

and from which he flew to the top of a light-pole across the road. This is the first I have seen in the district, although the birds are said to be fairly numerous a few miles from Launceston.

The Bronze-Cuckoo (*Lamprococcyx plagosus*) was heard in the trees at Mersey Bluff about the middle of December; the Fantailed species we have always with us, winter and summer.

On January 23 this year, a young Pallid Cuckoo was seen in some scrub by the roadside at 5 a.m. The beautiful silvery plumage of the young Pallid renders it one of the prettiest of our native avifauna.—H. STUART DOVE, Devonport, Tasmania, 25/1/39.

Council Meetings of the R.A.O.U.

The following matters, amongst others, have recently been dealt with by the Council:

Ducks in Rice Areas.—Following representations from Leeton sub-branch and from Sydney, the Council resolved to support protests against opening the season for ducks on September 1 in rice-growing areas, and to endeavour to persuade the authorities to consider less drastic measures for protection of rice crops.

Foxes and Lyrebirds.—The Council resolved to seek the assistance of the State authorities in Victoria to eliminate foxes from Lyrebird areas in the Sherbrooke forest and environs.

Reprints from The Emu.—It was resolved that the rule limiting *gratis* reprints to 25 be adhered to, with a provision that Council would consider applications (if made to Council prior to publication of the article in question) for additional copies *gratis* in special circumstances for distribution for educational or similar purposes.

Sanctuaries, etc.—Council has identified the Union with efforts being made to ban grazing of cattle on national parks and sanctuaries, as conducted at present in Victoria; has continued its efforts to secure the proclamation as a national park of a large area round Hattah Lakes and Kulkyne Forest (Victorian Mallee); and has suggested modifications to enhance the scientific value of the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary, Healesville (Vic.) by extending the area and appointing an advisory committee.

Mathews Library.—A minute of appreciation was recorded on the acquisition by the Commonwealth of the valuable ornithological library of Mr. Gregory Mathews, which contains many rare volumes which will be of great value to Australian ornithologists.

List of Members.—An anonymous donor has offered to defray the cost of printing a list of members, and the offer has been gratefully accepted.

Dogs on Willis Island.—An interesting point has arisen regarding the lonely radio outpost of Willis Island, maintained principally as a cyclone warning station. The R.A.O.U. was approached for support against an application by the wireless station staff to keep dogs on the island. In view of the abundant bird life of the island which would be destroyed if the application were granted, Council supported the objection.

Export of Birds.—Council recorded its strong disapproval of the large quantity of Australian birds exported from Western Australia, as shown in the last annual report from that State. Members agreed that the record was appalling (see *The Emu*, vol. XXXVIII, part 5,

p. 459), and it was resolved to seek the aid of the State Secretary in having this rate of export curtailed.

Banding and Observing.—Dr. Serventy has been invited to promulgate a scheme for bird-banding and scientific bird-observing in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. A. H. Chisholm has recently been elected a British Empire Member of the British Ornithologists' Union, an honour upon which he is to be congratulated.

Reviews

[*Children of Tane: Bird Life in New Zealand.* By Mona Gordon. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., New Zealand. Price, 13/6.]

Patient historical research and a steady enthusiasm for her subject have enabled Miss Mona Gordon to give us a book on New Zealand bird life written from a new angle. Original in plan and scope, *Children of Tane* is divided into ten parts, the first of which gives a picture of conditions primeval and discusses the Malayan or Indonesian origin of forest trees and native land birds. The first human beings of whose contacts we have any record are the Maoris, and from their mythology, rich in nature lore, stories of the origin and importance of birds are re-told.

Part 2 deals with the discoveries of early explorers, the work of New Zealand naturalists of the old school, and some mention of their successors in our own day. This has not been done before except chronologically by Oliver (*New Zealand Birds*, 1930), and Miss Gordon's account is interesting. It is a subject that has yet to be treated more fully and one on which opinions are bound to differ. Miss Gordon has referred to the somewhat ruthless collecting activities of Reischek and Buller, and in seeking to offset that by an evaluation of their scientific work has perhaps rated it higher than it deserves. It is a pity also that she had not delved into the files of *The Emu* and discovered something of the sterling work of J. C. McLean. There are, however, some sympathetic studies of other field naturalists.

In part 3 the reclamation and conservation made possible by the reservation of island sanctuaries is described, and an account given of present conditions on Little Barrier, Kapiti, Resolution, and Stewart Islands, as well as a number of smaller sanctuaries. In succeeding sections many forest birds are described, whilst a chapter on migration is illustrated with useful maps. Appendices, bibliography, and index enhance the reference value of the book, and four coloured plates are included with other illustrations.—R.A.F.

[“New Zealand Oystercatchers.” By R. A. Falla. *Records of the Canterbury Museum*, vol. iv, no. 5, p. 259, March, 1939.]

The author finds that none of the previously-proposed classifications of New Zealand Oyster-catchers fits the facts as ascertained from skins and field data. He recognizes *Hæmatopus finschi* Martens as defined, with constant plumage and dimensional characters and even more marked ecological and distributional peculiarities. The species breeds on the beds of snow-fed rivers of the South Island, far inland, and moves to the sea coast with its young to congregate in large flocks during the period of moult and throughout the winter, when some flocks reach the North Island. Nesting habits and young