

out reference to the Australian Children's Encyclopædia, a 2-volume work of 1056 pages with popular accounts by a number of experts in their respective fields.

Coming closer to ourselves—to his contacts with the R.A.O.U. and the like—Charles Barrett was a foundation (1901) member and remained associated most of the years thereafter. For a short time (1910 to 1916) he assisted Leach with the editing of *The Emu*. He served as editor of *The Victorian Naturalist* from May 1925 to August 1939. He took a leading part in the formation of the Bird Observers Club in 1905. He was a corresponding member of the Zoological Societies of London and of New York.

Charles Barrett was a quiet and reserved man, not unfriendly but largely concerned with his family, his books—he had a fine library of Australiana and writings on the Pacific which latter is to go to the National Library, Canberra—and his own interests and concerns. He did not seek to be a clubman, a man of the world, a good mixer, a 'go-getter'—but, after all, many people prefer men like that.
—C.E.B.

Correspondence

PLUMAGE OF PARROTS

To the Editor

Sir,—Erhard F. Boehm in 'Parrots and Cockatoos of the Mount Mary Plains, South Australia' (*Emu*, vol. 59, p. 83) contradicts the accuracy of my published statements that adult plumage is attained by the Adelaide Rosella (*Platycercus adalaidae*) at about the age of fifteen months and by the Ringneck Parrot (*Barnardius barnardi*) between twelve and eighteen months of age. The statements to which he refers are the result of carefully-recorded observations of numbers of birds of both species bred in captivity in my own private collection and in the Adelaide Zoological Gardens.

In order to substantiate his opinion that, in the case of the Adelaide Rosella, certain plumage changes "of fine old birds do not appear to be attained until at least the third year and possibly only in the fourth year of life" and in the case of the Ringneck Parrot that certain features of the plumage "of fine old individuals are certainly not acquired until the third, and possibly not until the fourth year of life", Boehm would need to have banded many nestlings of both species and to have collected them at varying times thereafter. If he has done so, his figures in regard to numbers banded, total number of specimens collected and number of recoveries would make interesting reading; but until he is able to publish such records, his statements in regard

to plumage changes can only be regarded as worthless conjecture.

Boehm's statement in regard to the "pale pink crests" of the Pink Cockatoo (*Kakatoë leadbeateri*) merits correction. The crest feathers of this species are red with white extremities and with a band of yellow running through the red, this being broader in the female than in the male.

Yours, etc.,

ALAN LENDON

Adelaide, S.A.
July 6, 1959.

TATTLERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

To the Editor,

Sir,—My letter (*The Emu*, 58, 336-337) and choice of words were aimed at all those who consider that 'possible' and 'probable' records should appear in print. More often than not the proclivity to acclaim the unusual record springs from honest zeal, but nothing is to be gained by publishing observations about which there is the slightest doubt. Where problematical groups are concerned, such as the waders, sight observations do not contribute much to our knowledge of bird distribution nor can the binocular "almost completely" replace the gun.

C. N. Austin (*The Emu*, 59, 71) has taken the opposite view to mine. I hope his remarks will not encourage a practice which I think should be discouraged lest "the face of Australian ornithology" become unrecognizable. Mr. Austin regards as meaningful the sentence "probably most migratory waders follow the coastline" which implies "more evidence for than against". I cannot agree with that. Perhaps Messrs. Glover and Schodde meant 'possibly'; probabilities and possibilities are two different things as everybody knows.

Mistakes can always occur in field identifications, no matter how knowledgeable the observer may be. The literature is full of erroneous data: therefore let us exercise caution at all times when doubts can be raised from whatever source.

Yours, etc.

H. T. CONDON

Adelaide, S.A.
June 8, 1959.

Correspondence on the foregoing matter is now closed.—Ed.

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