

Correspondence.

R.A.O.U. HEADQUARTERS.

(To the Editor).

Sir,—In the last number of *The Emu*, page 227, a paragraph appears in which it is stated I offered a contribution towards the cost of renting new premises for the R.A.O.U.

I made such an offer, certainly, but as no acknowledgment was received within a month my offer was definitely withdrawn. Correspondence in the hands of the Hon. Secretary will bear out my statement.

"Belltrees,"

Scone, N.S.W.

March 5, 1926.

Yours etc.,

HENRY L. WHITE.

THE EMU AT HOME.

(To the Editor).

Sir,—I have just read, with much interest, the article on "The Emu at Home," by D. W. Gaukrodger, in *The Emu* for October, 1925.

I have had no experience with the Emu in Australia; in fact, I have never had the pleasure of visiting your country. On the other hand, I have had much to do with Emus in captivity, and have never yet known the female to take the slightest interest in her eggs once they were laid, much less to assist in incubation. Are we, then, in Mr. Gaukrodger's article, to read "he" for "she" and "him" for "her", or are we to believe that the habits of the Emu at liberty are at such great variance with its ways in captivity?

Yours, etc.,

LEE S. CRANDALL,

Curator of Birds,

New York Zoological Park

Nov. 20, 1925.

[Mr. C. M. Betts, of Gladesville, N.S.W., who kept Emus in a paddock, informed North: "Our experience is that the female always sits a fortnight and then the male finishes the incubation." Later, he shut up a female and she successfully hatched the eggs by herself (North, *Nests and Eggs*, Vol. 4., p. 411.) It is clear therefore that individual females differ.—EDITOR.]

COLOUR VARIETIES OF BUDGERIGARS.

(To the Editor)

Sir,—In *The Emu*, July number, there is a note on "Colour Varieties of the Budgerigar," by Mr. A. S. Le Souef. I was in charge of Mme. Lecallier's collection of birds when Mr. Le Souef paid his

visit. There was then a good collection of Budgerigars, including blue, olive, jade, yellow, green, and the sage green mentioned. I bred for the first time, when with Mme. Lecallier, the apple-green, the cream, and the jade. I also bred for the first time, in 1923, the cobalt-blue Budgerigar. These were the first seen of this colour (there was a pair) and they were sold to the late Mrs. Dalton-Burgess, of Clifton, Bristol, who, some time later, bought several pairs from M. Blanchard, of Toulouse. The birds mentioned by the late Mr. Astley, in his letter to Mr. Le Souef, were sold to him by me. The following year, 1924, the late Mrs. Dalton-Burgess bred the grey, they having not been bred up to that time. There are the following colours of Budgerigars: Cobalt, grey (or what I call lavender), blue, olive, jade, apple-green (called sage-green by Mr. Le Souef), cream, yellow, and the original green; there is also a so-called *white*, but these birds are not a pure white, having pale blue underparts. A noted French breeder in the south of France is trying to breed them pure white.

A Budgerigar Club has now been formed in England, and a new colour, cinnamon, is mentioned in their colour standard; but this colour has yet to be produced, and I think it most unlikely that this will be done. I have here the largest breeding establishment of the known colours of Budgerigars in the United Kingdom, and should any members of the R.A.O.U. be visiting England I shall be pleased to see them and show them my collection of birds. No doubt new colours will appear in the near future.

Yours, etc.,

Courtlands, Beaconsfield, Bucks, F. GEO. HEDGES, R.A.O.U.

England.

Oct. 18, 1925.

SECOND BROODS.

(To the Editor).

Sir,—Mr. McGilp (*Emu*, Vol. XXV., Page 17) contends that few birds rear a second brood. He is no doubt right as far as his locality is concerned. There, the rainfall is meagre, and only after good rains the food supply may be good enough and a stimulant to breed. As far as my observations go, I say emphatically that all or nearly all the birds in Southern Victoria rear two broods each year, and in the case of *Malurus* as many as four broods have been reared in a Melbourne garden.

After many years of close observation as a collector I may cite the following species at least:—*Acanthizae*, fresh eggs average date Aug. 15th, second clutch Nov. 5th; *Pycnoptilus*, Oct. 1st, Dec. 30th; (Have seen male leading young about and female on eggs); *Erythrodryas rosea*, Oct. 12th, Jan. 1st; *Climacteris leucophaea*, Sept. 1st, Nov. 25th; *C. erythrope*, Sept. 30th, Nov. 30th; *Myiagra rubecula*, Nov. 25th, Jan. 10th; *M. concinna* Nov. 20th, Jan. 15th; *Dicaeum*, Nov. 15th, Jan. 15th; *Melithreptus lunulatus*, Oct. 18th, Jan. 5th; *Cinlosoma punctatum*, Sept. 20th,

Jan. 1st ; *Strepera anaphonensis*, Aug. 20th, Nov. 5th ; *Oriolus*, Nov. 5th, Jan. 20th ; *Chthonicola*, Sept. 1st, Nov. 25th ; *Falcunculus*, Oct. 20th, Dec. 30th ; *Meliphaga chrysops*, Oct. 28th, Jan. 1st.

Of course, our rainfall averages roughly 23½ inches, and therefore a good food supply is assured. In a very good season I should think that many of our stationary species would hatch out three or even more broods.

Yours, etc.

Canterbury, Victoria.
Nov. 19 1925.

F. E. HOWE.

Reviews.

DR. PHILLIPS ON DUCKS.

["A Natural History of the Ducks."—By John C. Phillips, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard College, U.S.A. Published by the Riverside Press, Cambridge.]

Members of the R.A.O.U. were introduced to this important work in *The Emu*, vol. XXIV, pp. 78-9, when vols. I and II of *The Ducks* were received from the author.

In volume III the excellence of the work is fully maintained. This book deals with the remainder of the sub-family *Anatinae* and the sub-family *Fuligulinae*. The four following Australian species are included : Australian Shoveller (*Spatula rhynchotis*), Pink-eared Duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*), Freckled Duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*), and Australian White-eyed Duck (*Nyroca australis*). Fine coloured plates are given of all.

It is doubtful if the Shoveller of world-wide range (*S. clypeata*) is Australian. Gould states that he saw it himself, and we know it occurs frequently in the Austro-Malayan region, notably at Borneo. However, its life-history will aid us to understand better our own Shoveller, which is the Australian representative of the common Shoveller. Dr. Phillips writes : "Old male Shovellers arrive on the breeding grounds in all the perfection of the spring plumage, but the males of the previous year have the plumage by no means freely developed. Naturalists are divided on the question as to whether or not these young males breed the first season. It will be probably found that those hatched early in the previous season reach sexual maturity by the following spring. Certainly no shoal-water Duck is more irregular than the Shoveller in assuming full dress. Sometimes old and otherwise perfect male specimens will have a brown feather here and there to mar the white of the breast. Absolutely perfect specimens are more rare than in any other species. But it must not be forgotten that lack of full plumage is not necessarily an indication of sexual immaturity either in this or other species."

The clutch of eggs varies from 8 to 14, averaging about 10 ; incubation period from 22 to 24 days.

The charming little Pink-eared Duck is not found outside of Australia, and has a record for the abundance of down with which it lines