

Honorary Secretary's Report.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Your Council has much pleasure in presenting to you the fifth annual report, containing a *précis* of the transactions of the A.O.U. for the year ending 30th June, 1906. The Union's affairs still steadily progress. Efforts have been made to have water areas and quarantine grounds permanently reserved for the protection of bird-life. Excellent ornithological results attend the "working excursions" of our annual Congresses. Since the last Congress and "camp-out" at Kangaroo Island a large area of that locality has been permanently reserved as a sanctuary for its avifauna, mainly through the exertions of the South Australian member of your Council. The prevention of the introduction into the Commonwealth of unknown, dangerous, and patent diseases, that may be inimical to our avifauna, has been successfully accomplished, such diseases having been declared "prohibited imports," until they have been satisfactorily proved to be innocuous. A comprehensive and useful index for reference to the first five volumes of *The Emu* is in course of preparation. The *personnel* of the honorary editors of *The Emu* underwent a change during the year, but the Council was able to retain the services of the retiring editor in an honorary advisory capacity. Under the able guidance of the new editors, the journal still maintains its standard of scientific, literary, and artistic excellence, and a more observant and attentive public is being gradually created thereby, whilst the science of ornithology is becoming more popularised, and is advancing apace as its utility is being recognized. Nature study training, as well as nature study and also State school exhibitions, it is gratifying to know, are educating the rising generation to appreciate the domestic economy and value of their Australasian avifauna. Such training is better "bird protection" than many Acts of Parliament. The finances of the "Coloured Figure Fund," which is raised by voluntary subscription, have been somewhat neglected lately for lack of subscriptions. The thanks of the Council are, however, due to those subscribers who have so kindly helped to increase this very useful fund. The necessity of a "Check-List" is a matter of urgency. Ornithologists generally are awaiting its appearance, and its utility and importance cannot be over-estimated. It is hoped that the convener of the "Check-List" and the committee will be able to present a report to the members of the A.O.U. at the next annual session. The thanks of the members of the A.O.U. are again due to the president, Colonel-Surgeon Charles S. Ryan, for the gratuitous use of his rooms for Council meetings. The Council would be glad to receive further notes regarding the migration of birds. It is intended to tabulate some of these notes at the end of the present year. Useful and informative notes on birds that happen to strike the lighthouses are regularly forwarded by the light-keepers, as will be seen by the report by Mr. D. Le Souëf.

A. H. MATTINGLEY, Hon. Sec.

Lighthouse-keepers' Reports.

BY D. LE SOUËF, MELBOURNE.

COMPARATIVELY few reports have been received from the lighthouses during the past year, and the information received has not been of much help regarding migration.

Mr. George Johnston, of the Tasman Island light, reports that a Fan-tailed Cuckoo on 8th September was caught alive, and on liberating it several others joined; also Summer-Birds (*Graucalus*) and Wood-Swallows (*Artamus*) were seen for the first time (in 1906) on that day. The Welcome Swallows appeared there for the first time this year on 24th September; last summer they were conspicuous by their absence.

At Swan Island, Tasmania, Mr. Hemsley reports that several Petrels struck during rainy or cloudy weather, but the only land birds were a flock of Starlings, on 16th June, at 4.30 a.m.

At Maatsuyker Island, Tasmania, the Superintendent, Mr. Muir, states that 10 Black Cockatoos arrived on 22nd May, and remained for some weeks. The last Mutton-Bird was seen on 21st April.

At the Tamar Leading Light, near Launceston, Mr. Kirkwood states that Magpies seem to be increasing, and constantly alight on the tower of the lantern.

Mr. Nillson, of Table Cape Lighthouse, reports that he has not noticed any birds strike the lantern for some years, but a few passed by at night, but were not identified, except one flock of Wood-Swallows (*Artamus*).

Only one report came from South Australia, and that from the Althorpe Island Lighthouse, and Mr. Rackett, who is in charge, states that one White-faced Storm-Petrel struck in September, and was caught alive.

Two reports were received from Queensland—one from Mr. Picken, of the North Reef Lighthouse, in which he states that many birds strike the lantern in thick weather, and in nearly all cases at the point the wind is blowing from, but he had not been able to secure any for identification.

Mr. M'Kee, of Lady Elliott's Island, mentions that nine Mutton-Birds struck—four on the 14th, four on the 20th, and one on the 22nd of September; none were killed. Also, on the latter date, a small brown and white bird with horizontal stripes on its breast, which escaped.

A very interesting report is sent from Clifly Island. The Superintendent states that many *Zosterops cerulescens* struck on 17th April, and 40 dead ones were picked up at the foot of the tower next morning. Also that on 21st April three *Artamus sordidus* struck, one being killed, and on the 30th of the same month a *Graucalus melanops* struck and was killed. He also

mentions that the Mutton-Birds and Petrels that nest on the island very often strike the lantern in thick or misty, rainy weather, but he has not known one to be killed. He sent skins of the three kinds mentioned as being killed.

In a report from the Nobbys, Newcastle, N.S.W., by Mr. W. Gardiner, it is stated that a large number of small birds were about the light from 18th to 31st August. The specimen he sent was a White-faced Storm-Petrel. These little birds seem very plentiful round the coast of southern Australia.

Field Notes on Birds of the Richmond District, North Queensland.

BY FREDC. L. BERNEY.

PART IV.

STUBBLE QUAIL (*Coturnix pectoralis*).—Only to be seen very occasionally. My few notes on them bear reference to all the four seasons of the year. A male that was shot gave the following measurements:—Total length, $7\frac{10}{16}$ inches; wing, $4\frac{1}{16}$ inches; tarsus, 1 inch; bill, $\frac{9}{16}$ -inch; spread of wings, $13\frac{2}{16}$ inches. Compared with such authorities as I have access to, these figures seem excessive. I do not think I ever flushed two together.

BROWN QUAIL (*Synæcus australis*).—The appearance of the Brown Quail in this district varies much, owing, doubtless, to our uncertain climate. They appear to favour the months January to June; it is not usual to come across them from July to September, while I find I have no record at all of this Quail during the last three months of the year. This does not show any migratory movement, but simply that they avoid these parts during the drougthy half of the year. Actually, July to October are our driest months; November and December may bring us early storms, but they are so uncertain and patchy that the Quail would derive little benefit from them until January, when some of the grasses would be seeding and insects had time to multiply.

To me it is pleasant to hear them calling in the evening from the vicinity of a bore stream—"Bee'e quick, bee'e quick," the first two syllables drawn out almost into one, for it reminds me of Partridges in the old country, to which, too, they bear a strong resemblance when on the wing. Commencing a trifle before sundown, they relapse into silence towards midnight, and, starting again as daylight approaches, they ease off towards sunrise and cease calling altogether shortly after. They generally go in coveys up to a dozen, and frequent moist ground where the vegetation is green and grows rank.

On the 10th June this year our cat brought in a bird that proved on dissection to have a hard-shelled dull white egg in the oviduct, which I judge would have been laid within twenty-four hours.

Details of three birds obtained on Wyangarie are given herewith:—

No.	Date.	Sex	Total length. Inches.	Wing Inches.	Tail. Inches.	Tarsus Inch.	Bill Inch
104 ...	Feb., 1905	Male ...	$7\frac{10}{16}$...	$3\frac{13}{16}$...	$1\frac{12}{16}$...	$1\frac{4}{16}$...	$\frac{9}{16}$
109 ...	Feb., 1905	Male ...	$7\frac{12}{16}$...	$3\frac{12}{16}$...	$1\frac{12}{16}$...	1 ...	$\frac{10}{16}$
171 ...	June, 1906	Female...	$7\frac{8}{16}$...	$3\frac{11}{16}$...	$1\frac{10}{16}$...	$1\frac{5}{16}$...	$\frac{10}{16}$