

IS THERE A SCARLET-BREASTED KINGFISHER ?

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—In none of my bird books can I find any description of, or even reference to, the scarlet-breasted Kingfisher. In Hall's "Key" I think twelve different species are described, but I can find nothing in the list that would serve to establish the identity of this beautiful bird. In the "Check-list" recently issued by authority of the R.A.O.U. fifteen Kingfishers are mentioned, but, so far as I can make out, the scarlet-breast is not included. That there is such a bird I know, as I have seen it at very close quarters in the remote southern border districts of New South Wales. It is one of the most charming bird-forms the writer has ever seen. The back and wings are metallic green and royal blue, the throat whitish, and the breast just as vivid a scarlet—so far as one may judge without handling the bird—as the Scarlet-breasted Robin. I would be glad if you could enlighten me on this point.—I am, &c.,

Wagga, N.S.W., April, 1913.

W. M. SHERRIE.

[There is no scarlet-breasted Kingfisher indigenous to Australia. The nearest colour is "ferruginous orange," which describes the breast of the familiar river Kingfisher (*Alcyon*).—EDS.]

Obituary Notice.

MELLOR.—On the 4th May, 1913, at Holmfirth, Fulham, S.A., in his 69th year, after a long and painful illness, John Fox, youngest son of the late Joseph Mellor, of Adelaide, and dearly beloved husband of Eliza Mellor.

THE late Mr. J. F. Mellor, although not an active member of the R.A.O.U., always took a deep interest in its affairs since its inception. He accompanied Mrs. Mellor and their son, Mr. J. W. Mellor, to all the annual sessions, except to the last (Launceston) meeting, when he was incapacitated on account of the dire illness to which he ultimately succumbed.

Members who were fortunate enough to know the late Mr. Mellor will ever remember his genial disposition and cheerfulness, especially at the camp-outs, at which, moreover, being of a mechanical turn of mind, he was an indispensable hand. In numerous ways, private and public, his place will not be easily filled, and members will condole with his family and friends at their loss.

The late Mr. Mellor married a daughter of the late Mr. John White, of Reedbeds (near Adelaide), therefore was brother-in-law to the late Mr. Samuel White, frequently mentioned in Gould's great work, "The Birds of Australia."

Bird Observers' Club.

THE first meeting of the Bird Observers' Club for 1913 was held at the Thistle Tea-rooms, Elizabeth-street, on Wednesday evening, 15th January. Mr. C. F. Cole was the host. There was a good attendance of members. The chair was occupied by Dr. H. W. Bryant, president. Mr. Slaney was

elected a member of the Club. Mr. L. G. Chandler, the hon. secretary, reported that a party of Club members had spent an instructive week-end on Mud Island, Port Phillip Bay. Thirty-seven specimens of the White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*) had been ringed, in connection with the study of migration. The Mutton-Bird rookeries at Phillip Island formed the subject for the evening, and Mr. Cole thought it was time that the Club arrived at some finality in regard to the preservation of these interesting rookeries. Mr. A. J. Campbell said that little was known regarding the life-history of the Mutton-Bird, and the B.O.C. should make systematic studies. Mr. Campbell made suggestions concerning the protection of the birds. Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley considered that only wire crooks should be used in extracting eggs from the burrows. When crooks with wooden handles were used the mouths of the burrows were enlarged, and finally the tunnels collapsed. Mr. G. A. Dyer stated that last year, on Phillip Island, he met a man who had in his possession four 40-gallon casks of bird oil. At a rough estimate, over 3,000 birds had been killed to obtain this oil. The chairman described a visit which he had recently made to Cape Woolamai, in company with Messrs. A. J. and A. G. Campbell. He considered that the Club should study the Mutton-Birds scientifically. He outlined several plans whereby the many problems in the life-history of the Petrels could be elucidated. Messrs. O. W. Rosenhain, F. E. Wilson, and A. C. Stone also spoke on the subject. Major J. M. Semmens, Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game, who was present by invitation, said that it might be better to go on with protection without waiting for the scientific points to be cleared up. He detailed a series of recommendations, which, he said, he intended to place before the Minister for Agriculture at an early date. It was agreed that members of the Club visit Cape Woolamai before the old birds had left the rookeries for the season. Mr. F. E. Howe exhibited an unusual nest of the White-shafted Fantail (*Rhipidura albiscapa*), the specimen being devoid of the "tail." Mr. C. Barrett exhibited photographs of the nests of typical birds of the Lake Boga district, and Mr. Chandler photographs taken during the recent Club outing at Mud Island.

The monthly meeting of the Club was held on Wednesday evening, 19th February, at the residence of Mr. Dudley Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., Zoological Gardens, Parkville. Before dinner, members inspected the gardens, under the guidance of Mr. Le Souëf. The large mounds of the Brush-Turkey created considerable attention. The host stated that the male bird alone constructed the mound, the earth and *débris* being scratched up by the bird's feet, with a backward motion. A pair of White-quilled Rock-Pigeons (*Petrophassa albipennis*) was also closely examined. Mr. Le Souëf had recently brought these birds from the Northern Territory. At the business meeting Mr. Le Souëf occupied the chair. Mr. L. G. Chandler, hon. secretary, read the report of the Mud Island camp-out, and a brief paper by Mr. A. H. Chisholm, of Maryborough, on the nesting habits of Thrushes. Mr. J. A. Ross then read an interesting paper on Cuckoos. Mr. Le Souëf gave a lecture on his recent trip to the Northern Territory. A series of lantern slides was shown. Mr. D. Le Souëf exhibited an adult specimen of the White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*), and two young in the down. Mr. F. E. Wilson showed a set of eggs of the Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*), with an egg of the Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx plagosus*). This was a new record. On behalf of Mr. H. L. White, of New South Wales, Mr. A. J. Campbell exhibited a magnificent series of eggs of the Spotted Bower-Bird (*Chlamydera maculata*), and also a set of eggs of the rare Yellow-spotted Bower-Bird (*C. guttata*). For further note on this exhibit see *Emu*, vol. xii., p. 286.

The monthly meeting of the Club was held on Wednesday evening, 19th March, at the residence of Dr. H. W. Bryant, Toorak. The host occupied the chair. Mr. C. F. Cole read an interesting paper on the Mutton-Bird. The paper contained many valuable notes on the habits of the birds, and

Mr. Cole was congratulated on his good field-work. Mr. T. H. Tregellas followed with a paper entitled "Birds of Passage." He dealt with many migratory and partially migratory birds. Mr. P. R. H. St. John was unanimously elected a member of the Club. Mr. A. C. Stone exhibited a set of four eggs of the Plain-Wanderer. Dr. Bryant exhibited a skin of the Terek Sandpiper (*Terekia cinerea*), from the Snowy River, Victoria, and skins of the Grey-rumped Sandpiper (*Totanus brevipes*) from Victoria and another wader from Samoa. Several members contributed nature notes.

South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE annual meeting of the Association was held in the Adelaide Institute on 28th March, Mr. E. Ashby presiding. There was a good attendance. The honorary secretary, Mr. J. W. Mellor, read the thirteenth annual report, which showed that good progress had been made, a number of new members having joined, and much more interest was now being taken in the study and welfare of our native birds. The police were taking an active part in watching for offenders against the *Birds Protection Act*, and prosecuting those found breaking the law, while numerous inquiries were being made by people relative to the usefulness or otherwise of our native birds. Two members of the Association, Mr. J. W. Mellor and Captain S. A. White, had attended the congress of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union recently held in Tasmania, and officially taken charge of the ornithological investigations made in connection with the scientific expedition to Flinders Island, in Bass Strait, after the congress session. The silver cup presented by the Association to be competed for annually by the school children of South Australia had this year been won by the Wilkawatt public school. It was found that this cup was stirring up enthusiasm amongst the children, and they were making keen observations relative to the habits of the birds to enable them to write the essays accurately. The financial statement showed a substantial credit balance. The report and balance-sheet were adopted. The honorary secretary reported having recently gone to Port Adelaide, at the request of the Police Department, to investigate a case in which native birds were being exported by a bird-dealer, and these had been detained by the police until it was ascertained whether any protected birds were amongst the consignment. Mr. Mellor found that the species were not protected, and they were allowed to be forwarded. Captain S. A. White tabled the "Check-list" of the R.A.O.U., and also *The Ibis*. Mr. F. R. Zietz was elected to the position of president for the ensuing year, but it was resolved to adjourn the meeting until next month, and in the interim to call for nominations for the positions of vice-president and honorary secretary and treasurer, and in future years to call for nominations for all officers of the Association, these to be in the hands of the secretary at least ten days prior to the annual meeting. The subject of the evening was the study of the Heron and Bittern families. Specimens were brought by Mr. Ashby and Captain White, and it was decided to continue the subject at the next meeting.

The adjourned annual meeting of the Society was held in the Royal Society's rooms, North-terrace, on the evening of 25th April. Mr. Robert Zietz (president) occupied the chair. Other officers elected:—Vice-president, Mr. J. W. Mellor; secretary, Mr. R. Crompton. Dr. A. M. Morgan reported the appearance of the Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater (*Acanthogenys rufogularis*) on the plains. Mr. Zietz said he had seen the first Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroica phænicea*) for the season. Capt. White said he had observed numbers of these beautiful birds on the salt-flats near St. Kilda during the week, and that these birds leave the ranges at this time of the year and disperse over the low country. The subjects for the evening were Cranes, Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns. A fine collection of these birds