

# New Zealand Bird Notes

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### CONTENTS.

	Page
Bird-life at Sundrum, South Canterbury, by D. H. Graham .. .. .	178
The Snares Island Expedition, 1947 .. .. .	181
Identification of Birds by Radar, by C. A. Fleming .. .. .	184
Stilts Nesting at Ardmore, by A. F. Stokes .. .. .	185
Hutton's Shearwater in N.Z., by V. I. Clark and C. A. Fleming .. .. .	187
Seabird Mortality in February, 1947, by J. M. Cunningham .. .. .	188
Breeding of Red-capped Dotterel in New Zealand, by R. A. Falla .. .. .	194
Royal Spoonbill in New Zealand, by R. H. D. Stidolph .. .. .	195
Habits of Shining Cuckoo, by Ross H. Michie .. .. .	196
Index .. .. .	197
NOTES—Density of Paradise Duck Population, 177; Blackbirds Eating Carrots .. .. .	197

### ILLUSTRATIONS

	Facing page
Plate V.—Snares Island Crested Penguins .. .. .	182
Plate VI.—Antarctic Terns; Snares Island Tomtit .. .. .	183
Plate VII.—Red-capped Dotterel .. .. .	194
Plate VIII.—Royal Spoonbill in New Zealand .. .. .	195

DENSITY OF PARADISE DUCK POPULATION IN THE MOLESWORTH STATION AREA.—A count of paradise duck (*Tadorna variegata*) from a truck between Molesworth Station homestead, 2,905 feet above sea level, to Tarndale, 3,350 feet, via Sexton Pass and along the Acheron, Sexton and Alma rivers, was taken by the writer on October 29, 1946. A distance of 26 miles, of which about 11-12 miles were along the riverbeds, was covered between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The weather was fine, warm at noon in sunshine, with slight to moderate winds at times. The total number of paradise duck observed was 207, of which 47 were counted between Molesworth and Red Gate, 108 between Red Gate and Tarndale, and a flock of more than 52 birds was seen on Tarndale Flats. Of these 12 were single birds, 15 were in pairs while the remainder was in flocks from three to 52 birds. Obviously the majority of ducks were already mated with the exception of the large flock which may have been formed by immature birds. It should be remembered that the paradise duck in the beginning of the breeding season is frequently seen in trios, one duck accompanied by two drakes. It is likely that the majority of the paradise duck population was already in their respective breeding grounds. The density of the paradise duck population was about eight birds to a mile for the whole distance and about 17 birds to a mile of river flat.—K. A. Wodzicki, Wellington.