

continued so far with both nests. Instances of multiple nest-building are not infrequent (see *British Birds*, vol. 41, p. 348, and vol. 42, p. 183, where further references are given) but they usually refer to artificial situations such as the rungs of a ladder, the girders of a bridge or stacked crates and so on. Furthermore they refer to birds the nest position of which is normally distinctive, and it would be interesting to know if such mistakes occurred among ground-building birds, such as Pipits.

In the same tree in which were the two Willie Wagtails' nests was the nest of a Restless Flycatcher (*Seisura inquieta*). The two species were continually fighting and chasing each other, and it was possible that an increased emotional tension caused by the nearness of the Restless Flycatcher caused the error in nest-building to continue to such an advanced state.

Also in the same tree, at a higher level, was the nest of a Magpie-Lark (*Grallina cyanoleuca*). The nesting association between this bird and the Willie Wagtail is well known, but the presence also of the Restless Flycatcher may indicate that there is another, not so well known, nesting association with the Magpie-Lark.—A. GRAHAM BROWN, Colac, Vic., 1/1/50.

Owlet-Nightjar. On October 2, 1949, I had what must be the unusual experience of finding an Owlet-Nightjar (*Egotheles cristata*) abroad during daylight hours, apparently of its own choosing. At the time of discovery it was on the ground, perhaps feeding, but I could not be sure. When it was disturbed, the bird flew to a low branch of a sapling and remained perched there for some minutes. Its position provided an excellent opportunity to note its general characteristics, the rufous ear patches, barring on the tail, yellowish legs and feet. Later, it flew strongly and confidently through the trees to another perch about a hundred yards away. After it was disturbed a second time it took a longer flight and I lost sight of it. The time was 10.30 a.m. It was a dull morning, with the clouds down to a few hundred feet, sultry, and raining lightly at the time of the observation.—C. C. LAWRENCE, Lindisfarne, Tas., 22/2/50.

Correspondence

FOREIGN BIRDS IN AUSTRALIA

To the Editor,
Sir,

I have been much interested to read the article by H. E. Tarr on the 'Distribution of Foreign Birds in Australia' (*Emu*, vol. 49, pp. 189-198). This is a subject on which I

have been consulted a number of times by European ornithologists and on which it was difficult to find satisfactory published information.

I am especially interested to read the range given for the Starling, which is said to extend north to Maryborough in Queensland but not to have reached Rockhampton. It seems worth while to place on record that on August 5, 1924, I saw a flock of about ten birds in Rockhampton. I had supposed that these were pioneers and that it would not be long before the Rockhampton district was colonized, but it appears that twenty-five years have elapsed and the Starling has not yet arrived there.

It is stated in Mr. Tarr's article that "the impression gained in Queensland is that the barren region between Rockhampton and Mackay slows up any bird movement northwards," but I do not see the relevance of this statement to the case of a bird which has not yet established itself at Rockhampton.

The Starling is a bird of temperate regions and as far as I am aware its extensive range nowhere extends into the tropics. Is it not probable therefore that it is the position of Rockhampton on the Tropic of Capricorn which has prevented the Starling from establishing itself there?

Yours, etc.,

W. B. ALEXANDER.

Oxford, England.

April 6, 1950.

YOUNG GANNETS AS BAIT

To the Editor,

Sir,

Members of the Union will know of the great concern caused by fishermen taking young Gannets from the Cat Island gannetry to use as bait in crayfish pots. In this connection the following quotation from *Natural History in the Highlands and the Islands*, by F. Fraser Darling, is of some interest. Dr. Fraser Darling writes (p. 81):

"We may be glad as naturalists that a fairly recent law prohibited the use of flesh of warm-blooded animals as bait in lobster creels. Until this law was passed . . . many cormorants, shags, and other sea fowl were killed to be used as bait. Nowadays the lobster fisherman has to do some fishing for haddocks, codling and rock fish before he can shoot his creels."

There is a good deal to be said, of course, against regulations that are difficult to enforce. Nevertheless, the Scottish law (though apparently passed in the interests of consumers of lobsters) may perhaps be a pointer for us.

I am gloomy enough to believe that some fishermen, having exhausted the easy harvest of Gannets, will turn

their attention to other sea-birds. Indeed, there is already unimpeachable evidence that Fairy Penguins in thousands are being taken for bait in south-western Tasmania. Sooner or later, it is hoped, governments will appoint an adequate staff of inspectors and observers to assist in conserving our Australian flora and fauna. In the meantime the position is critical.

Yours, etc.,

C. C. LAWRENCE.

Lindisfarne, Tas.
21/5/50.

Obituary

HUGH MCKNIGHT

The recent death of Mr. Hugh McKnight should be recognized in ornithological circles because he was responsible for many of the photographs reproduced in Charles Belcher's charming book, *'Birds of Geelong.'* Mr. McKnight was the son of Hugh Riordan, who married a daughter of Charles McKnight, one of the partners who originally settled on Dunmore, West Victoria, in 1843. As the name McKnight was in danger of running out, the Hugh Riordan of Belcher's book changed his name to McKnight, his mother's surname.—N.L.

Reviews

Drawings Used by Latham.—John Latham (1740-1837), who may be considered the grandfather of Australian Ornithology, was an industrious and indefatigable collector of material for his *General Synopsis of Birds* (1781-1785) and its supplements with their latin equivalents (1787, 1790, 1801). Drawings and specimens brought back to England by exploring expeditions, or collections of bird paintings from various parts of the world, including the then recently established settlement at Sydney, were used by him to describe a large number of new species. F. C. Sawyer, Zoological Librarian, British Museum, Natural History, has listed, with appropriate bibliographical details, the several collections mentioned by Latham, 'Notes on some Original Drawings of Birds used by Dr. John Latham,' *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History*, vol. 2, pt. 5, Sept., 1949, pp. 173-180.

Those that concern Australian workers are the Banks drawings, which include illustrations of birds collected during Cook's three voyages of discovery, the artists being Parkinson, Forster and Ellis, the Francillon drawings, the Lambert and the Watling series.

Latham himself appears to have copied, or have had copied by his daughter Ann and others, many of the drawings lent to him. Sawyer is of the opinion "... that in many instances the drawings in front of Latham, from which his descriptions were made were his *own* copies, i.e. the Latham Drawings, and that these should be regarded as the types." Such a statement introduces an element of confusion, particularly in relation to the Lambert and the Watling drawings, to an already complicated problem, a problem that has been discussed with considerable divergence of opinion by Gregory M. Mathews and others in *The Austral Avian Record*, in the pages of *The Emu*, and