

sloping rock, thinly overgrown with *Mesembryanthemum*, and in a space of barely a hundred square yards there were several dozens of these birds sitting on eggs or nestlings, the eggs being close to the water's edge, fresh or in progressive stages of incubation the higher the situation, until at the topmost ridge the young birds were almost fully fledged. Such densely-packed colonies may exist on many of the islets and rocks scattered through Bass Strait and along the coasts of the mainland. Numbers of these rocks are inaccessible unless under exceptionally fine weather conditions, and only a man of abundant leisure and means can hope to carry out the necessary prolonged investigations to clear up the existing uncertainty as to whether, and if so, where, these small Petrels that frequent our seas have their breeding-places on our islands.

Only one Albatross is known to breed in the Australian region. Who knows but that the Black-browed, Flat-billed, and Yellow-nosed Albatrosses have some isolated spot where a few dozen pairs annually rear their broods? It is by no means a far-fetched idea. To what extent have the islets of the Recherche and Nuyt's Archipelagoes been exhaustively searched?

These few suggestions as to fields for future endeavour are limited to the sea-birds. Are there no land-birds requiring further study and investigation? Glance over your "Check-list" and count up the species about which we know everything there is to know of their life-histories. Can you honestly exhaust the fingers of both hands in making the count?

In conclusion, let each seeker after truth take one genus, or even one species, and work it out thoroughly. Too many objectives tend to blurred results. Good luck to you all!

A. F. BASSET HULL,
Retiring President R.A.O.U.

CHECK-LIST COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE convener, Dr. J. A. Leach, presented the report on behalf of the Check-list Committee. This showed that, except for a few cases of incomplete information and disputed status, finality and unanimity had been reached by the committee. Pleasure was expressed that the differences which were expected to be serious proved slight and easily removed. It was decided that the A.O.U. and B.O.U. names for birds found in those countries as well as in Australia be accepted: that in all cases where the evidence is complete the oldest valid name be used; and that in cases of doubt or incomplete evidence the name of the "Official Check-list" be not altered. The committee found that its generic standard approximated closely to that of the "Official Check-list"—indeed, it found the "Check-list" most helpful and its standards in the main satisfactory. Mr. Campbell and Dr. Leach were deputed to investigate the disputed points and to

complete the proposed draft for the printer. Fifty copies of the proposed draft list are to be printed and distributed for criticism and comment. Such will be fully considered by the committee, and it is hoped that the second edition of the "Check-list" will be finalized at the Sydney congress next year.

NOTES ON THE SUPPOSED "EXTINCT" BIRDS OF THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

BY EDWIN ASHBY, F.L.S., M.B.O.U., WITTUNGA, BLACKWOOD,
S.A.

FOLLOWING on the R.A.O.U. Congress at Perth and Yallingup, the president of the Union (Mr. C. A. Barnard), Mr. J. W. Mellor, and the writer proceeded to Ellensbrook, on the coast, half-way between Cape Naturaliste and the Leeuwin, this being the type-locality for Mr. Milligan's *Sphenura littoralis* (the Lesser Bristle-Bird), also an old habitat of *Psophodes nigrigularis* (the Black-throated Coachwhip-Bird). It also is not far from one of the recorded localities for *Atrichornis clamosa* (the Noisy Scrub-Bird). While many interesting birds were noted during our three days' stay in that charming locality, none of the species named was met with. Nevertheless, information was obtained respecting the causes of their disappearance and the localities where they should now be looked for.

At Ellensbrook the hills slope steeply from the elevated forest country down to the coast, and that portion fronting the Indian Ocean for half a mile or more back is more or less sandy and covered densely with low bushes, one of the commonest being a pink *Pimelea*, which forms a low, dense cover. We were informed that in years gone by this scrub used to be about 4 feet high, but the continual fires put through with a view to improving the herbage for sheep have effectually reduced the scrub to the height of 18 inches or 2 feet. Large patches of sedge and rushes are still to be found on the flats. Miss Bussell showed us the spot, close to the homestead, where Mr. Milligan obtained the type of *Sphenura littoralis*. Being close to the house, on the side of the creek, a little patch of unburnt scrub still remains, and it was in this surviving patch of low bush that Mr. Milligan obtained the bird, called by Miss Bussell the "Rain-Bird." Evidently it must be searched for in low coastal scrubs not swept by constant fires. The same applies to the Black-throated Coachwhip-Bird, which frequented the same spots as the Bristle-Bird. No doubt such unburnt country exists between Ellensbrook and the Leeuwin, but it is probably difficult of access. We learnt that such bush exists about Cape Naturaliste. We saw something of it during our stay at Yallingup, and have reason to believe that the Bristle-Bird is in the immediate neighbourhood.

Another interesting fact is that *Leipoa ocellata* (the Mallee-Fowl) is to be found at Cape Naturaliste. My informant had seen the birds and found the nests quite recently. This bird needs in-