

from his property at Barham; continued recording there would be invaluable.

It is still much too early to consider analyses of the cards, but some curiosities attract attention. How is it, for instance, that only two of the 24 Buff-tailed Thornbill cards come from outside the A.C.T.? Here the nests of this species seem quite easy to find in open woodland or poorly cleared paddocks where this is probably the commonest species of Thornbill. Why, then, do not others record this species often? The Welcome Swallow seemed to have had a poor year in A.C.T., Tasmania and south of Melbourne, where many pairs only made half-hearted attempts to breed before leaving the area, presumably because of the dry season. The White-fronted Chat seems to lay larger clutches in Tasmania than on the mainland.

Finally, all the Spur-winged Plover cards have been examined by D. G. Thomas who is preparing material on this species in Tasmania. R. P. Cooper also examined nearly all the cards for Spur-winged, Masked and Banded Plovers in connection with an article on these three Plover species. Miss V. Parry of Monash University examined the few cards for the Laughing Kookaburra which she is studying.

REPORT OF THE NEW GUINEA BIRD SOCIETY

In December 1965 a small band of enthusiasts gathered in Port Moresby to organize a bird study group. The result has been the growth to a body of 67 members in April 1967, mostly in Papua-New Guinea but with some Australian and overseas membership. Territory membership now extends to outer, and often remote areas, with representation from diverse walks of life. As yet there is no active indigenous membership, but the rise of tertiary education in Papua-New Guinea, will, it is hoped, remedy this very real deficiency.

Monthly meetings are held on the first Monday, at the Department of Information auditorium at Konedobu. Lectures, slide screenings and films of ornithological interest are given and we have been fortunate in having visiting lecturers such as Dr Elliott McClure of the United States Migratory Animal Pathological Survey and Mr R. Schodde of the C.S.I.R.O. Land Survey Division. Monthly outings are held, and although primarily intended to introduce newcomers to bird study, have revealed important bird observations. These activities are reported in a monthly newsletter mailed to members. The burden of this organization has fallen on the willing shoulders of our retiring President, Mr Roy D. Mackay, our Secretary-Treasurer, Mr E. D. Cleland, and his deputy Mr W. G. Peckover.

In the field of conservation the Society has made its voice heard and, with the Papua-New Guinea Scientific Society, has been consulted by the Administration in connection with legislation on fauna protection and national parks. The authors of a proposed C.S.I.R.O. List of vernacular names for New Guinea birds have courteously requested the Society's views on the draft list. These and other activities indicate that the Society has won acceptance as a useful contributor to ornithological study.

Several more ambitious projects are now in hand. These include the proposed preparation of field identification cards for the instruction of new members and visitors to the Territory, and a long-term population study of a section of the Mount Lawes Territorial Forest. In addition the Society is acting as a central repository for bird lists and observations made by members throughout the Territory. Bird banding has its small but enthusiastic following and the first published results of this work should appear soon in appropriate journals. Mention must be made of the work of Messrs E. Cleland, R. D. Mackay and H. L. Bell on the notoriously difficult "Lewin" type Honeyeaters of the genus *Meliphaga*.

In the brief period covered Society members have already made significant contributions to the sketchy knowledge of Territory avifauna, results of which will be published in due course. These include the first New Guinea record of the Fairy Martin, *Hylochelidon ariel*, first Australian New Guinea records for the Marsh Sandpiper, *Tringa stagnatilis*, Coot, *Fulica atra*, Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava*, Nankeen Kestrel, *Falco cenchroides*; extensions of range of the Streak-headed Mannikin, *Lonchura tristissima*, Figbird, *Sphecotheres vieillotii*, Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, Little Whimbrel, *Numenius minutus*, Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*, Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*, and Japanese Snipe, *Gallinago hardwickii*, and the discovery of the bower-painting habit of both the Lauterbach's and Fawn-breasted Bower-birds, *Chlamydera lauterbachii* and *C. cerviniventris*. With reference to the latter species one of our members, Mr W. G. Peckover, is carrying out excellent work on this little-studied bird. Last but not least is the discovery of the long-awaited bower of the Flamed Bower-bird, *Sericulus aureus*.

Our thanks must go to the Department of Information and Extension Services for provision of a meeting place and to the Trustees of the Papua-New Guinea Museum for their assistance. To the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research our thanks are due to the unfailing co-operation of an organization which will occupy a prominent part in future New Guinea ornithology. Thanks are also due to the courtesy and genuine interest of the ornithology departments of overseas Museums, particularly those of the American Museum of Natural History, The Royal Natural History

Museum, Leiden (Holland) and the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University.

Any interested person is advised to contact the Secretary, P.O. Box 635, Port Moresby, or to contact the Papua-New Guinea Museum on arrival in the Territory.—H. L. BELL, President, April 1967.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SHERBROOKE SURVEY GROUP

The Sherbrooke Survey Group (V.O.R.G.) has been banding nestling lyrebirds in Sherbrooke Forest, Vic. since 1958. Weekly visits to the forest have resulted in over five hundred reports being filed and indexed. From this mass of data there have emerged a number of new facts, some promising leads, and some figures on population estimates, nesting success and, chick and adolescent survival. One paper is in the hands of the editor and others are in the course of preparation. It is considered desirable at this stage to submit a preliminary report.

Population

An estimate, based on counts in sample areas, sweeps through the forest with teams of up to thirty people in line, nesting density and success, and, survival rates for chicks and adolescents puts the population for the entire 1960 acres of the forest at between 100 and 130 birds.

Nesting

Nesting success is better than 80%, the annual crop being about 20-25 chicks.

Male at nest

It has been found that the male lyrebird is well aware of the location of the nest and visits it from time to time, both casually and in response to alarm calls before and after the hatching of the chick.

Hens fighting

Hens which nest close together have been observed to indulge in claw to claw combat and it is believed that one will crush the nest of the other.

Old male retaining territory

One old male (Spotty) clung to his territory for at least three years beyond his breeding powers.