

often handle freshly-killed or live birds, and they are kindly asked to remember the necessity for collecting parasitic flies. The collecting method is extremely simple.

Some glass tubes are all that is necessary. The flies should be put into a tube, together with a label giving the species of bird, locality, date, and collector's name. The tube should then be 'stoppered' with cotton wool.

Hippoboscids from wallabies, kangaroos, etc., would be most welcome, also.

The writer of this note kindly requests all bird students, bird-lovers and naturalists generally, to collect these parasites and send them to him (Dr. S. J. Paramonov, C.S.I.R.O., Box 109, P. O., Canberra City, A.C.T.) for identification and study.—S. J. PARAMONOV, Canberra, A.C.T., 23/10/50.

Correspondence

THE EUROPEAN STARLING: DATA ON BREEDING WANTED
To the Editor,
Sir,

Some readers of *The Emu* may have seen a letter from Dr. Robert Carrick of the Natural History Department, Marischal College, Aberdeen, Scotland, on the subject of the European Starling, which was sent to various Australian daily papers. (I assume that the letter was given space, though so far I have received no evidence of the fact). The letter in question ran as follows—

For some years I have been making a special study of the Starling, and I would like to have comparative information from those parts of the Southern Hemisphere into which man has introduced it, i.e. South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. In Britain the first clutches are laid during 15-30 April, which would be 15-30 October in the Southern Hemisphere. If any reader can give information from particular nests on the following points, I shall be most grateful.

When is the nesting time, as indicated by laying of eggs, hatching, feeding of young, and date when young fly?

What is the size of the completed clutch, and of the brood of nestlings? *This is the most important point.*

How common are second broods, i.e. being fed in the nest at Christmas or later?

Where is the Starling absent, uncommon or abundant, both as a nesting bird in spring and as a winter visitor?

I particularly wish to know how far it has spread as a nesting and wintering species, and whether its advance now seems to be halted.

I shall be very glad indeed to correspond direct, or through your office, with any readers who are interested enough to make these observations, or indeed any others on the Starling. Readers will appreciate that their own observations, however small, will all help to piece together the more complete picture of the Starling's nesting habits and present distribution.

While visiting Britain in 1948 I met Dr. Carrick, and was able to see something of his Starling investigations. Outside a few British ornithologists and some Scandina-

avian co-operators, Dr. Carrick's work is virtually unknown as he has published little. This is due to the fact that he is concerned with several inter-related aspects of Starling ecology, and also because he is dissatisfied with many of his observations made prior to the adoption of a system of individual marking. (He has exploited not only leg bands, but also brightly-coloured feathers cemented on to the birds' tails—the technique is described in a paper published in the *Scottish Naturalist*, April, 1948, and is one in which Australian ornithologists might well be interested). I am quite certain that when the full account of Dr. Carrick's work is published, it will prove of very real interest and value to ornithologists in this country, as well as in the Northern Hemisphere; and I hope those who are in a position to help him make his study more comprehensive and complete by providing information of the kind he seeks (or who have friends who can do so) will not be backward in coming forward.

It seems hardly necessary to urge anyone furnishing information to Dr. Carrick to be explicit on the point of the locality of the observations, which it is desirable to relate to some easily identified centre. Small country towns are often very difficult to place by someone not in possession of detailed maps, and reference works such as railway and post-office guides. If any reader with Starling information prefers to communicate with me rather than write direct to Scotland, I would be only too happy to act as collecting and relaying point on Dr. Carrick's behalf.

Yours, etc.,

Wildlife Survey Section,
C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, A.C.T.
4/12/50.

F. N. RATCLIFFE.

Obituary

MRS. ADAM BLACK

The death occurred on July 4, 1950, at Kangaroo Hills, near Ingham, Queensland, of Mrs. Adam (Jane) Black who had been a member of the R.A.O.U. since 1916. She was the daughter of Peter Dalglish of the Boort district, Victoria, and was born on May 29, 1860. She married Adam Black in 1890 and, as a bride, went to live at Elderslie in the Winton district in Queensland. There were many hardships attached to pioneering in those days and the Blacks encountered some serious droughts and were seriously affected by the great shearers' strike in the early 'nineties. After a residence of a few years on two other stations, they finally settled down in 1901 at Pajingo, 60 miles from Charters Towers, where they resided until Mr. Black's death in 1935 when Mrs. Black went to live with her daughter, Mrs. V. Allingham, at Kangaroo Hills.