

A Review of the Genus *Calamanthus*

By EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U., etc.,

"Wittunga," Blackwood, South Australia.

By arrangement the skins of members of the above genus, belonging to the collections in the S.A. Museum, and those of Mr. Parsons and the writer, were recently assembled together and a careful examination made in daylight.

Calamanthus fuliginosus Vigors and Hors., was first considered. Skins from both Southern, Central and Northern Tasmania were examined and a very wide divergence was noted. Several northern skins were decidedly more grey than any from further south, but then the two richest coloured, and darkest, skins of all were also from the north of that island. This series was compared with skins from Victoria and from the South-east of this State, with the result that we united in considering them conspecific. We were unable to distinguish even sub-specific differences, for the margin of variance in the skins from Tasmania was considerably greater than was the difference observable between normal Tasmanian skins and the mainland birds.

C. montanellus Milligan.—The only skins available were three specimens in the writer's collection, one from the type locality, one from the Wongan Hills and the other a recent skin from much further north. We were able to substantiate the conclusions that were urged by the writer at the Adelaide Congress, viz., that *montanellus* was certainly deserving of full specific rank. The beak, shape of head and markings, all show characteristic differences. It was agreed that this species is nearer to *fuliginosus* than to *campestris*.

C. campestris Gould.—A long series of skins ranging from south-east of Adelaide, westward to Eyre's Peninsula and northwards to the Gawler Ranges and a locality 50 miles north of Port Augusta was examined. Port Augusta is the type locality.

While there is, as might be expected, some margin of divergence, the general characters are consistent throughout. We concluded that all birds found south of a latitude of not more than 50 miles north of Port Augusta, will be found to be easily referable to this species.

C. isabellinus North.—A fairly long series was examined, ranging from Leigh's Creek northwards and westwards to Point Cloates and Day Dawn, in North-western Australia. We found that the general characters throughout this very extended habitat were constant. Birds in which the striations on the crown were absent (as originally described by North) come from the same localities and were found breeding together with birds which show the striations and are identical with the bird described under the name of *rubiginosus* by Campbell. North informed Dr. Morgan many years ago, that he had found out that *isabel-*

linus did often have striations on the crown, and said he was publishing a note to that effect.

We consider that *C. isabellinus*, North, should be given full specific rank, it being an interior species, only nearing the coast in the far north-west, where the interior conditions extend to the coast. The name *isabellinus* antedates Campbell's name of *rubiginosus*, and so must stand.

LIST.

- C. fuliginosus*, the Striated Field-Wren, habitat Tasmania, Victoria and S.E. portion of South Australia.
- C. montanellus*, Rock Field-Wren, habitat southern but not coastal portion of Western Australia.
- C. campestris*, Rufous Field-Wren, habitat South Australia south of the head of Spencer's Gulf, and, we believe, Eastern Victoria.
- C. isabellinus*, Rusty Wren, habitat, northern South Australia and Western Australia, extending from Leigh's Creek north and west to Point Cloates, and probably inland N.S.W.

A Trip to Mungeranie, Central Australia

By DR. BROOKE NICHOLLS, R.A.O.U., Melbourne.

On May 24th, 1922, I left Melbourne for Adelaide in company with Dr. George Horne to visit the country of the Wonkonguru, a native tribe inhabiting the eastern shores of Lake Eyre. Cooper's Creek forms the southern boundary, and their territory stretches northwards to the Warburton River (so called by McKinlay, the explorer, in 1861, after the then Commissioner of Police in Adelaide). Later it was found to be the eastern end of the Diamantina River, and re-named after the wife (Diamantina Roma) of the first Governor of Queensland (Sir George Bowen) who married the daughter of a Sicilian nobleman.

Whilst in the district we met an old white-bearded, white-haired native named "Elius," who as a boy of eighteen saw McKinlay (his first white man), and his rescue party searching for Burke and Wills. "Elius" and a companion stalked the party for some days. Stealthily creeping behind the bushes, they came close up and saw the explorers' mob of sheep, from which they eventually cut out and speared a straggler. Hearing a gun fired, they ran away. McKinlay—a red-bearded man—they took to be a black man with his face red-ochred, and the sheep they mistook for a new kind of dog. This chance meeting of ours with "Elius" constituted a remarkable living link between 1861 and 1922, and possibly the last of its kind that will be recorded of the ill-fated expedition.