

who stated—"I assure you that I shall give definite instructions that jungle training must be conducted on the area that we propose to set aside specifically for that purpose. So far, no encroachment on private or public property has been made before obtaining prior approval. I will see that that is done on this occasion."

The Use of Poison 1080 (Sodium fluoracetate)

This poison was used against rabbits in Wyperfeld National Park, Vic., in the spring of 1954, despite advice to the Lands Department that no lasting results would be obtained. The Director of Fisheries and Game has expressed the opinion that no serious damage was done to other fauna in the Park. Recent reports indicate that rabbits are again numerous in Wyperfeld. Poison 1080 has also been used in other States, and reports from those using it are an assurance that no single case of bird poisoning has come to light. However, reports received at the R.A.O.U. Congress in Tasmania indicate that a big reduction in the Magpie population has taken place following its use there.

General

Members of the Committee have, by lectures, articles and letters in the papers, given publicity to the preservation of bird life.—HUGH WILSON, Chairman.

Gulls and Crickets.—For some months a plague of crickets has descended on Melbourne and its outskirts. Their arrival has temporarily altered the habits of the Silver Gulls in a strange manner. Previously they were not seen along the beach from Black Rock to Rickett's Point after darkness had fallen. Now they congregate about dusk in large numbers, flying above the tea-tree and patrolling the area. We watched and found they were taking large numbers of a flying insect prey which, after some trouble, we managed to see was the common cricket. The Gulls resembled a flock of swifts as they wheeled about and flew at the prey with the bill wide open. Each night they remain till well after dark. At twilight the crickets commence to emerge and fly high into the air, often out to sea or inland for some distance. Very few of them seem to escape the sharp-eyed birds. We first noticed this performance about the middle of February and it is still in operation at the time of writing, towards the end of March.

Salt Lake City has a monument to a close relation of the Silver Gull which saved the crops, in the early days of Utah, from an insect plague.

After witnessing the number of crickets taken each night one wonders to what proportions the plague would have developed here if birds had not been in action holding it in check.—ERNEST S. HANKS, Black Rock, Victoria. 26 3-57.