

Report of Hon. Editor of *The Emu*

Outstanding among the many interesting and valuable contributions to *The Emu* since the last editorial report have been K. A. Hindwood's two papers on the Emu-Wren and on Bowes' Diary respectively, G. Mack's treatise of the genus *Zosterops* in Australia, and D. J. Dickison's review of ornithology in Victoria. Numerous minor contributions, many with excellent photographs, and notes from every part of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, have all aided in keeping up the standard of the journal.

The standard *Emu* for some years has been a quarterly part of eighty pages, but the October (1932) number was much reduced owing to lack of material. Whilst it is hoped to increase succeeding parts so that the size of the yearly volume will be as usual, members are, nevertheless, requested, by increasing their contributions, to permit of no repetition of the issue of small parts. The response to former requests to non-contributing members has been so small as scarcely to warrant the repetition of such requests; yet there are some members ready to criticize when small parts are issued. One is soon brought to a realization of the fact that *The Emu* is the means of keeping ornithologists in Australasia in touch with each other's doings and in keeping members of the R.A.O.U. interested in their Union. Bearing those facts in mind, members should be desirous of assisting in maintaining the interest of members generally in the Union in these parlous times for all scientific bodies by seeing that the standard of *The Emu* is maintained, if not surpassed. The Stray Feather and Camera Craft sections of the journal are by no means the least important portions of it, and to the former, at least, there should be no member who cannot contribute from time to time.

Elsewhere in the part wherein this report will be printed appears a letter from Mr. Stidolph, R.A.O.U., concerning bird lists—and one or two other members have written the Editor on the same matter. In order to elucidate what many appear to misunderstand, the following analysis of the paragraph referred to therein (appearing in Vol. XXXII, p. 80) is included. The note in question was at the time carefully considered, hedged around with reservations, and calculated not to give offence to even the most impetuous.

Firstly the criticism is *not* that of the Editor—he is only to some extent in agreement with the criticisms of *others*. Secondly, the list there spoken of is the *mere list* with *little accompanying data*. It is unfortunate that some members have placed such a narrow interpretation on the note in question, which, rather than to discourage contributions,

was intended to encourage them—that is, contributions of a *more complete nature*. With much that has been said anent encouraging young ornithologists the Editor is in accord, not after reading the letters, but quite independently of them. But a bird census is greatly improved if careful notes, gathered after patient study, are included, and the young ornithologist would be well advised rather to continue painstakingly working on his list and notes until he is satisfied that it is complete as it can be made, than to rush it into print in a haphazard condition.

It is fully appreciated that lists form a large part of bird observation. A census of birds from a zoologically-unexplored locality is of considerable value, and it has also been the custom always to record in *The Emu* the birds of the R.A.O.U. Camps-out. That bird lists were included in the part of the journal in which the paragraph appeared and also in the current part, indicate that there is no intention of rejecting them—the underlying object of the reference was to *improve their quality*. The Editor has kept the words on the cover, and to which reference is made in Mr. Stidolph's letter, as an illuminating criterion. Mr. Stidolph italicizes "popularize"; the recording of *scientific research* is the other portion that completes the well-balanced whole. The Editor desires to keep both objects in view and trusts that members will assist in that direction. Finally, the inclusion of this statement in the editorial report is in no way intended as a retort to the letters referred to, but merely as an explanation of what the Editor hoped, when he included it, was already sufficiently clear.

C. E. BRYANT,
Hon. Editor.

Musk-Duck (*Biziura lobata*).—The Musk Duck is usually considered as a bird incapable of any but very short flights, and is believed to travel on foot from one water to another. Whilst on holidays recently at Smith's Lake (N.S.W.), Mr. Bramble, an old resident of the Lake, informed me that the male bird always walks from one water to another, and on more than one occasion he has seen the bird travelling across country from Smith's Lake to Myall Lake, which lakes are about a half mile apart, but the female *always* flies. He noticed that the female always became very thin before undertaking a flight.—W. J. ENRIGHT, R.A.O.U., West Maitland, N.S.W., 14/11/32.

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