

News and Notes

INDEX TO *The Emu*

The scientific index to the first fifty volumes of *The Emu* prepared by Mr. A. R. McGill will be published shortly. The Council has fixed the price at £1/1/- (postage 8d.). The work is most comprehensive and should be of extreme value to ornithologists. It records every reference to species dealt with in the journal during that period, indexed under species and grouped under genera. Orders may be placed now with the Hon. General Secretary. The volume will be cloth bound.

DONATION TO FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

Members concerned in the destination of the surplus of the amount collected at Palm Valley during the 1952 Camp 'for a special purpose' will be interested to learn that by almost unanimous decision the money was donated to the Flying Doctor Service.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due in respect of the Union's year commencing on January 1, 1953. If you have been paying on the basis of the twelve months beginning on July 1, you are asked to make an adjustment to facilitate the work of the Hon. Treasurer.

AN OMISSION

Mr. K. A. Hindwood has written, under date March 3, 1953, as follows—"When typing the final draft of my notes on 'River Pollution and Birds' (*The Emu*, vol. 53, 1953, p. 91) I inadvertently omitted the following words: '... about 200 Little Pied Cormorants and two Ravens'. The inclusion of those words in the second last paragraph will make the mention of those species in the last paragraph intelligible."

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DUCK-RINGING SCHEME

The Fisheries Department of Western Australia, which administers the Fauna Protection Act, began, in June 1952, a marking scheme as an aid to its investigation of the habits of native ducks. Already several hundred individuals have been banded with aluminium rings which carry the following inscription—"Return to Fisheries Dept. Perth". Most of the birds marked were Black Duck and Grey Teal, but a few Mountain Ducks have been captured for banding also.

Other water birds which enter the traps, such as Coots and Dusky Moorhens, are also ringed. Among the recoveries so far reported are two Black Ducks ringed at the Queen's Gardens, Perth, which were shot at Northam and near York, respectively, some 60 miles across heavy forest country to the east, and another on the Moore River to the north. A Black Duck ringed at the same time at Yanchep was shot 10 miles south of Fremantle.

Reviews

The 'Pealea' Phenomenon in Storm-Petrels.—In 1848 Titian Peale, the ornithologist of the United States Exploring Expedition, described a new species of storm-petrel, *Thalassidroma lineata*, having a characteristic streaked pattern on the under-parts. Subsequently other specimens were ascribed to the strange species, which had become somewhat of an enigma to more recent ornithologists. Ridgway erected a separate genus, *Pealea*, for the group, and Mathews subdivided it again and recognized two species.

Now Robert Cushman Murphy and Jessie Pennoyer Snyder ('The 'Pealea' Phenomenon and other Notes on Storm-Petrels', *Amer. Mus. Nov.*, no. 1596, 1952) have reviewed the situation and find that *Pealea lineata* is an unreal taxonomic unit, the individuals composing it—five are known up to date—being aberrant examples of three common Storm-Petrel species, namely *Fregetta grallaria*, *Fregetta tropica*, and *Oceanites oceanica*. The nature of this aberrancy, conveniently called the 'Pealea' phenomenon, a black streaking or spotting, is fully discussed, and the authors show that it occurs more commonly than has been suspected, and many other specimens of the species named exhibit it, though not in so extreme a degree as the five skins which had been referred to the fictional 'species' *lineata*. The 'Pealea' effect has been noted also in *Pelagodroma marina*, *Nesofregetta albigularis*, and *Garrodia nereis*. The paper is no. 62 in the Whitney South Seas Expedition series.—D.L.S.

Male Birds' Discovery of their Young.—First part of a paper entitled 'How the Male Bird discovers the Nestlings', by Alexander F. Skutch, appears in *The Ibis*, vol. 95, no. 1, Jan. 1953, pp. 1-37 (to be concluded in August). It deals with the cock bird's preparation for the 'discovery' and instances of 'discovery'.

With species in which the male does not share in incubation, how does he know when to begin feeding the nestlings? By direct sight? By seeing the hen bringing food? By vocal communication from the hen? By hearing the young? By the hen bird's increased desire for food? An example is mentioned of a male bird unaware of the hatching of the young until the departure from the nest of the first two over a week old.

Histories of the male's discovery of the young at individual nests are given. On the whole they do not seem to us to be as convincing as the author believes, and are characterized by much 'belief' or 'assumption' or 'appearance'. Perhaps the 'Discussion' (to be included later) will clarify the matter.—C.E.B.

African Birds.—African Handbook of Birds, series 1, vol. 1, entitled *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, by C. W. Mackworth-Praed and Capt. C. H. B. Grant, is a notable addition to the local