may be rare. In England aviculturists are assisted by the Zoological Gardens; and that is as it should be, because it is recognised that Zoological Gardens are purely for show and that real observations and breeding attempts should be made in private aviaries unless a Government institution for such purposes exists. In Australia the case is different, and it is much to be regretted that obstacles are placed in the way of our getting birds to observe and study.

Breeding of Cape Barren Geese.

BY G. A. HEUMANN, R.A.O.U., Beecroft, N.S.W.

Not many years ago the Cape Barren Goose (Cereopsis novaehollandiae) was exceptionally plentiful along the south-west coast of Australia; but conditions have changed with them as with many other Australian birds, and to-day a pair is rarely seen in a wild state. Around Esperance Bay the children would hunt the young ones uphill; to-day there is none left in that district. Mr. A. S. Le Souef, of Taronga Park Zoological Gardens, told me that the species is rapidly becoming extinct. And yet they breed easily and prolifically.

The pair I possess was sent to me by the late Mrs. Roberts, of Hobart, about seven years ago. They were young birds, and not until they were three years old did they lay their first eggs. These, unfortunately, were not fertile, but in the following seasons I reared four young ones each time without any trouble. This year (1926) although the eggs were fertile, no young ones appeared, probably on account of too early breeding during very changeable weather, in June, the breeding season being generally in August.

The site selected for the nest is beneath a bush, and it is interesting to see the hen breaking off branches, from 6 inches to 12 inches long, putting them all in a heap, and then using them when she wants them, as foundation and for the sides of the nest. It is not a big structure but looks cozy enough after she has plucked herself of the down in which she completely buries her eggs. The incubation lasts 40 days, and is only carried out by the goose; the gander generally stands nearby to see that nothing interferes. Both Geese are very pugnacious during this period, and will attack anything most viciously. A stray fowl quickly becomes a dead bird.

Young Cape Barren Geese are exceptionally pretty. A broad black stripe runs from the base of the hill to the tail; then come two white stripes and two black stripes again. The underparts are creamy white. As the gosling advances the black becomes gray, the white a dirty white, until little by little they all show only gray. It takes rather more than six months for the birds to lose their baby feathers.

The flesh of these Geese is very dark and appears to be bruised, and unless they are very young the meat is tough and dry.

As pets in general, if it were not for their pugnacity, Cape Barren Geese would be ideal. They will follow one anywhere, and one
could perceive no pleasanter sight than a clutch of these Geese with their geolings. I feed my birds on hot bran and pollard-mash in the morning and wheat in the afternoon. They also get, of course, as much green stuff as they like, this being their natural food. It is a pity that the public cannot see a family of this species at the Zoo, when they are so easy to breed.

The Belltrees Oological Collection.

BY A. J. CAMPBELL, C.M.B.O.U., ETC., MELBOURNE.

TAKING advantage of the R.A.O.U. holding its Annual Meeting in New South Wales, and by the kind permission of Mr. H. L. White, I had an opportunity of viewing the progress of this celebrated collection.

The collection is enclosed in one large cabinet, 8½ feet in length, 4 feet in breadth, and 4½ feet in height, and is built of Queensland maple (Plenderia oxleyana), which under the polishers' art is yellow ochre in colour, beautifully mottled and striped mahogany red. There are eight divisions (four on each side back to back) which in all contain 137 drawers, 22½ x 19 inches in dimensions, graduated from ½ inches to ½ inches in depth. The knobs of the drawers are made of yarrem wattle (Acacia homalophylla, native to the Belltrees estate), and when polished are nearly as hard and black as ebony.

Time and space utterly fail to explain all the unique and valuable specimens among the thousands of clutches, but a general and brief sketch may be given of the Cuckoos. There are about 600 "combined clutches"; i.e., sets containing both eggs of the foster-parent and of the Cuckoo, which are among the most interesting of wonderful exhibits.

All Australian Cuckoos have not been observed methodically hatched from the fosterer's nest; therefore there is necessarily some uncertainty about the parentage of the strange egg in many cases, although from circumstantial evidence, or by analogy, it is possible that the proper parent has been correctly named.

Both Mr. White and his painstaking assistant, Mr. S. W. Jackson, are to be commended for the excellent and artistic arrangement of the specimens. Each clutch has its own history, more or less elaborate, written in a special reference book. The following is an example:—"The only Bronze Cuckoo I have seen here (Cordial) is L. rissatus. One was clinging to the nest of Gerygone magnirostris in which was a freshly deposited egg of a Cuckoo, and later I obtained a young bird being fed by a Gerygone. I consider there is not a shadow of a doubt that rissatus lays a green (bronze or olive) egg, and that the egg already sent in the set of Gerygone magnirostris belongs to that bird (Cuckoo)—H. GREENSILL BARNARD, 4. 12. 25."

It would appear that four of the small Bronze Cuckoos all lay uniform olive, or bronze-coloured, eggs. Some degree of certainty may be narrowed to L. plagus. Two others (L. rissatus and L.