

ORGANISATION

The R.A.O.U. scheme is to be administered at Canberra, where initially Mr. Stephen Marchant will be responsible for the issuing of record cards and instructions, and for maintaining the collection of completed cards. These will be available for analysis by anyone in Australia who can show the appropriate qualifications, knowledge, and interest in a study of recognised importance. An annual report of the year's activities and progress will be published or circulated to contributors.

A scheme of this nature, even if dependent largely on amateur voluntary effort, cannot be operated for nothing. The Council has therefore decided that every participant be asked to pay £1 for 100 cards initially to help defray part of the costs; these cards will be replaced *gratis* when returned completed. It is not expected that this levy will make the scheme self-supporting from the start—it will merely represent a contribution towards the overall cost. It will only be after the scheme becomes well known, fully supported, and established that this preliminary and tentative arrangement can be reviewed and perhaps modified on a permanent basis.

The Council, then, urges all observers to support this scheme as fully as possible, and emphasises that no one need be put off either by the amount of work involved or by the feeling that little or nothing can be contributed. The amount of effort involved depends solely on the enthusiasm and interest of the individual. The accurate recording of a single nest seen once in the garden has a value far beyond the simplicity of the observation. Corporate membership by local bird societies, schools, or institutions would be particularly valuable and welcome, provided some competent individual is prepared to act as local organiser for distribution of cards, checking of accuracy, etc.

Please consider carefully whether you are likely to have anything at all to contribute to the scheme and, if so, write to Mr. Marchant, who will be only too pleased to advise, help and encourage. The more people who participate in the scheme the sooner will it become established, and the sooner will its value become clear in the shape of publications.

Please address all enquiries on the scheme to: Mr. STEPHEN MARCHANT, 36 ARTHUR CIRCLE, FORREST, CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Obituary

JOHN NEIL MCGILP, O.B.E.

John Neil McGilp, an experienced pastoralist, a sound citizen, a naturalist of distinction, and an ornithologist of high repute, died on October 12, 1963, in his eighty-second year. In his younger days, at the very beginning of the motor era, Moonarie was far afield and Moolawatana on the outskirts of civilisation, but both must have played their part in making him a naturalist. The Pastoral Board furnished him with opportunities to visit still more remote areas and no part of the fascinating arid interior of South Australia can have escaped his seeing eye. He was uncanny in finding the nests of birds. He would surprise his unobservant fellow-traveller, as the car stopped to open a gate, by saying, "I think there is a nest in that post"—such an unlikely fence-post it would seem and sure enough a Whiteface had one there. His appointment to the Board of Management of the State Bank of South Australia shows that he was recognised as a sound citizen with business acumen. At his suggestion as a naturalist, his fellow-Commissioners of the National Park of South Australia established a large kangaroo and emu enclosure.

John Neil McGilp, son of Neil McGilp from Argyllshire, Scotland, was born at Port Augusta on October 30, 1881. He was educated at Way College, Adelaide. He began his pastoral career on Carriewerloo near Port Augusta, then at Moonarie, north of the Gawler Range, and next on North Bungaree, Clare. In 1907 he went to Moolawatana Station, north-east of Copley and near Lake Callabonna, which was held by Neil McGilp and Sons for 55 years, being sold in 1935. He retired to Adelaide in 1920 and visited England and the continent in 1926. In 1930 he was appointed a member of the Pastoral Board and in 1936 of the Land Board; he became Chairman of the latter in 1938. He was awarded the

O.B.E. in 1944 for his public services, and reached the Public Service retiring age in 1946. In August, 1940, he was a member and Deputy Chairman of the Board of Management of the State Bank of South Australia and held office for 22 years, retiring on February 1, 1962.

He was a foundation member of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union and was President in 1938-9; he was President of the South Australian Ornithological Association in 1935-6 and 1948-9. He was appointed a Commissioner of the National Park, later enlarged to the National Park and Wild Life Reserves, in 1951 as a Government nominee and insisted on retiring in 1962. Other positions that McGilp held were President of the South Australian Stockowners' Association (1927-1929) and of the Hawthorn Bowling Club; Chairman of the Dog Fence Board of South Australia (1950-57), a member of the Council of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia, a member of the Flora and Fauna Advisory Committee (S.A.), of the Marginal Lands Committee (1940), and of the Advisory Committee on Soil Conservation (1940).

In 1930, the gift to the South Australian Museum of the "McGilp Egg Collection" was arranged. During the next seven years McGilp brought into the Museum batches of eggs to a total of 2,198 clutches. Thereafter, till 1961, he added to the collection which eventually reached a total of about 2,500 clutches from all parts of Australia. The collection when presented contained 67 clutches not represented in the Museum. Now the eggs of all Australian species, with the exception of the rarest and some overseas migrants, are contained in it.

In 1912 he married Maude Constance Lindsay, who was born at Birdsville, and who survives him. One daughter, Mary, is married to Dr. J. E. Barker, of Adelaide, and the other, Florence, to Dr. Claude Anderson, now of Perth.

In H. M. Whittell's *The Literature of Australian Birds* (1954) a short biography with references appears and three pages of articles, some with colleagues, up to 1949. In Everett's Index to vols. 1 to 37 of *The Emu*, there are 10 references under his name, and there are 42 entries in A. R. McGill's "A Species Index to *The Emu*", vols. 1 to 50 (1901-1951). Not included in these are the following: *South Australian Ornithologist*—"Notes on the Black-capped Sitella" 1953, 21 (1), p. 8-10; "Feeding habit of the Black-winged Currawong" 1953, 21 (2-3), p. 29; "Notes on Cuckoos in South Australia" 1956 22 (1), p. 9-12; *National Parks and Reserves* 1953 (Commissioners of the National Park, South Australia)—Birds of the Mount Lofty Ranges, p. 86-98; *South Australian National Parks and Wild Life Reserves* 1963—Birds of the Mt. Lofty Ranges, p. 77-88; *South Australian Naturalist* 1950, 25 (2, 3 and 4), p. 2-11—Protection of Fauna and Flora in South Australia.—J. B. Cleland.

Reviews

Breeding Biology of the Snow Petrel near Cape Hallett, Antarctica.—An interesting paper on one of the least known of our antarctic sea-birds is presented by William J. Maher in *The Condor*, 84: 488-99, November 1962. Maher's observations suggest that after a gradual increase in numbers, as the birds return to the breeding grounds, the Snow Petrel, *Pagodroma nivea*, deserts the nesting area for a period of feeding at sea prior to egg laying.

The nesting cycle takes approximately 150 days from arrival until the young fledge. The timing of the cycle is comparatively late compared with Maccormicks Skua and the Adélie Penguin but is seen as a series of adaptive compromises related to the metabolic effort of producing the relatively large egg and the advantage of the peak of food supply in late autumn coinciding with the critical post-fledging period. Moults occur during the breeding cycle.—JOHN L. MCKEAN.

The Migration of Birds, by Jean Dorst, 1962. William Heinemann Ltd., London, U.K. 476 pages in 13 chapters, bibliography, etc., 131 diagrams, maps. Price: 60/9.