

Correspondence

To the Editor.

GOULD IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Sir,

Although it is now some time since publication of the Gould special issue, I am sending this information regarding places in this State apparently named after John Gould. We South Australians were very remiss in not doing so before. The places are—Gould's River, Mount Gould, and Gould's Range, and are situated between fifteen and twenty miles north-east of Adelaide. Mt. Gould is shown on a map issued in London in June, 1841—see *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. of Aust.*, S.A. Branch, vol. XVII.

Gould accompanied the Surveyor-General (Capt. Charles Sturt) on a visit to the district in which these features are located. See Cleland in *The Emu*, vol. XXXVI, pp. 201-4, and Hindwood, vol. XXXVIII, p. 99. There is no doubt that the "west" bend as mentioned by Cleland (line 8, p. 202) is that now known as the "North West Bend." This fixes the direction in which the party travelled. Cleland, quoting from the *Westminster Review*, says "the West bend"; Hindwood (p. 99) says "the Western Bend."

Yours, etc.,

279 Goodwood Road,
Kings Park, S.A.,
February 15, 1941.

J. D. SOMERVILLE.

NOMENCLATURAL MATTERS

To the Editor.

Sir,

In *The Emu*, vol. XL, p. 322, it is stated that *Circus juxta* is a nude name. In my opinion that is incorrect. The name appears in the *United States Explor. Exped.*, vol. VIII, p. xv, Oct. 1848, in the table of contents, with a reference to p. 64 where *Circus approximans* is described and no other bird. Apparently Peale, when indexing the contents of his work in paged proof, did not like the name *approximans* and after consideration he preferred *juxta*. To those who follow the International Rules *juxta* has page priority, and, moreover, must be the latest opinion of the author. It certainly cannot be called a nude name.

On p. 321 of the same volume there is a reference to "the tendency towards a genus for every species," but no responsible worker has ever advocated or used such a system, as must be evident to any careful worker.

Some of the matters appearing in the fourth volume of Peters' *Check-list of Birds of the World*, as mentioned in *The Emu* review, call for comment. Peters confines to Cape York *Cyphorhina plumifera neglecta* of southern Queens-

land.* An author who changes the type locality of a species, without cause, and places the name purely by guesswork, may take other unscientific liberties with names. Cape York has been well explored for new and old forms. My type of *neglecta* was collected in the scrub country of southern Queensland and the collector told me that the locality was near the Macpherson Ranges. *Podargus plumiferus* only occurs around the type locality (Clarence River) and that part of southern Queensland which abuts on to it. It is apparently a very rare species. I have examined many skins labelled "*plumiferus*," which were actually *strigoides*. When once a true *plumiferus* is examined it would never be placed with *strigoides*. The affinity of *P. plumiferus* is with *Micropodargus ocellatus*. In the Sydney Museum there is a skin of *plumiferus*, and when skins of *ocellatus* were collected at Cape York they were labelled *plumiferus* without the skins being measured. The wing of the form named *neglecta* is 230 mm., tail 237; the *plumiferus* from the Clarence River has a wing measurement of 229 mm., tail with tip broken. The wing measurements of *M. o. marmoratus* vary from 177 to 190 mm. The question is not whether *plumiferus* is a form of *strigoides*, but is it a form of *ocellatus*. I am inclined to keep it a separate species. The way *neglecta* is treated by Peters makes a bird collected in southern Queensland, with a wing measurement of 230 mm., an absolute synonym of a species confined to Cape York, with a wing of under 190 mm.

With regard to the use of *Ninox leucopsis* (Gould) 1838, the original, in *Proc. Zool. Soc. (Lond.)*, 1837, p. 99, reads: "Four species of this genus [*Athene*] are now on the table, the two largest of which are new to science. For the largest I would propose the name of *Athene strenua*, and for the other that of *A. fortis*. The third has been characterized by Messrs. Vigors and Horsfield as the *Noctua Boobook*, and the *Noctua maculata* of these gentleman seems to be identical with it." It is to be noted that *maculata* was not on the table. "For the fourth and last species of the genus [which genus, *Noctua* or *Athene*?] which is from Van Diemen's Land, and which is evidently distinct from either, I propose the name of *leucopsis* . . ." The "either" says that *leucopsis* is distinct from either *boobook* or what? Certainly not from either *boobook* or *maculata* as the latter bird was not on the table. As there were four species, the fourth is distinct from either *boobook* or those in the genus *Athene* which were treated as one item. We must remember that Gould adopted *strenua* and *fortis* but did not again use *leucopsis*. In my opinion that name is indeterminable. It is not a nude name as I once thought it.

Concerning the date of the publication of the *Trans. Linn.*

*Peters (*op. cit.*) includes this form in *Podargus ocellatus marmoratus*, which fact might well have been mentioned in the review item.—Ed.

Soc., Lond., vol. XV, pt. I, the volume includes papers read in March and June, 1826, so could not have been issued in February, 1826, as has been stated. The earliest date of issue I know is February 17, 1827. Is not the data provided by me in my Bibliography correct?

The committee appointed to bring out our new *Checklist* will have to consult many works, embracing lists compiled by overseas workers and including the one now appearing, by Peters. No one expected one man to list the birds of the world without making mistakes and, although Peters is, of course, as much entitled to his views as are the remainder of the ornithologists, there are some outstanding differences between him and other workers so far as the nomenclature of Australian birds is concerned. The R.A.O.U., for example, has always admitted the genus *Barnardius*, as do most workers. Other genera are admitted by those who have studied Australian parrots in the field and in captivity. Different workers have different ideas of what constitutes a genus, the prejudiced worker maintaining that he is correct, the truly-scientific worker not being so dogmatic. Apparently misunderstanding exists concerning the use of genera. An accepted definition of a genus has never been promulgated and until such obtains it is obviously impossible to say if too few or too many genera are in use.

Yours, etc.,

GREGORY M. MATHEWS.

Sydney,
February 26, 1941.

Editorial

In view of differences between contributors on matters of nomenclature, the Editor draws attention to the statement on the inside front cover dealing with authors' responsibility for opinions expressed in their contributions. Lack of editorial comment does not necessarily imply agreement with any particular statements.

Pressure on space has necessitated the holding over of very much material, and publication of several lengthy papers may be delayed considerably. In view of such state of affairs, avifaunal lists of other than little-worked areas and biographical papers of length, particularly those dealing only indirectly with Australian ornithology, cannot be accepted, or at best must be postponed to strictly ornithological contributions.

Marked differences occur in the style of branch reports, some being largely confined to matters of minor local domestic import. State Secretaries might endeavour to record, in their reports, matters of more-general progress in ornithology, such as bird protection, sanctuaries, dissemination of knowledge of birds, and the like, ensuring a more