

RECORDS OF DISTRIBUTION AND MIGRATION.

To the Editors of *The Emu*.

Sirs,—In the hope that interesting and useful records may be collected and preserved by the Union regarding the distribution and the migration of Australasian birds, I should like to make the following suggestions:—

1. That a number of members, representative of as many districts as possible, should volunteer to act as "District Correspondents."
2. That each Correspondent should supply—
 - (a) A list of the stationary birds of his district;
 - (b) Any additions to the list from time to time or the name of any bird which has ceased to be resident in the district;
 - (c) Dates of arrival and departure of migrants;
 - (d) Any other facts worthy of note.
3. That a map be prepared, the districts numbered thereon, and the lists numbered correspondingly.
4. That the results obtained be published in *The Emu* from time to time.

Yours, etc.,

29 Hope Street, Bendigo, Victoria.

MARC COHN.

[*Note*.—The Council has agreed to adopt Mr. Cohn's suggestions, and has asked him to undertake the collection of data. Members who are willing to act as correspondents should notify Mr. Cohn. Forms upon which to furnish reports will then be sent to them.—Eds.]

Economic Section

PROTECTION OF QUAIL IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Protection of Quail in New South Wales.—After many years of educational work the bird-lovers of New South Wales have succeeded in making the people on the land realise that one live quail is worth a score of dead ones. There was a time when many farmers regarded quail as merely something to be shot at and killed in wholesale fashion. There were some even who believed that these birds were enemies—mischievous enemies—because they ate a little wheat. Now most farmers know that the quail eats only fallen grain—wheat that would in any case be wasted if it were not thus picked up. The change has been brought about largely, if not wholly, by propaganda work by the publication of informative articles, showing that, for the most part, quail consume weed-seeds, insects, etc., thus rendering a service to the people engaged in primary production. One of the most gratifying results of the dissemination among farmers of a more thorough knowledge of the habits and nature of quail

is that in New South Wales these birds have now been given full protection for a period of two years. The Farmers and Settlers' Association is entitled to credit for this reform of a wanton and economically rotten law, which permitted the wholesale slaughter of these birds in all parts of the State. As a matter of fact, the farmers' delegates to the annual conference of the association sought to have quail protected for a longer period than two years. Many of them fought to have a five-years' period of protection, but as other influences were at work, a compromise was effected. The Farmers and Settlers' Association Conference first moved in the matter in 1922. It agreed to a resolution urging the Government to amend the law so as to give greater protection to these birds. Nothing was done, however, and the conference returned to the subject in August, 1923. The association, fortunately, has now so much political power that the Government could no longer ignore its demands—and so we have quail protected in New South Wales for a period of two years. At the end of that period, the position is to be reviewed. In the meantime, desperate efforts are being made by alleged sportsmen and others (who cannot spend a holiday happily unless they are slaughtering quail) to influence the authorities against the enforcement of the Act, in so far as it applies to these birds. As a matter of fact, the new Birds and Animals' Protection will never be reasonably effective while the law is administered under existing conditions. The law is sound enough: so was the old enactment. But it is futile to try and protect wild birds and animals adequately with unsatisfactory administration. The writer the other day heard one of the "honorary rangers" appointed by the Government under this Act declare openly that he would go on shooting quail, because, if caught, "only a nominal fine would be imposed, and the game was cheap at the price." That just about sums up the situation in New South Wales. The much-vaunted new law is no more effective in reality than was the old—and it never will be effective while magistrates are content to impose nominal fines for gross breaches of the Act. This is a matter which the R.A.O.U. should take up and vigorously and incessantly prosecute throughout Australia. In this matter of securing better protection for quail, it should be noted that the farmers stood alone in their fight. They received no assistance from any other organisation. What we need in this country is more co-ordination among the bodies which aim at securing more effective protection for useful and beautiful birds.—W. M. SHERRIE, R.A.O.U., N.S.W.

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CROWS AND THE BLOWFLY PEST.

In a recent report on pastoral country known as the North-east and East of the Burra appears the following:—"Experi-