Reviews

Birds of the New Guinea Highlands.—Any record of ornithological exploration in New Guinea is of special Australian significance, as that large island is our nearest geographical neighbour, and much of it is politically part of the Commonwealth. In recent years a good deal of attention has been focused on the Central Highlands, around Mount Hagen, the Kubor Mountains and the Wahgi Valley. The American Museum of Natural History sent expeditions to that area in 1950 and 1952, and the results of both are given in 'Birds of Central New Guinea' (*Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. History*, vol. 103, article 4, pp. 315-374, pls. 13-34, 1954) by Ernst Mayr and E. Thomas Gilliard. The junior author, whose ability and enthusiasm were apparent during a few brief visits to Australia, was the leader on the 1950 trip and manager in 1952.

A total of 1,500 study skins was collected, comprising 182 species and subspecies. Of that total 23 were new to science, many others were geographical and altitudinal extensions of range, and some proved helpful in clarifying the relationships of birds to the east and west. The major part of the text comprises an annotated list of species and subspecies, with collecting and observation data relevant to each. Of special importance was the collecting of a new species of honeyeater, *Melidectes princeps* (pl. 34 depicts the important differences between it and its nearest relative, *M. nouhuysi*), and the adult male *Archboldia sanfordi* (the subject of a fine painting by George M. Sutton as the frontispiece), both obtained on the 1950 expedition. Although the latter bird was described as a subspecies of *A. papuensis*, because the immatures and females bore a close resemblance to that bird, it might have been better to have regarded it as a striking new species, at least until the adult male of *papuensis* became known.

A number of photographic plates depicts some fine scenic views and such typical New Guinea avifauna as *Crateroscelis robusta, Monachella mulleriana, Pomareopsis bruijni* and *Paramythia montium*. The variability of *Neositta papuensis* was further emphasized by the inability to place the single collected specimen with any known race. Photographs, showing the flycatcher-like pose of *Eugerygone rubra*, confirmed the senior author's belief that it should be transferred from the warblers to the flycatchers, a change further supported by the brown colour of the juvenile plumage, which resembles that of *Micræca*.—A.R.M.

Western Australian Ornithology.—*The Western Australian Naturalist*, vol. 4, no. 8, May 6, 1955, contains many items on bird studies. A. H. Robinson ('Nesting Season of Western Australian Birds—A Further Contribution', pp. 187-192) supplements Ivan Carnaby's previous paper with his own analysis of nesting records and discusses the incidence of nesting in relation to climatic factors. In north-western Australia many species have two breeding seasons, nesting in the summer and autumn if there are monsoonal rains, and again in the spring if there are winter rains. There is a decided dropping off in breeding activity in the mid-winter period. Julian R. Ford ('Removal of Host's Egg by the Cuckoo?', pp. 173-174) demonstrates that the Pallid Cuckoo deposits its own egg before the host (Red and Little Wattlebirds were studied) lays its own eggs. Brief items are as follows: E. McCrum and P. Slater (a record of the Silver-grey Petrel beach-drifted at Rottnest—the second for Western Australia); P. Slater (use by the Grey Butcher-bird of wire-netting as a vice, and a record of the Western Silvereye at Kalgoorlie); E. McCrum and P. Slater (a record of the Pectoral Sandpiper at Reid); H. B. Shugg (travel of a banded Little Crow); W. C. Ford (on the early arrival of Rainbow-birds in 1954); C. F. H. Jenkins (Scarlet and Red-capped Robins nesting together at Mundijong); and Dr. A. M. Gwynn (a record of a Frigate-bird, possibly the Greater, in Fremantle Harbour in May 1951).—D.L.S.