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Ornithologists Union

FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1947

DISBURSEMENTS

Printing <i>Emu</i> , vol. 46	£342	3	6		
Illustrations (£112/7/5, less donations 16/-)	111	11	5		
Postage on <i>Emu</i>	13	11	8		
Reprints (£4/19/10, less recovered 19/-)	4	0	10		
	£471	7	5		
Less Sales of <i>Emu</i>	£37	4	6		
Less Advertisements in <i>Emu</i>	1	10	0		
Less Donations towards Special Issue	61	11	6		
		100	6	0	
	£371	1	5		
Index to <i>Emu</i> (£4/15/-, Amount paid to C.S.I.R. 10/- = £5/5/-, less sales of Index 10/-)		4	15	0	
Total Net Cost of <i>Emu</i>	£375	16	5	£375	16 5
Rent of Room		33	0	0	
Typing		10	10	0	
Postages, Telegrams, etc. (less 5/1 recovered)		28	8	4	
Insurance on Library, Furniture, etc.		2	5	8	
Stationery and General Printing		6	8	5	
Advertisement in <i>Wild Life</i>		8	15	0	
Miscellaneous Items		5	2	9	
Total Net Disbursements		£470	6	7	
Credit Balance at Bank of Australasia on 30/6/47	£183	11	7		
Less outstanding cheque		8	17	6	
	£174	14	1		
Credit Balance at State Savings Bank on 30/6/47	307	1	7		
Petty Cash in hands of Treasurer on 30/6/47	1	7	0		
		483	2	8	
		£953	9	3	

AT JUNE 30, 1947

ASSETS

Subscriptions—					
Arrears	£15	15	0		
Less Prepaid <i>vide</i> Liabilities					
Library (Estimate)	450	0	0		
Furniture and Specimens (Estimate)	340	0	0		
Blocks £10, Copies of <i>Emu</i> (Estimate) £25	35	0	0		
Checklists—419 @ 5/-	104	15	0		
Reserve—Commonwealth Government Inscribed Stock (face value)	770	0	0		
		£1,715	10	0	
Credit Balance (net) at Bank of Australasia		174	14	1	
Credit Balance (net) at State Savings Bank		307	1	7	
Petty Cash in hands of Treasurer		1	7	0	
		£2,198	12	8	

LIABILITIES		TRUST ACCOUNT AS
Nil		
Balance, being surplus of Assets over Liabilities . . .	£1,075 16 6	
		<u>£1,075 16 6</u>

The estimates of Assets set out on previous year's basis have been accepted by us; the bank pass books have been examined; and the certificate of the Inscribed Stock registered in the name of the Union and in the names of the Trustees, received by us direct from the Registrar of the Commonwealth Inscribed Stock, have been examined by us and are in agreement with the face value figures shown in Balance Sheet and Trust Account.

(Signed) HUGH C. E. STEWART.

(Signed) P. LAIRD.

Nests of Little Grass-birds

By C. C. LAWRENCE, Lindisfarne, Tasmania

In 1944 some notes of mine on the Little Grass-bird (*Megalurus gramineus*) were published in *The Emu*.¹ The notes drew attention to the occurrence and nesting of a few birds of this species on a small coastal island at Port Sorell in northern Tasmania. A longer acquaintance with the species, and reference to literature not available then, as well as some further data, suggest that the circumstances were more important than I thought at the time.

The occurrence of Little Grass-birds on a dry coastal island is unusual, for the experience of observers over a long period has shown that it is a bird of the swamps and reed-beds. Campbell² said of the species "... one has to wade through the maze of murky swamps, sometimes far inland, to find its wonderfully constructed nest," and observers familiar with the species will agree on the general truth of his remark. However, ornithologists have, from time to time, noted the presence of Little Grass-birds on coastal islands. Gould³ recorded these birds "... on such islands as those of Green and Actaeon in D'Entrecasteaux Channel" (southern Tasmania), but he made no reference to their breeding there. It would be interesting to determine whether Little Grass-birds still occur on those small islands. Campbell² also recorded the island occurrence of this species. He wrote—"Although I have observed the Little Grass-bird among the rough herbage of such places as Breaksea Island, Western Australia, as well as on some of the smaller islands in Bass Strait, there is no evidence of its breeding in such places." However, as my notes of 1944 pointed out, not only does the Little Grass-bird sometimes live away from what has come to be regarded as its natural habitat, but it will also breed there.

AT JUNE 30, 1947

ASSETS

Commonwealth Government Inscribed Stock (face value)	£1,070	0	0
Balance in State Savings Bank		5	16 6
		£1,075	16 6

(Signed) A. S. CHALK,
Hon. Treasurer.Audited and found correct,
(Signed) HUGH C. E. STEWART,
(Signed) P. LAIRD,
Hon. Auditors.

The island at Port Sorell where I found the Little Grass-birds has an area at high tide of about half an acre. Most of it is covered with tussocks and coarse grass, with patches of a rank shrub growing here and there to a height of about four feet. Unfortunately, I was not able to identify the shrub. The island is a rookery for Fairy Penguins (*Eudyp-tula minor*), and the loose soil is pitted with their burrows. The five Little Grass-bird nests that I found on the island were all built in the shrubs at a height of not less than three feet and not, as would be expected, in low situations among the tussocks. This, too, is contrary to the habit of the species. Perhaps the frequent passing of the Penguins through the tussocks caused the Little Grass-birds to prefer the higher nesting sites in the shrubs. North⁴ noted the fact that this species will sometimes build its nest in a relatively-high position. He wrote—"The site chosen for the nest is somewhat varied. I have usually taken it from the bottom of a clump of long rushes within eight inches of the water, and not infrequently in the upright branched fork of a melaleuca, about five feet from the ground, when growing in swampy localities." Campbell² found that nests were "usually situated in rushes or a bush in a swamp or lagoon not far above the surface of the water." However, although these observers recorded nests built in shrubs at heights up to five feet above the ground, there is still, in both the instances referred to, an association with marshy conditions.

A typical Little Grass-bird's nest is deep, oval in shape, with a slight hood over the entrance at the top. Often one or two long feathers droop over the entrance and hide the contents of the nest. In all the references available to me the nest lining is given as feathers. North,⁴ writing of a nest found on the Parramatta River in 1886, by Dr. Hurst, and presented to the Australian Museum, Sydney, described it as being "lined with dried grasses and a few feathers"