

containing what might have been the white of an egg. 2. Beak very dirty, plumage comparatively clean, but in the throat and stomach undeniable evidence of both white and yelk of egg. 3. Very clean, full-plumaged bird; stomach containing only a few ants and other insect-remains. Had I found no more conclusive evidence than in No. 1, I should have treated the whole story as a myth, attributing the fluid contained in the throat, &c., to an unusual quantity, and an abnormal condition, of the glutinous substance found naturally in the head and throat of this and allied species; but I know not how to argue in favour of No. 2, for in that case it seems to be "proven"; whilst in No. 3 the accusation is utterly disproved. Is it a recognised fact,—it was new to me,—or is it an acquired habit, something akin to the Kea's love for (living) mutton-fat (Zool. 1881, pp. 290—301)? for I should have mentioned that game-preserving is not carried on less keenly than it was some years ago in the locality where these birds were taken. I should be glad to know that egg-sucking is but a case of depraved appetite in a few individuals of the "Yaffingale," whose merry "laugh" forms so pleasant an accompaniment to a woodland ramble.—G. B. CORBIN (Ringwood, Hants).

**Dark Variety of Montagu's Harrier in Hants.**—At the end of May I heard of "a black hawk" having been killed near here, and on enquiry I have not much hesitation in saying it was the dark variety of the above species, which has been obtained once or twice before in this locality. I did not see the specimen in question, but its occurrence is, I think, worth recording.—G. B. CORBIN (Ringwood).

**Egg-drills.**—We have received from Mr. Marsden, of 37, Midland Road, Gloucester, two specimens of egg-drills—a small one sold at 6d., and a larger one at 10d.—which may be recommended. They are not so well finished as the one previously noticed (p. 236), but they are less expensive, and, being much shorter in length, are more conveniently carried by the egg-collector.

**Notes from Western Australia.**—As I believe this district has never been explored from an ornithological point of view, having been settled only ten years, perhaps some notes may be of interest to readers of 'The Zoologist,' though, when I have been here longer, I shall have more to say I trust. At present my camp is about twenty miles from the sea, and about twenty miles north of the River Gascoyne, which, owing to a long drought, has not run for three years. This spell of dry weather interferes with bird-life; many must have died of thirst, and stronger species moved to where there is water. The country may be described as a mass of scrub from two to ten feet high, with here and there sand-flats and clay-pans, where water holds when rain falls. Numerous shallow gullies intersect the country, and are fringed by the white or swamp gum tree (the only tree

APPLICATION NO.

DATE

21/2/95

that grows here, and not to any great size). Near the sea are sand-hills and salt-marshes, which I have not yet explored at all. Coming down the coast last January I shot many interesting birds at Derby (King's Sound), but they were all swamped in the boat returning to the ship. Mutton-birds were very numerous all along, and at Cossack I saw and shot Ospreys. At Ashburton a fine Sea Eagle settled on the mast-head, but was not secured. The noble Wedge-tailed Eagle (*A. audax*) is numerous here, and very destructive to lambs: a good many have fallen victims to poison. It is a pity to destroy such fine birds, but I have seen a pair kill five lambs in one morning. Birds of prey are very plentiful, but as yet I have not commenced to shoot for skins, the birds being in bad feather this time of year, and I want to secure them with their eggs. Emus are seen almost daily, in spite of the drought, and, from a specimen I examined on March 23rd, I think Gould is correct in surmising that the Spotted Emu is the bird of Western Australia (*Dromæus irroratus*). This was a female, and contained a large cluster of eggs, some as large as a duck's. March 25th no less than twenty-eight were seen in one flock near a pool, many last year's birds not full-grown. The Western Long-billed Cockatoo (*Licmetis pastinator*) is seen in large flocks. I have only Gould's 'Hand-book' to work from, but have seen and shot several of the following species, which he describes as only being found in the interior:—Rose-breasted Cockatoo (*C. roseicapilla*), the Varied Parrakeet (*Psephotus multicolor*), and the Crested Bronze-wing Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*). The Yellow-collared Parrakeet (*P. semitorquatus*) is common, as are others of this genus I have not yet identified. A flock of Black Swans were on a pool here April 2nd, which I take to be a long way north for this species; they were in company with Avocets, Pelicans, Pink-eyed Duck, Australian Teal, and other wildfowl. The Australian Curlew is very common, and a noisy bird at night. When winter sets in, and we get rain, I hope to be able to send some fuller and more interesting notes.—T. CARTER, of Masham, Yorkshire (Boothathana Station, Gascoyne, Western Australia).

## REPTILES.

**Coloration of the Viper.**—With reference to the remarks of Mr. Macpherson under this heading (p. 306), it may be well to point out that the Viper which occurs in the Forest of Fontainebleau is *Vipera aspis*, and not the British Viper, *Vipera berus*. The characters by which these two species may be distinguished will be found indicated by Mr. Boulenger in 'The Zoologist' for 1885, p. 375.—J. E. HARTING.

## FISHES.

**"Becker" or "Braise" in Cornwall.**—On August 3rd I took, in my trammels, a "Becker" or "Braise." There exists considerable doubt