

Sanctuaries continue to be created throughout the State. A splendid concession (and one which will interest members who attended the Brisbane congress last year) is the proclamation of the whole of Stradbroke Island, Moreton Bay, as a sanctuary for native birds and animals. This island has an area of 123 square miles, and ranks next to Hinchinbrook Island (North Queensland) as the largest insular reservation in Australia. The greatest sanctuary of all is the Barron Shire (N.Q.), the whole 490 square miles of which were proclaimed a sanctuary at the request of the shire council.

Late in August Brisbane members of the Union had the pleasure of entertaining at tea Professor J. Burton Cleland, R.A.O.U. (South Australia) and Colonel (Dr.) Horne, R.A.O.U. (Victoria), both of whom were in Brisbane in connection with the Australasian Medical Congress.

Queensland will be represented at the annual meeting of the R.A.O.U. in Perth. The distance is too great, however, to ensure a good attendance from this State.

A. H. CHISHOLM, *State Secretary.*

Review.

[“The Birds of Australia.” By Gregory M. Mathews, F.R.S.E. Vol. viii., parts 1 and 2.]

It is a relief to Australian ornithologists to see again the parts of this great work. It was feared that, on account of the enormous increase in costs, publication would have to be suspended; but fortunately that catastrophe has been averted.

The high standard set up at the beginning, so many years ago, is well maintained in the parts under notice. Indeed, it is surprising that, whilst in every other direction the effects of shortage of material and increased costs are plainly visible, yet this remarkable work has gone on in a marvellous way unimpaired, and on a uniformly high level of excellence. As a matter of fact, increased excellence is seen in these parts, for all the plates are by the famous bird artist Grönvold—a sufficient guarantee of their accuracy and high finish. However, the placing of two or more species on a plate may possibly be due to the demands of economy.

The field notes are, as usual, varied and interesting, and are contributed by many of the best-known Australian field workers. The researches into the past history of the species are thorough, and the essential facts are fully set out.

Approval, too, may be expressed of some general remarks on the classification of birds made by Mr. Mathews. These suggest a hope that his many years of constant, faithful, and critical study of masses of material and literature have placed Mr. Mathews in the position of being able to suggest an up-to-date classification of birds.

The first part deals with the Pittas, Scrub-Birds, Swallows and Martins, and three Flycatchers. The Australian Robins, here subdivided into seven genera of one species each, the Short-billed Tree-Tit, and the White-throated and Brown Fly-eaters are treated in Part II.

Mr. Mathews has worked himself during the past fifteen years into a leading position amongst the world's ornithologists, and Australians are proud that their avifauna is being so thoroughly studied and so excellently depicted. They approve of the splendid treatment given by Mr. Mathews, but regret that in one matter they are unable to follow his lead. Attention has previously been drawn to Mr. Mathews's excessive splitting of genera. In the parts under notice Mr. Mathews has quite out-Heroded Herod by using 21 genera for the 22 species described, *Micræca* alone having two species. Six of the generic names are due to fine splitting by Mr. Mathews, and he has adopted all previous suggestions of generic subdivision.

In Mr. Mathews's "Check-list," Part I., 1920, recently issued, a tendency to moderation and to the adoption of a middle position was noted, but in these parts an extreme position is apparent. Possibly the parts were prepared for press before the completion of the "Check-list." This extreme position is the one factor likely to depreciate the value of Mr. Mathews's monumental work. He started in a medium position as regards genera; then became a violent lumpner, and is now in the extreme splitting position. Indeed, with one more split he would have reached in these parts the physical limit of generic splitting—a genus for each species. It is with regret that we have again to draw attention to this rendering useless of generic names.

Additions to the Library.

By F. ERASMUS WILSON, R.A.O.U., HON. LIBRARIAN.

OWING to pressure on space I am not able to comment on any of the articles appearing in the following publications:—

Victorian Naturalist, vol. xxxvi., parts 11 and 12; vol. xxxvii., parts 1, 2, and 3.

Science and Industry, vol. ii., parts 3 and 4.

Australian Naturalist, vol. iv., part 10.

Hawkesbury Agricultural College Journal, vol. xvii., parts 4 and 5; vol. xviii., part 1.

Ibis, vol. ii., part 1.

British Birds, vol. xiii., parts 2 and 4.

Avicultural Magazine, vol. xi., parts 2 and 4.

Bird Lore, vol. xxii., part 1.

Le Gerfaut, 1919, fas. 1 and 2; 1920, fas. 1.



1920. "Review." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 20(2), 110–111. <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu920110>.

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