

too much. Most people discover that the more they delve into field problems, additional problems demanding solution tend to arise.

The nine photographs are good and in keeping with the text. The bulletin is attractively set up on art paper.—L.E.R.

Ornithology in Western Australia.—Several bird articles of interest appear in *The Western Australian Naturalist*, vol. 2, no. 5, July, 1950. Angus Robinson ('Observations on Courtship Feeding in Some Australian Birds,' p. 106) provides field notes on the practice among the Pallid Cuckoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Kookaburra and Grey Butcherbird; in the last named species the hen was seen being fed by the cock during incubation. In cases of assumed young being fed by adult Pallid Cuckoos the author suggests that they are instances of courtship feeding among adult birds.

W. H. Loaring ('Notes on the Chestnut-shouldered Wrens,' p. 108) reports recent observations of *Malurus leuconotus* and *M. pulcherrimus* in the Perth area, thus giving that district four species of *Malurus* (Neville Cayley stated in *The Fairy Wrens of Australia*, p. 1, that three species are the most found in any one locality). Loaring discusses habitat differences between *M. elegans* and *M. pulcherrimus* and gives useful notes on differences, observable in the field, between the females of these species.

E. H. and L. E. Sedgwick give an annotated bird list of the Esperance district, recording 73 species during the summer of 1949-50. E. H. Sedgwick gives a table of the song-periods of the Pallid Cuckoo in a number of localities from 1934 onwards, confirming the earlier review of Dr. J. Gentili (*W.A. Nat.*, vol. 2, p. 59) of the movements of that species in southern Western Australia. He also has a brief note on a bowing display in the Rufous Whistler. K. G. Buller records the Marsh Sandpiper from Jandakot Lake, the first record of the species from southern Western Australia.—D.L.S.

News and Notes

SUMMARIES REQUIRED

In order to facilitate the work of authors, students of ornithology and research workers, authors of lengthy and technical papers are requested to supply, with their contribution to *The Emu*, a summary of the principal matters included.

NEW HON. TREASURER

Mr. H. F. Clinton has been appointed by the Council to the position of Hon. Treasurer in place of Mr. A. S. Chalk who recently resigned that position. Cheques, money orders and postal notes for subscriptions, donations, and other payments to the Union, should be made payable to the Union, not to individual officers.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

The annual membership subscription has been increased by the Council from 21/- to 25/-. Will members please note this increase, which became of force as from July 1, 1950.

HONOUR FOR EDITOR

Mr. C. E. Bryant has been elected a corresponding member of the British Ornithologists Union.

MOTIONS AT CONGRESS

In the 'Proceedings of the Hobart Congress,' *Emu*, vol. 49, at page 237, a motion passed at the meeting was reported—to the effect that "the attention of Council should be drawn to the motion of the 1948 congress (concerning the destruction of Wedge-tailed Eagles) and, as nothing had been done in the meantime, that action should be taken." Exception to this motion was later taken by some members of Council and the Council directed that a note should be published in *The Emu* advising that action had in fact been taken on the 1948 motion.

Correspondence

VOCAL MIMICRY IN BIRDS

To the Editor,
Sir,

Dr. A. J. Marshall has built an interesting and plausible theory around 'Vocal Mimicry in Birds' (*Emu*, vol. 50, pp. 5-16), but there is one facet of his reasoning that appears to me to be unreasonable. On page 9 he states (*inter alia*)—"In a thickly wooded environment where territorial sound cannot be reinforced by more or less constant exhibitionism of other kinds it seems advantageous for individuals to make more and more sound so that rivals for their territory, and members of the opposite sex, will be constantly aware of their whereabouts."

Please remember that this article is dealing with vocal mimicry: the foregoing excerpt, considered in conjunction with the perfection of so much of the mimicry, seems to me to bring us to a dead end. Let us consider the case of a female Lyrebird seeking her food in dense bracken fern. A constant stream of bird calls is filling the air, some real, some the products of her mate's imitative ability. Does she, or a rival male, hearing the normal choir of other birds' voices and indeed such inanimate sounds (if a sound can be inanimate) as the ring of an axe, a creaking wheel or two trees rubbing together, react to the presence of her mate or merely regard the sounds as natural and normal?

The fact that so much of the song is *pure imitation of other and every day sounds* must at once negate its effect as territorial claim and challenge, for I see no reason why it would be attributed to its correct source, or in any way be differentiated from the calls which it imitates!

Yours, etc.,

DONALD SHANKS.

Woolsthorpe, Vic.
13/8/50.

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