

finality in regard to markings. Freckles, spots, blotches, dots, streaks, &c., should each have a definite delineation.

*Disposition of Markings* also requires treatment. Continuous or broken zone, compact or loose cap, would express the state of concentrated or scattered colouration.

The egg constitutes a part of the bird as much as the beak, feathers, &c., and requires scientific treatment on the same lines.

The investigation of the phenomena underlying the causes of variation in nature is one of the most sublime and fascinating problems of biology. By concentrating attention on the problem of egg variations, the student may ultimately be led to the discovery of laws controlling variations among individuals of the species. Whether these laws are influenced by climatology, physiology, physico-chemistry, or the action and reaction due to the subtle inter-relation of organisms, remains to be unriddled.

A conference of leading ornithologists should bring to finality the suggestions herein roughly adumbrated.—Yours, &c.,

P. A. GILBERT.

Redfern, Sydney, 26/1/11.

### South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE monthly meeting of this Ornithological Association was held in the Royal Society's rooms, North-terrace, on Friday evening, 5th May. Captain S. A. White presided. The secretary (Mr. J. W. Mellor) reported that a deputation had waited upon the Commissioner for Crown Lands with a request that the Pelican be placed upon the partially-protected list. The deputation appreciated the manner in which it was received, especially on hearing that part of the Coorong was likely to be declared a bird sanctuary. Mr. E. Ashby brought forward a notice of the deputation on the Kangaroo Island reserve on 13th June, when the Government would be asked to fulfil the promises of former Ministries. Captain White read a paper on "The Birds of the Riverina District," which he visited last year. He showed numerous specimens of the birds, among which were the beautiful "Green-leek" (*Polytelis barrabandi*), Yellow Parrakeet (*Platycercus flaveolus*), Rose-breasted Cockatoo (*Cacatua roseicapilla*), Grey Jumper (*Struthidea cinerea*), Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*), and Yellow-throated Friar-Bird (*Philemon citreogularis*). A long discussion occurred on the genus *Sericornis*. Mr Ashby showed birds from Dandenong Ranges, Gippsland, and Ballarat (Victoria), and from South and Western Australia. Mr. Mellor exhibited specimens from Eyre Peninsula. Mr. Robert Zietz (Ornithologist of the Adelaide Museum) read an extensive list, and brought numerous specimens for comparison; and Dr. A. M. Morgan showed the eggs of three rare species.

The July meeting of this Association was held in the Royal Society's rooms on Friday evening, the 28th. Captain S. A. White presided. The secretary, Mr. J. W. Mellor, reported having received letters from the Commissioner of Crown Lands in regard to the reservation

of certain swamps in the south-east as breeding-places for native water-fowl. Mr. Mellor gave a good description of his journey into the heart of Eyre Peninsula in quest of Mallee-Fowl for the reservation on Kangaroo Island, and reported having secured several pairs, which he had liberated at Cape Borda (see page 110). Dr. A. M. Morgan reported having seen the first nest on the Adelaide plains this season with a full clutch of eggs of the White-fronted Chat (*Ephthianura albifrons*). The president exhibited an unusually large and deep nest of the Bell-Bird (*Oreoica cristata*). Mr. Robert Zietz brought some interesting bird-skins from the Museum collection for comparison, and a long discussion occurred on the probability of the Double-banded Dottrel nesting on the Australian coast. He showed a pair of these interesting birds in their nuptial plumage, which were procured at Balaclava, and presented to the Museum by Mr. S. S. Ralli. Mr. Mellor showed a small collection of bird-skins from the Eyre Peninsula, some being of great interest, one or two having been recorded from that locality for the first time. Among others were the skins of the Yellow-throated Miner (*Myzantha flavigula*), White-eared Honey-eater (*Ptilotis leucotis*), Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*), White-fronted Honey-eater (*Glycyphila albifrons*), Wattle-cheeked Honey-eater (*Ptilotis cratitia*), Grey-breasted Robin (*Eopsaltria gularis*), Chestnut-rumped Ground-Wren (*Hylacola pyrrhopygia*), Spotted Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis maculata*), and Broad-tailed Tit (*Acanthiza apicalis*).

The September meeting was held in the Institute, Adelaide, on Friday evening, the 8th, Dr. A. M. Morgan presiding. Mr. J. W. Mellor, secretary, reported having been exceptionally vigilant with reference to the better protection of birds on the islands in the Coorong, which had been sadly depleted by "pot-hunters" and half-caste aborigines. The Government had agreed to lease the islands between Wood's Well and Salt Creek to the Association, with the object of protecting the bird-life there. A number of reliable people about the lakes and the Coorong had been enlisted as honorary custodians to look after the bird-life on the islands and to assist the Association in bringing offenders to book. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Mellor for his successful efforts. A number of letters from well-known residents of the lakes and Coorong were received, and much satisfaction was expressed that the Association was taking active steps to preserve the birds. The Association, in conjunction with the Native Fauna and Flora Protection Society, has been moving towards amending the *Bird Protection Act*, and Mr. M. Symonds Clark read a number of alterations agreed upon by the joint committee. These have been sent to the Commissioner of Crown Lands as recommendations for embodying in the new bill. Mr. E. Ashby forwarded some interesting notes on the breeding of the Blue Wren, Yellow-rumped Tit, and Hooded Robin near his house, Wittunga, Blackwood. Mr. J. W. Mellor gave an account of his journey to the Flinders Ranges, near Port Germein, for the purpose of bird-observing. He walked 60 miles during the three days he was there, and identified 68 species of native birds—a goodly list. He showed two species of Wrens—the Turquoise (*Malurus callainus*) and the Purple-backed (*M. assimilis*)—the Orange-fronted Chat (*Ephthianura aurifrons*), and the Plumed Honey-eater (*Ptilotis plumula*), which were collected for Mr. G. M. Mathews, England, to assist him in writing his elaborate history of Australian birds.