

"*Occurrence.*—The first specimen seen was an isolated male, in the last week of October or the first week in November, 1910, in the neighbourhood of Leigh's Creek, South Australia. A flock of about 20 was seen later in November, and later on, in December and early January, between Hergott Springs and the River Cooper, several pairs were seen throughout the 90-mile journey, running on the ground or occasionally flitting across the track—in all, perhaps 20.

"*Nature of Country.*—The ground is dull red, covered thickly with stones the size of a marble to that of a plum, with salt-bush or blue-bush, say 3 or 4 feet apart. In the stretch between Hergott Springs and Cooper's Creek the country is typical "gibber plain," and the stones are more rounded and set closer together than near Leigh's Creek.

"*Habits.*—The habit of this bird separates it at once from any of the genus *Ephthianura* with which I am acquainted. It is always seen in the open country—either 'gibber plain' or open, stony hillside—running on the ground, bobbing its tail up and down in the same manner as the Australian Pipit (*Anthus australis*). So closely do its actions resemble that bird that at first I thought it possible that the tail was not fully developed, for it seemed strangely short for a bird that so closely resembled the Pipit in its actions. I have never seen a Wheat-ear, but from the written descriptions of the habits of some of the species occurring in Africa one would expect some relationship between them and the species under review. On one occasion a small boy saw one of these birds run into a rabbit-burrow, and, the burrow being short, he caught the bird in his hand, and took it home and fed it on Canary seed, which it ate, but after two days died, and, unfortunately, was thrown away. One of the specimens shot likewise ran down a rabbit-burrow after being hit, which suggests that this habit may be common to the species.

"*In Conclusion.*—The last time this bird was met with was Easter, 1911, near Leigh's Creek, when a single bird was seen. The prevalence of drought conditions since that date has prevented its recurrence in that locality.

"An observant bushman described the nest as being very similar in situation and structure to that of the Pipit (*Anthus australis*)."

Notes and Notices.

Osprey (Egret) Plumes.—The Duchess of Portland, writing to *The Times*, 23rd August, states:—"My attention having been called to the fact that mounts of real osprey were recently advertised for sale, I beg that you will allow me through your column to implore my countrywomen to refrain from purchasing this particular kind of head-dress. I am afraid ladies are not generally aware of the dreadful suffering caused in procuring these feathers. The milliner's osprey (French, *aigrette*) grows on the back of the White Heron or Egret, and then only in the breeding season, when their nests are congregated together in large numbers. Thus, the birds, although alarmed on the approach of the hunters, are unwilling to leave their offspring, and fall an easy prey to the guns, after which the coveted feathers are plucked from their

bodies. But what of their young? They, cruelly deprived of their parental support, and having themselves no feathers of any value, are left to die the horrible death of slow starvation. These are the circumstances I wish to point out, and why I would ask all men and women to discourage the wearing of osprey plumes, for if there were no demand the supply would soon cease. I am glad to read in a leading London newspaper, commenting on the millinery taken to India by Queen Mary in the recent tour, that her Majesty had never worn a real aigrette, and had given special instructions that nothing of the kind should be employed in her millinery. This example will, I earnestly hope, be followed when the facts are known."

Lighthouses and Birds.—Two reports from lighthouse-keepers have been forwarded to the hon. secretary of the R.A.O.U. by Mr. J. Adams, Secretary to the Marine Board of Hobart.

W. A. Campbell, superintendent of the Eddystone Point lighthouse, reports:—"Re birds striking the tower. 10th September, 1912, 4.50 a.m., a Blackbird struck the tower, and continued to do so till daylight, when it disappeared. Again on 13th October a bird (Mutton-Bird) struck the tower. Found this bird dead at the base of the tower."

The following is a list of birds which hit the tower of the lighthouse on Goose Island, as observed by C. Carlson, the superintendent:—12th August, 2.35 a.m., Starling. 16th August, 3 a.m., Red-breasted Robin. 6th September, 1 a.m., Brown Thrush. 9th September, 3.5 a.m., not seen; 3.30 a.m., Starling; 4.30 a.m., Brown Robin; 4.40 a.m., Cuckoo or Summer-Bird; 4.50 a.m., Brown Thrush and Dusky Fantail; 5 a.m., Cuckoo, Brown Thrush, Fantail. 12th September, 7.45 p.m., Brown Thrush. 29th September, 11 p.m., Brown Robin; 11.40 p.m., Brown Thrush and bird unseen. 4th October, 1.15 a.m., Fantail. 6th October, 10.20 p.m., Ground-Lark. The Mutton-Birds were not put down, as they hit the tower too frequently.

The Turquoise Parrakeet.—As an aviculturist and a member of the Union, I should like to draw attention to the disappearance from the bird markets during the last twenty years of the beautiful little Turquoise Parrakeet (*Neophema pulchella*), which is easily bred in captivity and can be kept with the smallest Finches without fear of accidents. It seems likely that this little bird has gone the way of the Dodo and the Passenger Pigeon, and certainly it may be placed, as far as aviculture is concerned, on the extinct list. But there may still be a few specimens in the wilder parts of Australia, and it would, I think, be of interest to hear something about them. I would suggest that if the birds are found a few specimens should be taken to one of the Zoological Gardens in Australia for breeding purposes. According to Mr. Seth-Smith, this species was bred in considerable numbers in the London Zoological Gardens between 1860 and 1883. In Gould's day the Turquoise Parrakeet seems

to have been common. He says that, during his rambles, his attention was constantly attracted by the bird's beautiful outspread tail and wings as it rose before him. If our worst fears are realized, and this bird has gone for ever, I think it would be of interest to ornithologists all over the world if a short history of the species were published in *The Emu*.—W. H. WORKMAN, M.B.O.U. Belfast, Ireland.

[Mr. Workman's note from afar has raised an important question—Does this beautiful ground-loving bird still exist in the flesh? If so, it would appear to be very scarce. And Mr. Workman's suggestion is a good one, that observers should send notes concerning this species for publication in *The Emu*. In Gouldian days the habitat of the Turquoise Grass-Parrakeet was South-Eastern Australia.—EDS.]

Western Australian Game Laws.—Mr. Tom Carter, of Broome Hill, Great Southern Railway, Western Australia, forwards a copy of a bill for "An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws Relating to Imported and Native Game" (in Western Australia). One of the clauses provides that no living imported or native game shall be exported from the State unless with the written consent of the Minister, and every person who exports or attempts to export any such game without consent is liable to a fine not exceeding £20. The measure also provides that the Governor may from time to time, by proclamation, declare that any bird or animal indigenous to Western Australia shall be at all times strictly preserved, either generally throughout the State or in any one or more portions thereof.

Notice.

OFFICIAL CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA.

Referring to pages 145-6 in this issue of *The Emu*, it will be noticed that this very important and difficult work has been accomplished by the committee specially appointed by the R.A.O.U.

In a few weeks the Council will publish and issue the "Check-list" as a Supplement to *The Emu*. The Supplement, really an extra part, is published at considerable expense, and members are requested to forward to the hon. treasurer (Mr. Z. Gray, L.C.A., 190 Bridport-street, South Melbourne, Victoria), the sum of 2s. 6d. each on receipt of their copies.

At the same time the hon. treasurer begs to intimate that he will be glad to receive outstanding ordinary subscriptions for the current year, ending June.