

greater than I had realised last year. However, on the whole I am of the opinion that my estimate last year of 3,750 birds (N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 130) was very conservative, and I would now consider 5,500 nearer the mark.

XIII.—WINTER COUNTS IN HAURAKI GULF.

By Magnus Johnson, Auckland.

The following notes on gannets in winter may be of interest. I have visited all (I think) gannetries from White Island to the Three Kings and have for the past seven years taken a keen interest in their increase and decrease. On May 8, 1948, I set out for a week's cruise to Colville Peninsula and the Great Barrier.

On May 9 I visited Horuhoru Rock, just north of Thumb Point, off Waiheke, and counted between 70 to 80 gannets thereon. The birds were very still and not flying about.

On May 11 I visited gannetries on the Colville Group and counted 25 gannets on Motu Takapu (Gannet Rock) and between 40 and 50 on the larger island close by.

Between Auckland and Colville I saw only two gannets at sea and during the week's cruise I did not see more than 12 gannets at sea.

The birds I saw on the gannetries were mostly sleeping, with head under wing. As this was just before a severe S.E. gale, I suggest that the gannets sensed the coming of the gale and had taken refuge on the islands.

SEABIRDS NESTING ON THE SUGARLOAF ROCKS, NEW PLYMOUTH.

By Eric H. Sedgwick, Caron, Western Australia.

While in New Plymouth during January last, I paid some attention to the seabirds at Paritutu Beach and on the adjacent Sugarloaf Rocks.

My observations led me to postulate nesting colonies of white-fronted tern (*Sterna striata*) on Pararaki and on Motu-o-tamatea, and a possible colony of black-backed gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) on Motumahanga. Silver or red-billed gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*) were nesting on Pararaki.

Unfortunately, I was unable to set foot on Pararaki and had to content myself with watching through binoculars from the adjacent Mataora. From this vantage point I could clearly discern the red-billed gulls covering nests on the exposed summit of the rock. Their nests impressed me as being unusually substantial: perhaps a concession to the rocky site. Evidence of the terns nesting was more circumstantial, but nevertheless strong. A number of birds were apparently brooding in the niches in the mesembryanthemum-covered cliffs comprising the side of the rock. Several terns were seen carrying fish towards the island, and one, at least, appeared to feed a young bird with a fish that it had just brought in its bill.

I thought that a few terns might be breeding on Motu-o-tamatea, so on January 10th I examined the cliffs of that island for nests of the white-fronted tern but found none occupied, though adult terns behaved aggressively, diving to within a few inches of my head. Old nests and eggshells probably attributable to this species were located. The cliffs examined were rocky in parts, but elsewhere comprised steep slopes covered by a small species of *mesembryanthemum*. These cliffs resemble those of the nearby Pararaki, already referred to as a nesting place for terns and gulls.

Large seabirds, probably black-backed gulls, were to be seen over Motumahanga but at too great a distance to enable any definite conclusions to be drawn.