

MAGPIES IN NEW ZEALAND.

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Further notes on the Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca* and *G. tibicen*) in New Zealand are (vide N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 1, p. 86-104):—

WHITE-BACKED MAGPIE.

Distribution.—Hanmer Basin: Common. Tarndale Homestead, Marlborough: Fairly regular summer visitors. Hundalee: Apparently well established.

Attacks on Sheep.—At Beckenham Hills, North Canterbury, the following incidents have been reported: "A farmer who had attended to a cast sheep, went next day to see how it was. He found a flock of nearly 50 magpies pulling at its wool, which was scattered about. The sheep had been pecked round the eye but was not dead. Two days later a sick sheep near a plantation was attacked and the wool pulled out by magpies."

Magpies and Bumble Bees.—At Annat, Canterbury, a pet magpie regularly catches and kills bumble bees in the garden. A farmer in the same district has seen magpies kill bumble bees on at least six occasions. Twice he has watched magpies standing beside a bumble-bee nest and take the young bees as they came out into the sun to dry their wings. At Amberley, North Canterbury, a farmer has frequently seen magpies kill bumble-bees. Other farmers have expressed the opinion that magpies may be a factor in reducing yields of red clover by destroying old queens in the spring and thus preventing the natural increase.

Magpies and Keas.—From the upper reaches of the Waiau, North Canterbury, and from the Lake Coleridge district, come reports that Keas do not approach areas where Magpies are established.

BLACK-BACKED MAGPIE.

Distribution.—The writer saw a single cock bird at Monoti, near Cheviot, in October, 1945, and another near Culverden, in December, 1945. A reliable observer reported four birds up the Waiau River, between Montrose and Lochiel in 1945.

SHINING CUCKOOS IN GARDEN.—For two weeks prior to and up to 20/2/46 Shining Cuckoos (*Chalcites lucidus*) appeared in a garden in Opotiki. On several occasions five were feeding together on caterpillars in a kowhai tree. They were comparatively tame.—Norman Potts.

NEW BREEDING BIRD FOR THREE KINGS GROUP.—One of the most interesting ornithological discoveries of recent years was that by an Auckland War Memorial Museum party which visited the Three Kings group, where the Black-winged Petrel (*Pterodroma nigripennis*) hitherto recorded in the New Zealand area from the Kermadecs, was found to be breeding on the Great King. An illustration of this bird and of other species, and views taken by Mr. G. A. Buddle, a member of our Society, appeared in the "Weekly News" on April 24, 1946.