

## Correspondence

### GUANO PRODUCTION.

To the Editor.

Sir,—Owing to my being absent on a trip to Central Australia when the last annual session of the R.A.O.U. was being held at Sydney, I was unfortunately unable to join in the discussion arising from my paper which was read there and which was entitled "Notes on the Potentialities of Guano Production in Australia," wherein I advocated the transplantation of certain species of Cormorants of South America to some of the islands of the littoral of the Commonwealth of Australia. Whilst it is true, as stated in the discussion as recorded in *The Emu*, that the light falls of rain at the Galapagos Islands do not appreciably wash away the guano deposits on these islands, it should be realized that another potent reason why these deposits accumulate there in such vast quantities is that the Cormorants of the Galapagos islands make these islands their permanent abode throughout the year, and the deposits of guano thereby become added to, trodden down and consolidated daily, whilst the bodies of the birds for the greater part of the twenty-four hours of the day shield the deposits from destruction.

The South American birds return home each day and add to the store of guano regularly throughout the year; whereas those Australian Cormorants with similar nesting habits to the Galapagos islands birds, after their nesting duties are over, become nomadic for the most part of the year, and do not thereafter add appreciably to the small quantity deposited during their brief nesting period. For this reason it was suggested by me that it would be a wise policy to introduce *non-nomadic* Cormorants, whose regularly-added-to deposits would be in sufficient quantity to withstand entire erosion by the elements owing to their consolidation by these species.—Yours, etc.,

Melbourne, 25/1/34.      ARTHUR MATTINGLEY.

To the Editor

Sir,—I have read with much interest Mrs. Moncrieff's presidential address on "Birds in Relation to Women". May I take exception, however, to the suggestion that Margaret Catchpole was a wonderful woman and a born naturalist and that she wrote the letters from which the quotations are made. H. Wright, in the *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 15, Part I, 1929, p. 47, states that she was just an ordinary woman who drifted through life, and that some letters written by her and now in the Mitchell Library

prove that she had only the rudiments of learning. The letter quoted appears in "The History of Margaret Catchpole, a Suffolk Girl", by Richard Cobbold, which is a romance founded on a substratum of fact. The account of the Lyrebird protecting its mate from the heat of the sun must be looked upon as what has been called "a fantastic fabrication of fancy without the faintest foundation in fact". However delightful this may be as fiction it should not be allowed to pass in an ornithological journal as an observation from nature.—Yours, etc.,

J. B. CLELAND.

Adelaide, S.A.

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