

(c) On two successive days, 17 and 18/11/45, I had splendid views of a whimbrel at the mouth of the Ohau River, Manawatu. The bird was first noticed in flight and as it settled near a bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) an excellent opportunity was given to compare its size. It was slightly larger than the godwit, the long down-curved bill did not appear to be quite as long as the godwit's bill; the plumage generally was a mottled brown, with a flecked white rump (v-shaped), blackish tipped wings; a white eyebrow, a dark stripe on top of the head; grey feet and dark bill.

For some five minutes the bird ducked itself in a shallow back-water, splashing its wings and dipping its bill in the water and preening its feathers under its wings. When disturbed it uttered a loud sharp cry of "willy-willy-willy-willy-willy-willy." It was observed at 50 yards distance with eight magnification binoculars.—R. H. D. Stidolph, Masterton.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT IN AUCKLAND PROVINCE.

By R. B. SIBSON.

The Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa limosa haemastica*) now rare even in its native America, has been observed twice this year in the province of Auckland.

(a) Mr. H. R. McKenzie writes that on 10/3/46, near Waitakaruru, in the Firth of Thames, one was seen in a close pack of bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa l. lapponica*) on a mudflat and was carefully watched for over half an hour by Mr. P. H. Orum, Capt. A. T. Edgar and himself. It was a small godwit, showing hardly any colour except for a fully black tail. Its identity was considered quite certain.

(b) On 28/7/46, Mr. P. C. Bull and the writer had close views of one and noted all the diagnostic field characters, on Puketutu Flats, in Manukau Harbour. It was first noticed flying with three bar-tailed godwits, and some sort of chase was in progress with much zig-zagging and exciting calling, but whether in play or in anger was not certain. Fortunately it settled eventually among other waders on a shell-bank, to which there was easy access by way of a lava reef and under the cover of typical salt-marsh vegetation. On the ground its smooth-looking grey breast, clear-cut eyestripe and small size marked the Hudsonian as different from the scores of bar-tailed godwits around it, and when it rose the sharply-defined pattern of white rump and black tail was most conspicuous. Finally, as it flew past at the head of a party of bar-tails, its whitish alar bar showed distinctly. It was a neat godwit about the size of a small male bar-tail.

This record is particularly interesting as it is the first reported winter occurrence of the Hudsonian godwit in New Zealand. The bird was presumably immature, and, like the majority of immature bar-tails, was content to stay here growing up, before attempting the long journey back to its Arctic breeding grounds. It should be in New Zealand at least till March, 1947.

The Hudsonian godwit has now been observed four times in the province of Auckland, these being the only records for the North Island. The two earlier occurrences were reported in "The Emu," 1943, Vol. xliii, p. 136. The first bird was found by W. Ridland and the writer near

the mouth of the Waikato River on the south bank. It was resting at high tide in a paddock with a party of non-breeding stilts. The date was 2/11/40. The second bird was seen three weeks later, on 24/11/40, by C. A. Fleming and the writer, at Mangawai, some ninety miles to the north. It was flying with a large mixed flock of waders, consisting mainly of godwits and knots (*Calidris canutus*). Careful watching of godwit packs may show that the Hudsonian godwit visits New Zealand more often than is generally suspected.

WILD PEAFOWL IN WANGANUI DISTRICT.

By C. A. FLEMING, Wellington.

In the summer of 1945-46 I was engaged on geological survey work in the Wanganui district. For some weeks I was puzzled by strange shrill cries unlike those of any bird on the New Zealand list that I knew of, but similar to that of the peacock. Eventually, in the hills north of Longacre, I topped a ridge, and looking down into the gully on the other side, saw a fine peacock gliding across a patch of native scrub, its tail trailing gloriously behind—a most incongruous sight in an otherwise typical New Zealand scene. I recorded peafowl in a number of places between Tokomaru East Road, on the west of Wanganui River, and the vicinity of Longacre, east of the river. The birds were in all cases wild, not associated with homesteads, and have apparently become well established, at least in a limited area.

The peacock (*Pavo cristatus*) is a native of India and Ceylon, but has been distributed widely as an ornamental bird. In New Zealand I had not previously heard of peafowl in a feral state, but have since been told of others in the Gisborne area. In Biblical times, we read, the peacock was introduced into Palestine by Solomon. Perhaps other members can tell us who performed this service for New Zealand, and can provide more information on the dates and places of establishment of a handsome addition to the list of the introduced birds of New Zealand.

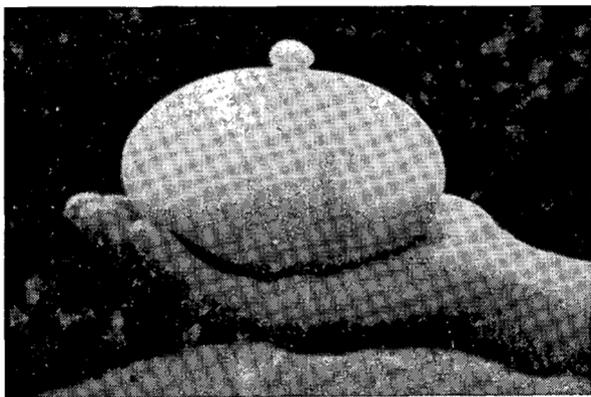


Photo. B. Iorns, Masterton.

A contrast in size of N.Z. birds' eggs: North Island Kiwi and Grey Warbler. These are among the largest and smallest eggs laid by native birds.