

Correspondence.

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES IN THE VICTORIAN "STATE SCHOOL PAPER."

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—Kindly allow me space to point out that the praiseworthy efforts of the Victorian Education Department to familiarize the children of the State with the names and habits, &c., of the fauna and flora of the land in which they live are likely to be marred through want of a little care in the preparation of the articles dealing with the subject.

In one article last year headed "Yellow-haired September" the author tells the children that he noticed a "Grey Butcher-Bird," and that he knew it by its *sharp-pointed bill*. I never yet saw a Butcher-Bird with a "sharp-pointed" bill. In fact, I understand the curved tip or hook to the bill is the chief anatomical point in the bird's anatomy.

Pipit is spelt Pipet, and the bird is called unmusical. To hear it singing at nesting-time is enough to contradict this assertion.

The theory that the "extra" nest of the Yellow-tailed Tit is meant to deceive the Cuckoo is ingenious, but is not borne out by experience. Personally, in a period of over twenty years' collecting I have never found, or heard of, a Cuckoo's egg being found in the top nest.* I have seen the wily Cuckoo enter a nearly completed nest, and leave it, perhaps to call another time when things were ship-shape.

By all means teach the young people Natural History, but let it be scientific, even if popular.—Yours, &c.,

ERNEST A. D'OMBRAIN.

Casterton, 26th April, 1903.

Note.

DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS ON LAKE CONNEWARRE.—Last Christmas a person was shooting and demolishing flocks of Sandpipers, Tringa, &c., with punt guns. Although it was open season for these species, it is illegal to use guns that cannot be used from the shoulder. Some other persons were noticed shooting rifle balls into flocks of Pelicans, which had evidently been driven from the interior by the drought. Could not the Field Naturalists' Club of Geelong aid the proper authorities in bringing future offenders to book?

Donations to the Coloured Figure Fund.

SINCE the last acknowledgments the Council desires to return thanks for the following amounts, viz.:—Mr. H. G. Barnard (Queensland), £1 1s.; Mr. J. G. Gray (N.S.W.), 12s. 6d.; Sir Samuel Way (South Australia), 6s. 6d.; Mr. S. Robinson (N.S.W.), 5s.; Mr. E. M. Cornwall (Queensland), 5s.; Mr. W. M'Ilwraith (Queensland), 5s.; Edward D'Ombraïn (Victoria), 5s.

* We believe one instance is known.—EDS.