

Bird Protection.

WILD LIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA.

THE annual report of this society for the year 1923-4 has recently reached us. In spite of its title the Society appears to confine its activities entirely to New South Wales, but in that State it is clearly doing excellent work.

It is obvious that the Society is wise in endeavouring to increase its membership since the larger the number of voters represented the more chance there is that politicians will pay heed to the views of deputations. For this purpose the Society has issued various attractive posters appealing for support. We trust all members of the R.A.O.U. in N. S. Wales will help by joining the Society and hanging its posters in their neighbourhood. The Secretary is, A. W. Atkinson, c/o. Customs House, Sydney.

State Secretary's Report.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

At the annual meeting of the Ornithological Section of the Royal Zoological Society and N.S.W. Branch of the R.A.O.U., held in Sydney, on July 16, Mr. A. H. Chisholm was re-elected Chairman, Mr. A. F. Basset Hull vice-chairman, and Mr. N. W. Cayley hon. secretary.

The following is a summary of the Annual Report :—

Nine meetings were held during the year, all being satisfactorily attended, and all being marked by addresses and discussions providing interest and enjoyment.

On August 22, 1924, Mr. A. H. Chisholm led a discussion on voice mimicry among Australian birds. This address was subsequently elaborated in writing and published in the *Nineteenth Century* (Eng.), for August, 1925—the first time for many years that this famous journal has discussed Australian birds.

On September 19 Mr. H. Wolstenholme lectured on "Australian Bird Names and their Meanings." This address has also been elaborated, and will probably be printed in association with the second edition of the *Check List* of Australian birds.

On October 17 Mr. E. J. Bryce gave "Some Observations on bird-life in North America."

On November 21 Mr. Chisholm reported on the proceedings of the annual congress of the R.A.O.U., held in Central Queensland during October. Mr. Wolstenholme spoke on the birds observed during that trip.

On January 16, 1925, Mr. N. W. Cayley contributed "Observations on the Plumage Display of some Australian birds."

On February 20 Mr. T. Iredale led a discussion on the genus *Gerygone*.

On March 20 Mr. David Uniapon, the educated aborigine, spoke of aboriginal myths and legends relating to birds and mammals.

On April 17 a fine series of pictures of birds, taken by Mr. Otho Webb, of Queensland, were shown as lantern slides by Mr. Cayley.

On May 15 further lantern slides from bird photographs were shown, the pictures being by Messrs. D. W. Gaukrodger (Q'land.), A. E. Keane (N.S.W.), and M. Cohn (Vic.).

On June 19 Mr. P. A. Gilbert gave a comprehensive paper on "The Superb Lyre-bird," based on observations made in the National Park.

In connection with the report upon the congress of the R.A.O.U., members expressed resentment of the meagre representation of N.S.W. upon the Council of that body, and approved of the drastic alterations in rules that the annual meeting had ordered consequent upon the unsatisfactory features of the elections. More recently it was decided to write the general secretary of the R.A.O.U. inquiring whether congress decisions had been put into effect.

Several inter-State visitors and others from country districts of N.S.W. were welcomed to meetings during the year. Other personal episodes were the tendering of felicitations to Mr. Wolstenholme, who is now on an extended visit to England, the making of a presentation to Mr. E. Nubling on the occasion of his marriage, and the making of a presentation to Mr. Frank Farnell, Chairman of the National Park Trust, in acknowledgment of his many courtesies to bird-students. Mr. Nubling was presented with a painting of a Bower-bird, and Mr. Farnell with a painting of a Lyre-bird.

It is due largely to Mr. Farnell that a cabin in National Park, long a desideratum of bird-men, has come into being. In other days certain members of this section frequently spent the night in the National Park with no other shelter than that afforded by trees or caves. From this cheerful practice grew the movement that has resulted in the establishment of what is known as the first Biological Station in Australia. The little group of bird-observers had meditated establishing a small camp of some kind at their own expense, and when they approached Mr. Farnell on the subject he agreed, on behalf of the Trust, to build them a solid cabin. After that he went a step further; he offered the R.Z.S. generally the use of a stone cottage at the coastal end of the park. Upon this a biological section of the society was formed and the cottage taken over. The cabin, meanwhile, was being built, and when complete it, too, was taken over by the R.Z.S. The opening function in both cases was held on March 21. The Chief Secretary handed over the cabin to the president of the society, who, in turn, handed it over to the chairman of this section. A similar procedure was adopted in respect of the biological section's cottage.

The cabin is situated about two miles from Waterfall railway station, and close to one of the best areas of brush in the reservation. It should assist us materially in working out life histories of the birds in the park, and we hope to use it to good advantage during the coming spring. We hope also to have co-operation at suitable times from workers in other classes of wild life.

At the same meeting preliminary arrangements were made for preparing a working List of the Birds of New South Wales.

Correspondence.

THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE OOLOGY.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—The action taken by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union in Congress assembled, October 22nd, 1924, is a serious matter. Upon the gratuitous assumption of illegal intent upon our part, this learned body publicly arraigns one of its own members, previously unadvised, stigmatizes a sister institution of science, and virtually threatens an important section of its own members with ex-communication. The crassness and the injustice of this attack alike stagger belief.

In the report of the October meeting *The Emu*, January, 1925, p. 196, says: "Those who had seen the first number of the 'Comparative Oologist,' the Journal of the International Museum, stated that members of the museum were expected to contribute eggs of the value of ten dollars annually, and that the authorities of the museum promised not to publish lists of the eggs received from contributors for fear of prejudicing their interests. This appeared to imply that members were expected to disregard the law in order to secure rare eggs for the Museum." The insinuation and bias of this report will be manifest upon the perusal of the offending paragraph, which reads as follows:

"The management of the International Museum of Comparative Oology undertakes to furnish to its membership annually an exact accounting of all receipts and expenditures, both oological and financial; but it will not make specific report of oological contributions for public use, save by general inclusion, or for purposes of scientific review. In particular, it requests permission to report specifically and *confidentially* the exact receipts through Member contributions; but even in this case we will refrain upon express injunction, if such publication is thought likely to be prejudicial to any member's interest."

Note that the only reports ever contemplated were those to be circulated among the members, who alone have presumptive interest in such details. The specific embarrassment feared, and one which has actually been protested, is that members reporting to us rare takes would be overwhelmed by requests from fellow members for similar material. That we ever contemplated operations outside the pale of the law is a gratuitous assumption which could only have