

Mr. Mathews to be quite sufficient for the foundation of a new sub-species, and he proceeds accordingly. It is quite impossible for us to go into controversy with one who 'has personally handled' 30,000 specimens of Australian birds, but we are quite certain that there must be a mistake somewhere, and leave it to others who are better acquainted with the Australian Ornis than we are to find out where these mistakes are."

"Additions and Corrections" to Mr. Mathews' "Reference-List" appear in *The Austral Avian Record*, vol. i., No. 3, pp. 73-80.

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### Correspondence.

MR. MATHEWS' LIST OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS: A QUERY.

*To the Editors of "The Emu."*

SIRS,—Is there any necessity for ornithological students to have so many sub-species to wade through as Mr. Mathews has created in his latest list of Australian birds? Are we to assume that through force (or possibly change) of environment some comparatively small differences are created that form a sufficient basis for a new sub-species? Were there not too many before this list was issued?

Granted that the new "sub-species" should be so described, why give personal names instead of descriptive ones? To give a name which describes the sub-specific character, if necessary, would be an advantage from an educational standpoint. Is this new list such aid as it should be for purposes of identification?

The use of personal names in science is always understood to be complimentary to persons who have made some noteworthy discovery, or who have performed a signal service to the particular branch in which they are interested—not merely for collectors who may by chance (or for gain) forward some local variety or phase of bird or other life procured in their own neighbourhood in the hope of their names being handed down to posterity. Does not giving the name of the collector to every new sub-species (?) sent in discount its worth and the value of distinctions which have been worthily bestowed?—I am, &c.,

H. KENDALL.

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*To the Editors of "The Emu."*

SIRS,—My attention has been drawn to the preface in Mr. Gregory Mathews's work, "The Birds of Australia," wherein the learned author makes the following statement regarding the nomenclature of Australian birds:—"The most gratifying feature in connection with my work is the declared intention of the Royal Ornithologists' Union (voiced by Mr. Milligan, *Emu*, vol xi., p. 136, 1911) to give loyal adherence to the system, presently adopted by the national authority on ornithology within the British Dominions, namely, the British Museum.

"This action at once decides the acceptance of that adopted by me throughout this volume," &c.

To remove all misapprehension on the subject, let me say at once that, in the declaration of my intention, I voiced neither the intentions nor the opinions of the Royal Ornithologists' Union or of the Check-list Committee, but simply my own. At the time I was well aware that there were very many members of both bodies who were not in agreement with me, and who intended not to be guided by the British Museum, or any other authority, but to mark out an independent course.—I am, &c.,

ALEX. WM. MILLIGAN.

103 William-street, Melbourne, 16/9/12.

### Bird Observers' Club.

THE annual meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held on Wednesday evening, 15th May, 1912, at the Mia-Mia Tea Rooms, Collins-street. There was a good attendance of members. Mr. Mattingley read extracts from a letter written by Mr. Jas. Buckland *re* sales of Emu and Bird-of-Paradise skins in London. Mr. Buckland stated that Germany was going ahead in the matter of bird-protection, but France was slow in falling into line. The hon. secretary then read a report of a recent trip to Phillip Island, undertaken by members of the B.O.C. It was decided that the hon. sec. write to the R.A.O.U., with a request that a brief report of the experiments conducted among the Mutton-Birds be published in *The Emu*, and that other magazines be asked to copy. Mr. F. E. Wilson, the hon. treasurer, presented the balance-sheet for the past 12 months. He was congratulated on the neat and concise manner in which he had kept the accounts. The balance-sheet was adopted. The hon. sec., in his report, commented on the good scientific work done by members. Birds and eggs new to science had been procured and described, and valuable ornithological books written. Office-bearers for the ensuing year were elected as follows:—President, Dr. H. W. Bryant; hon. treasurer, Mr. F. E. Wilson; hon. secretary, Mr. L. G. Chandler. The president, hon. secretary, and hon. treasurer, and Messrs. E. B. Nicholls and Chas. Barrett, were appointed as a sub-committee to consider a scheme for the advancement of the Club, and report at the next meeting. Dr. Bryant mentioned that he had just returned from Woodside, Gippsland, where bird-life was abundant. He saw several mobs of Emus close to the homestead, and the birds were remarkably tame. Mr. T. H. Tregellas stated that he had seen White-plumed Honey-eaters (*Ptilotis penicillata*) feeding young on 10th May. Mr. Mattingley said he believed that a new species of *Malurus* existed at Alexandra, in the Goulburn Valley (Vic.) On behalf of Mr. H. L. White, of New South Wales, Mr. A. J. Campbell exhibited a new bird for Australia, collected at Cape York—namely, *Piezorhynchus alecto*, of New Guinea. Skins of ♂ and ♀ were exhibited, also, for comparison, ♂ and ♀ *P. nitida*, from Napier Broome Bay, North-West Australia. Photographs taken at Phillip Island were exhibited by Messrs. H. W. Wilson and L. G. Chandler.

The monthly meeting of the Club was held at the residence of Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, "Koonawarra," Glenferrie-road, Kew, on the evening of Wednesday, 26th June, 1912. Dr. George Horne was elected to represent the Club on the Council of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. Mr. C. Price Conigrave was welcomed to the meeting by the president, and later in the evening he gave members a very interesting account of his exploration work in the North-West of Australia. He exhibited a large number of excellent photographs to illustrate his remarks.