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Birds and Lizards.—I was surprised, recently, to observe a male House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, busily engaged in beating a small lizard against a concrete footpath, obviously intent on killing the reptile, which had apparently already shed its tail. This is surely unusual in a species of which seeds and insects constitute the accepted diet. The lizard was one of the small dark skinks so common in suburban gardens.

A year ago my wife observed, in our garden, a female Magpie-Lark, *Grallina cyanoleuca*, with one of these small lizards wriggling in her bill. She was attended by a pair of well-grown young, which were begging for the meal, but when the adult bird put the lizard down, it escaped into grass, whence the excited bird sought in vain to recover it. The incident was not without humour. The harrassed mother bird had laid down her prize to leave her free to make a

determined each-way swipe to repulse her too-pressing chicks, on either side of her, and it was during this brief respite that the reptile made off.

In the case of the sparrow, I was not able to see what eventually happened to the lizard in possession, as the bird flew off with it at my approach, which was near, the bird being too engrossed with the business in hand to be aware of me. In each case the lizard was about four inches in length.—GORDON BINNS, 14 Patrick Street, Box Hill, Victoria.

Godwits in South Australia.—The following winter and spring Godwit records are considered worthy of note. On August 14, 1965, in company with Dr. D. W. Brummitt, two Black-tailed Godwits, *Limosa limosa*, were seen on the I.C.I. saltfields south of St. Kilda, this being the first occasion that the writer has recorded the species on the saltfields. Later the same day, four Bar-tailed Godwits, *L. lapponica*, were seen on the saltfields some distance further north.

On September 26, 1965, in company with Mr. J. Nelder, five Bar-tailed Godwits were seen a short distance from where the four had been previously observed. When flushed, they were immediately joined by three Black-tailed Godwits, previously unnoticed, and after flying together for several minutes, they split up and alighted again as separate groups.—ALAN LENDON, 163 North Terrace, Adelaide, S.A.

Cormorants a Century Ago.—As there is so much controversy at the present time regarding the pros and cons of cormorant predation and suggested means of population control, the following report warrants repetition. It occurs in the Launceston daily newspaper, *The Examiner*, Vol. XXVI, No. 26, Thursday, March 1, 1866, p. 5. The *Hobart Town Mercury* is acknowledged.

"Fish Destroyers—Reference has frequently been made to the vast numbers of shags which have visited the lakes and rivers of this colony, and more particularly the waters in which fish are preserved with a view to their acclimatization, and the fact that the number of these rapacious birds is under instead of over stated may be gathered from the circumstances that as the Marine Board boat in which were the Master Warden and others, was being sailed down to the Iron Pot Lighthouse on Saturday, it passed through a flock of these birds which must have consisted of many hundreds of thousands, as from Brown's River to Shag's Point, for nearly five miles, the river was quite black with this species of the cormorant tribe.—*H. T. Mercury*."—R. H. GREEN, Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, Tas.