bar' is preferable to 'Leichhardt's Bar' in that it conforms to recent common practice in geographical nomenclature.—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Caron, W.A., 24/6/47.

Young of the Moorhen: A Correction.—Without attempting to explain the error, I would like to correct my mistake in describing the young, in the 'nestling' stage, of the Dusky Moorhen (*Gallinula tenebrosa*) as that of the Purple Gallinule or Eastern Swamp-hen (*Porphyrio melanotus*). The description of the plumage and soft parts of the bird concerned appeared in *The Emu*, vol. 37, pt. 2, October 1937, p. 135, under the name *Porphyrio melanotus*, but this should be taken as referring to *Gallinula tenebrosa*.—K. A. HINDWOOD, Sydney, N.S.W., 20/8/47.

Reviews

Bird Population Studies.—'Bird Population Studies in the Coniferous Forest Biome during a Spruce Budworm outbreak,' by Dr. S. Charles Kendeigh (*Biol. Bull.*, no. 1, Division of Research, Department of Lands and Forests, Ontario, 1947, 100 pp.), deals with an aspect of bird-life which has been exercising the minds of ornithologists since the advent of DDT as an insecticide and the effect it would have on bird populations. His conclusion is that its use produces a small immediate mortality but does not affect the size of the total breeding population or the success in raising of young.

Some interesting data on the control of insect pests by birds are given. The bird population is estimated to destroy 16,000 budworms per acre. The total infestation is estimated to be 376,000 per acre, so the total destroyed is only 4.3%. The conclusion is that the birds do not bring the pest under control but that they probably prolong the intervals between successive outbreaks.

There is a very interesting section on the problem of inter-species and intra-species competition and the author's final conclusions are quoted in full: "Analysis and interpretation of the dynamic forces at work in the population support the contention that intra-species competition is responsible for limiting the maximum density of species at a level conditioned by the food supply and climate. Inter-species competition may replace intra-species competition to a certain extent where there is over-lapping in niche requirements. This control by competition is not rigid, however, so that temporary over-populations frequently occur. The segregation and limitation of species to particular niches is in large part effected by inter-species competition, although this competition is not very obvious except in times of stress, due to the development of inherited behaviour patterns that automatically assign each bird to its proper place in the community."—V.N.S.

Tasmanian Notes.—There have been criticisms of the ‘tucking away’ of new records in journals with restricted publication, with which we feel inclined to agree. There are two such matters in no. 2 of vol. 1 of *The Tasmanian Naturalist*, May 1947, namely a note establishing Pedra Branca as an authentic nesting place of the Gannet (p. 14) and a brief account of the breeding place of the Masked Owl (*Tyto castanops*) (p. 17). This does not, however, describe the eggs. There are other notes on the ‘Flight of Mutton-birds’ and ‘Birds of South Bruny.’ We wish the magazine success.—C.E.B.

Western Australian Notes.—No. 1 of volume 1 of *The Western Australian Naturalist*, June 18, 1947, is well produced and on good paper. The editorship is in the hands of Dr. D. L. Serventy. Bird material includes ‘Birds observed at sea in 1938,’ by L. Glauert, and ‘Breeding of the Black and white Fantail,’ by Eric Sedgwick. Some ‘generalizations’ in the latter cover triple (and sometimes quadruple) broods, brooding and nestling periods, moult and egg-clutches. This magazine should do much to co-ordinate natural history in ‘the West.’—C.E.B.

The ‘Seldom-seen’ Lyrebird.—Admittedly Mr. Larry Boys’ account in the *Avicultural Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 3, May-June 1947, entitled “‘See the Lyre-bird and Die,’ say Australians,” is popular and ‘breezy,’ but it does wrongly suggest that in the Sherbrooke ‘forest,’ where one can scarcely fail to encounter several birds on the occasion of *any* visit, Lyrebirds are difficult to come by (especially to ‘us locals’). It also suggests that Sherbrooke (where pine trees sway their un-Australian branches around the borders and picnickers’ shouts provide almost the most common sound) is primeval forest, a venture into which is an adventure indeed. All casual writers on the Lyrebird should be cautious about committing the bird to imitations of artificial sounds—for these notes are often the bird’s own calls or sounds not readily referable to other birds’ songs. Education on this aspect could, however, properly ‘begin at home.’—C.E.B.

News and Notes

STRUCTURE OF BIRDS

The August meeting of members was held at the Zoology School, University of Melbourne, on Friday evening, August 1. The speaker, Professor W. Agar, Professor of Zoology, was introduced by Mr. C. E. Bryant. About forty people were present. The small attendance was disappointing, as the subject, ‘Bird Structures,’ is an important part of ornithological study and the speaker an authority on the subject. The close attention of the audience indicated appreciation of the incisive presentation of the address, of one hour’s duration and using impromptu sketching to illustrate various points, together with plaster casts, mounted skeletons and prepared blackboard drawings.

The development of present-day birds (and mammals) was traced from the fishes, amphibians and reptiles of succeeding Ages, including the wing structure of the pterodactyls, *Archaeopteryx*, and the modern bird. It was emphasized that flight was developed independently among three groups of vertebrates—in the reptiles, leading to the pterodactyls; in the birds, developing through forms such as