

Although the majority of the birds were obtained at Inkerman, Mr. Stalker, the collector, obtained some on Mount Elliot, at the back of Townsville, and on Mount Abbot, in the Bowen district. It was on the former mount that the new *Sphecotheres* was found—a somewhat remarkable discovery so near a populous town. Two male adults were shot during December 1907, from a flock of 68,* and are stated to be most nearly allied to *S. salvadorii* of New Guinea.

The new Tree-runner—*Neositta magnirostris*—of which an excellent coloured plate is given, was procured at Inkerman, 14th March, 1907. It is closely allied to *N. striata*, "but differs from that bird by its generally larger size, and especially the longer and more massive bill," &c.

Correspondence.

THE CAPE BARREN GOOSE.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—I quite agree with Mr. Armstrong that the Cape Barren Goose is not holding its own. I have been in close touch with this fine bird for the last 20 years on the lakes and swamps near Mount Hamilton, in this Western District of Victoria, which is its chief stronghold. Mr. Frank Smith is evidently speaking of this same country when he speaks of his 1,000 birds, but I doubt if this number could be mustered. I know that flocks of 200 can be seen on one or two favourite feeding grounds, perhaps nearly as many as 20 years ago; but I also know of other feeding grounds not quite so good that are now practically deserted. What has become of the large flocks that used to frequent the shores of Lakes Corangamite, Gnarpurt, and the lakes north of Camperdown? Would Mr. Smith say that they are still plentiful there? I am told—but my information may not be correct—that these birds used to frequent portions of the Gippsland lake district, and some saltings near Port Fairy, and some portion of South Australia, and that they are not seen there now. Being of such a wary nature, it will be a long time before this bird is exterminated, but before that danger arises it must be protected all the year round.

It is pleasing to hear that Messrs. MacLaine Bros. do not break the eggs on their islands, but if reports are true there are some person or persons who do.

I only know of one instance of these birds nesting wild in this district, but Mr. Dennis, of Eeyeuk, has bred them for some years in captivity.—I am, &c.,

ERNEST G. AUSTIN.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—In *The Emu*, vol. vii., page 36, Mr. T. Hurst mentions having seen two birds along the banks of the Tamar in whose identity I am afraid he was mistaken. First he mentions a flock of from 20 to 30 Cape Barren Geese feeding in a stubble field near the river. I am very well acquainted with the Tamar, especially with its west bank—where Mr. Hurst's observations were made—but never have I seen or heard of Cape Barren Geese being found there. I know that several settlers have flocks of the common grey Geese, and these feed along the river, sometimes wandering long distances from the homesteads. I am strongly of opinion it was a flock of these he saw.

The second bird mentioned is the Stone-Plover. A flock of some 30 individuals is alleged to have been seen feeding in a stubble field. Here, again, I am afraid is an error in identification. After the note appeared in *The Emu* I spoke to several familiar with the district, and who would know the species if seen, but they all positively asserted they had never heard of or seen even a single Stone-Plover anywhere down the Tamar. In this instance I cannot hazard a guess at what Mr. Hurst really did see, but I feel very confident in asserting that the birds were *not* Stone-Plovers.

I regret the long time that has elapsed between the publication of Mr. Hurst's notes and my comments on the same, but the matter completely slipped my memory until Mr. Gregory Mathews, to whom I had mentioned the matter, urged on me the necessity of sending a note along.—I am, &c.,

FRANK M. LITTLER.

Launceston, 31/8/1908.

[Having perused the above letter, Mr. Hurst replies:—"I desire to state that I receive Mr. Littler's remarks in the best possible spirit, but I cannot reconcile myself to the suggestion that the birds I saw were other than those already stated by me. In support of my statement about the Cape Barren Geese, I mentioned the fact at the time to some friends (sportsmen) in Launceston. They expressed no surprise at the occurrence, and stated that Cape Barren Geese were not infrequently seen down the Tamar.

"*Re* the Stone-Plover, I heartily agree with Mr. Littler to the extent that it would be a most difficult undertaking to 'hazard a guess' as to what the birds really were if not Stone-Plovers."

The editors would like to add that Mr. Hurst is an experienced field observer, sportsman, and aviculturist, and unlikely to make a mistake in the identification of such familiar birds. It was autumn when Mr. Hurst made his observations—a season when

the Cape Barren Geese leave the mainland of Australia for the islands. Possibly the flock seen on the Tamar were migrating. Stone-Plover also flock in autumn, and have been previously recorded in Tasmania. However, Mr. Littler may enjoy the comfortable reflection that the unexpected often happens, even in one's own neighbourhood. For instance, take the discovery of the new Fig-Bird (*Sphecotheres*) shot by Mr. Stalker (collector for Mr. Collingwood Ingram) from a flock of 68 at the rear of Townsville,* with its 15,000 inhabitants, and where every ornithologist of note visiting Queensland has collected.]

South Australian Ornithological Association.

A MEETING of this Association was held at the residence of Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., on 6th August, the host being in the chair. A letter was read from Dr. A. M. Morgan, London, stating that he was urging upon kindred scientific societies in England the necessity of the extended "National Reserve" on Kangaroo Island, with the result that the leading authorities in natural history were unanimous that if certain fauna and flora were to be preserved from extinction the larger the area reserved the better. A letter was read from Mr. John Bagot, taking exception to the theory that the Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroica phænicea*) does not breed on the mainland, but departs to Tasmania to lay and rear its young, as he had known it to breed freely in his garden at Mount Lofty. Captain S. A. White and other members pointed out that this was erroneous, as the species inhabiting the hills was the Scarlet-breasted Robin (*Petroica leggit*). Mr. J. W. Mellor drew attention to the work upon Australian birds, with coloured plates, being compiled by Mr. Gregory M. Mathews, F.Z.S., &c., England, who desired that all local bird observers would assist him with notes. Mr. J. W. Mellor gave extracts from a paper written by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., Melbourne, upon "Cormorants in Relation to our Fisheries," in which the writer mentioned why the much-abused Cormorant should not be destroyed, as by close observation he had found that these birds do much good by keeping down the enemies of the fish and their ova. It was agreed that Mr. Mattingley's notes and observations were of great importance. The subject of study was the family *Artamidae*, commonly known as Wood-Swallows, of which 10 or 12 members are found in Australia. These birds, it was pointed out, were totally insectivorous, and for this reason were of extreme usefulness, and had consequently been protected in this State. Mr. A. H. C. Zietz showed a number of these birds, six species being from Australia. Captain S. A. White exhibited several species, notably the Little Wood-Swallow (*Artamus minor*), collected in the interior in the early days by his father, the late Mr. Samuel White, of the Reedbeds; also the Black-faced Wood-Swallow (*A. melanops*), discovered by the same naturalist at St. A'Beckett's Pool, lat. 28 deg. 30 min., on 23rd August, 1863. Captain White also showed the historic record and coloured plate of the bird described by Gould from the original specimen, which stated that the birds cling in bunches to the branches like bees, and were also seen at Chambers Creek and Mount Margaret. Mr. J. W. Mellor stated that the common kind of Wood-Swallow (*A. sordidus*) had been frequenting the Adelaide plains lately, and had been noted at the Reedbeds.

* See *Ibis* (July), 1908, p. 480; also *Emu*, this issue, p. 106.