

Report of the Bird Observers Club

The evening meetings at the National Museum, for which we have again to thank the Director for providing facilities, were concluded on November 27 by Mr. Geo. Mack giving a talk on the genera *Neophema* and *Psephenus*, suggesting that the rarer species of these groups were, probably, if investigated, not so rare as often considered. The September meeting was on the *Ralliformes*, by Mr. C. E. Bryant, whilst at the October meeting Mr. A. G. Campbell dealt with the Mallee quota of bird life, stress being laid upon the economic value of a zoological survey in advance of settlement in this treacherously dry territory. Already, in Victoria alone, the inner Mallee had cost the country over a million sterling in sustenance. A dramatic touch was given to the evening by a fall of "red rain" in Melbourne, which two days of violent north wind had brought from the inland.

At the Club meeting on October 16, a talk was given by Mr. A. G. Campbell upon the Upper Yarra Falls, illustrated by many brilliant lantern slides belonging to the "A. J. Campbell collection." A very fine outing was to Toolern Vale, where the Club observed 66 species of birds, fifteen of which were nesting in the 200 acre sanctuary of Mr. V. R. Davey, R.A.O.U. It was on October 28 that the Club again visited this spot on the historical occasion of the opening of the bird cabin.

The November meeting was devoted to reports of outings by several members, and being illustrated by lantern slides, proved of great interest. The November outing was under the guidance of Mr. D. Dickson, who took members over the ground he has known for some years at Mooroolbark. Bush paddocks and brushy creek courses alternated with luscious meadows, where sleek kine enjoyed the shade of spreading blackwoods. No fewer than fourteen different kinds of nests were inspected, a tribute to the amount of preparatory work necessary to make the outing a success.

On November 25, Mr. C. E. Bryant took members expressly to see the Fantail-Warbler at home in the rushy river bends at Bulleen, near Kew.

Early in December another especial trip was made to see another particular bird, namely, the Rainbow-Bird, nesting near the You Yangs, where we were met by several of the Geelong Naturalists Club. Members were treated to a most remarkable demonstration of the forces of nature in carving and scouring the countryside. Two days previously there had been a phenomenal downpour of about six inches of rain. The granite peaks were seeping with water, creeks were running in all the hollows, and the main channels were filled to overflowing with sand and sludge. The Rainbow-birds either lost their homes or had the nesting tunnels beheaded, but one energetic pair had already started again. A pair of Australian Rollers or Dollar-birds was observed, bringing the list of species for the day to 60.