

monument has been left—a reference for all time. No doubt the Government of the day will extend the same courtesy to the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, as it hopes to organize an expedition (composed of Australian and New Zealand members) to explore more ornithologically the romantic southern islands of New Zealand, of the avifauna of which, as Mr. Waite has informed us, our knowledge is yet "very inadequate."

Correspondence.

BIRDS OF THE EAST MURCHISON, W.A.

To the Editors of "*The Emu*."

SIRS,—In the April issue of *The Emu*, Mr. Whitlock, in his East Murchison notes, mentions my name in a way which calls for some comment on my part.

With regard to Mr. North's "record,"* to some particulars in which Mr. Whitlock takes exception, this certainly needs a little explanation from me. As to the dates, these, probably owing in the first place to carelessness on my part, have got somewhat mixed. On 13th June, 1908, I took nest and eggs of *Cinclosoma marginatum* at Wiluna; the nests taken on 30th August and 1st September of same year were those of *C. castanonotum*, and were taken about 80 miles east of Kalgoorlie, while on the Transcontinental Railway survey, as Mr. Whitlock points out; how I came to mix these up with *C. marginatum* I don't know. The "record" also mentions another set of *C. marginatum* taken by me on 19th August, 1906. This is correct, but the locality given is wrong. "Lake Way, W.A.," should read "Mt. Ida, W.A."

The delay in the publication of this "record" was practically all my fault, as Mr. North had repeatedly written to me for the particulars about the skin and also for the eggs for description. What I take exception to in Mr. Whitlock's article is his direct assumption that I am incapable of taking off a skin well enough for descriptive purposes, and that the skin sent by me to Mr. North from Wiluna was too mutilated for description. I quite agree with Mr. Whitlock in his remarks about the tenderness of the skin, but I maintain that the skin I sent was good enough for the purpose for which it was intended. However, Mr. Whitlock's statements are, in my opinion, more excusable than those of the editors of *The Emu*, contained in a footnote to the article under discussion; in this footnote the editors not only directly support the assumption that my skin was too mutilated for description, but also, without justification, directly accuse Mr. North of injustice to another collector.

* "Records of the Australian Museum," vol. vii. (1909), pp. 322-324.—Eds.

In his notes on *Amytornis gigantura*, Mr. Whitlock refers to my classing this species with *A. macrurus*, and says—"There is no reason for this." Mr. Whitlock has written me that "no" is a misprint for "more." As this puts a very different complexion on things, there is no need for comment.

As to the soundness of *A. gigantura* as a species there seems to be some doubt; several specimens from widely different localities have been obtained by myself and forwarded to Mr. North, with the verdict "*macrurus*." The matter, however, is *sub judice*, and I hope during the coming season to assist in the final settlement of this point.—I am, &c.,

CHAS. G. GIBSON.

Geological Survey, Kalgoorlie, W.A., 29/5/10.

[The editors have pleasure in publishing Mr. Gibson's letter. They have no desire to do injustice to anyone, but seek to record the scientific facts and history only of Australian birds, and in this connection any further notes on *Amytornis gigantura* or any other species by such a good field observer as Mr. Gibson will always be welcome.—EDS.]

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—In the account of my recent collecting trip to the East Murchison, I find a misprint has crept in. Referring to *Amytornis gigantura*, on p. 203—ninth line from the bottom (excluding footnote)—should read "There is *more* reason for this." This error is unlucky, as I wished to convey the impression that my mind was an open one on the question of the identity or otherwise of *A. gigantura* and *A. macrurus*. Also, after re-reading my notes on *Cinclosoma marginatum*, in connection with the female skin collected by Mr. C. G. Gibson and forwarded to Mr. A. J. North, I fear I may have conveyed the impression that in my opinion Mr. Gibson had not the ability to make a good skin. It was simply lack of the necessary leisure on his part that was in my mind when I wrote. Having had some experience of the amount of work to be accomplished by the officers of our Geological Survey Department when examining our vast mineral belts, I know how little spare time there remains of the short winter's day when the field-work is done. When I have a *Cinclosoma* to skin I approach the task with a mind resigned to a tedious and discouraging operation. Despite the most delicate handling, the feathers of the rump and flanks will fall out. A *Cinclosoma* rivals a Dove in this respect. But, whatever the condition of Mr. Gibson's specimen may have been, I question if it afforded Mr. North sufficient evidence, unaccompanied as it was by a skin of the male, to enable him to determine its identity with absolute certainty.

Dr. Sharpe founded this species on a single male specimen, procured in the north-west of our State (W.A.) *C. cinnamomeum* is an interior bird, and, moreover, a species likely to be met with around Lake Way. The female of the latter is not strikingly distinct from that of *C. marginatum*. It seems to me, therefore, quite a natural thing for Mr. North to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the presence in his hands of the two males and one female of *C. marginatum* collected by myself to aid him in his description and identification of the female skin sent by Mr. Gibson. I do not blame him for doing so, but I think at the same time that an acknowledgment of the fact was due either to Mr. H. L. White or myself.

I take this opportunity, too, of stating that it is rather painful to me to have my sexing of the type specimen of *Lacustroica whitei* questioned by Mr. North, even if indirectly.* After skinning and sexing birds for upwards of 30 years, I think I may be trusted to distinguish the male from the female, especially during the height of the breeding season.—I am, &c.,

F. LAWSON WHITLOCK.

Young's Siding, D.R., W.A., 6/6/10.

Bird Observers' Club.

THE quarterly dinner and ordinary meeting of the club were held at the Strand Tea Rooms, Collins-street, Melbourne, on 14th April, 1910. There was a good attendance. At the conclusion of the dinner, Dr. H. W. Bryant was voted to the chair. A report from the Chief Inspector of Vermin, Mr. F. E. Allan, regarding the use of poisoned baits in orchards (forwarded by the Secretary for Agriculture) was read. Mr. Allan contended that the statement that thousands of birds were destroyed annually by means of baits was exaggerated, if not entirely without foundation. Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., said the shooting in orchards did more damage than poison. Mr. G. E. Shepherd remarked that only Parrots and other birds provided with crops were liable to poisoning. Mr. C. F. Cole expressed the same opinion. The resignation of Mr. E. J. Christian, of the Kamarooka Estate, was received with regret, and it was resolved that he be placed on the list of country members. A paper by Mr. A. G. Campbell (Pomonal), dealing with the Victorian *Sericornes*, was read by Mr. A. J. Campbell. The author's contention was that *Sericornis frontalis* and *S. osculans* are really distinct species. Several members stated that two distinct types of nest were of general occurrence, one type being covered with moss externally, the other with bark. Mr. L. G. Chandler exhibited skins of *S. frontalis*, and Mr. J. A. Ross eggs of *S. frontalis* and other species of *Sericornis*. In the general discussion of the evening, reference was made to recent flocking of migratory birds, and to White-bearded Honey-eaters (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*) nesting, as a result of protracted warm weather. Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc., reported that a dead specimen of *Oceanites oceanicus* had been picked up 9 miles from the sea-coast, at Geelong. Instances of Mutton-Birds (Short-tailed Petrel) and White-faced Storm-Petrels having been

* *Vict. Nat.*, xxvi., p. 138.