

DISTRIBUTION OF MYNA IN N.Z.

By J. M. Cunningham, Masterton.

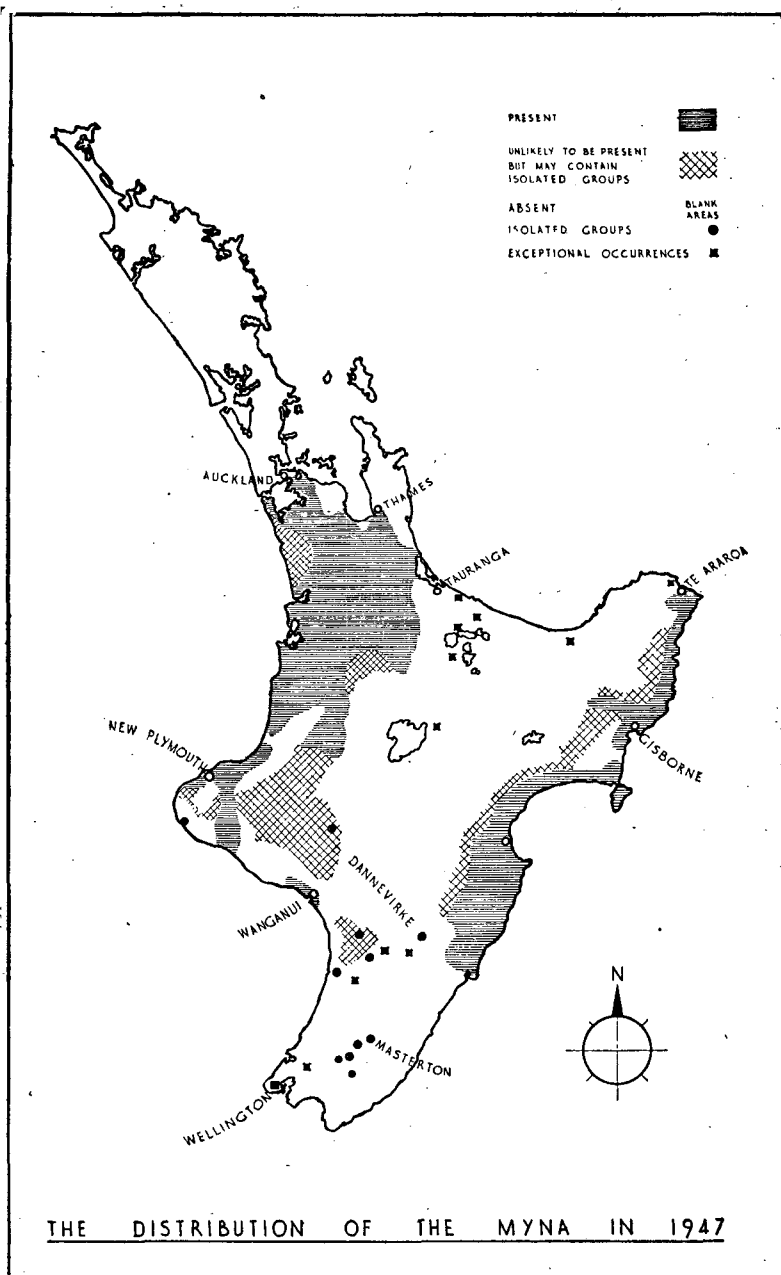
According to Thompson (1922) there is little doubt that the Indian myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) in New Zealand comes from stock naturalised in Australia from India. The myna, spelt variously as mynah, and minah, has been introduced into several countries, and the story everywhere has been of its remarkable increase. In New Zealand, scores and hundreds were liberated "in all centres" by private individuals and a few acclimatisation societies in the early 1870's. They bred everywhere, spreading rapidly at first, but soon began to decrease, ultimately to disappear in many districts. At one time they were common enough in Dunedin, Christchurch and Nelson. From these places they had disappeared completely by 1890 and there are now no mynas in the South Island.

Even as early as 1875 it was stated that "they are not now common about Wellington," and had not again been recorded there during this century until last year, when two stragglers were reported. They were more numerous at one time in the Wairarapa, and have apparently also decreased in the Manawatu. The Taranaki and Hawke's Bay populations extending north to Mt. Messenger and Te Araroa respectively, appear to be more or less stable at the present time, but the Waikato population presents a picture of continuous and aggressive expansion.

The cause of the early rapid expansion and later decrease is not known, though it was suggested that the rapid increase of the starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) also had something to do with it. Statements thereon are conflicting: Thompson (1922) describes how a pair of starlings displaced a pair of mynas from a nesting site, but correspondents inform me that the myna will attack and drive away starlings, one pair occupying an area in which several pairs of starlings would breed. They are thus reported to be displacing starlings in many localities, but my own observations tend to disprove this, as starlings appear numerous in many places where mynas are extremely common, and Oliver (1930) says that where the two come into contact, the myna generally has to give way.

The course of expansion and colonising follows that described by Guthrie-Smith (1921) in "Tutira." The first pair appeared at Tutira Homestead in 1884, five years after liberation by the Hawke's Bay Acclimatisation Society. Odd pairs reappeared each year until 1889, when they first nested successfully. At first using nesting-boxes put up for them, they became less dependent on man-made sites each year. When in small numbers they prefer the habitations of man, but as they increase they seem to overflow into the rural areas. In the Wairarapa and Manawatu, for example, they are, as a rule, only seen in the towns, but in the Waikato and parts of Hawke's Bay their distribution is more regular. They appear particularly numerous in the vicinity of pig farms, where they relish the skim milk, and are said to perform a useful service in delousing the pigs.

This paper is the result of an appeal for information in "New Zealand Bird Notes" in January, 1947. The response has been gratifying and many members of the society willingly supplied notes. Many referred the writer to correspondents and this in turn led to other sources of information. Owing to limited time, I have not tapped such possible sources as "The Weekly News." I have had many discussions on the subject, and many of the records are my own or have been confirmed personally. The file consists of well over 50 letters: I have attempted to reply to each writer (several times in many cases), but offer my tardy apologies to anyone who has been missed. It is remarkable how evidence has been corroborated in many instances, and pleasing to note that few records have had to be rejected as being unreliable. I give my thanks to all who have helped: it is difficult to single out anyone in particular, but I must acknowledge the particularly valuable co-operation of Messrs. R. B. Sibson and E. G. Turbott, who have contributed so largely to the prolific Auckland-Manukau reports. Many localities have also been covered by the records of Mr. R. H. D. Stidolph, Mrs.



I. Tily and Mrs. P. J. Taylor. I am grateful also to Mr. N. Inkster for his drawing of the accompanying map.

As inferred above, the North Island distribution can be divided into four main areas, which will be treated separately. It is known that mountain ridges, or a few miles of heavy bush, will restrict the expansion of the myna for years, even though odd birds will cross these barriers at intervals. There seems to be a certain minimum population below which the myna does no more than hold its own. It is perhaps inevitable that in an investigation of this sort, emphasis should be given to the main roads, but I have tried to trace the position in the back areas as far as possible, often going out of my way when touring to investigate back roads. Because of the probability of future changes in distribution, present localities are given in some detail for the benefit of future investigators.

WELLINGTON-WAIRARAPA.

As stated earlier, Wellington once had a large population of mynas, and it was more numerous, though never common, in the Wairarapa. They had apparently disappeared from the city by 1890 or 1900, and are now only to be found in the towns of Featherston, Martinborough (also 40 years ago, I.T.), Greytown, Carterton and Masterton. There are only a handful of birds in each of these towns, and their number has remained more or less constant over many years. In Masterton a small group of birds will remain faithful to one locality for years, and will rarely be seen away from it. Such places are in Vivian Street, Tararua Street, Church Street (old gasworks), and Queen Street (Wagg's Garage). They wander occasionally, having been seen in Renall Street for instance, and it is not very surprising that they should at times be reported from Wellington. H.R.M. believes he heard one at Hataitai, not since confirmed, in February, 1947, and P.C.C. recorded one at Upper Hutt in 1946.

HAWKE'S BAY—EAST CAPE.

Repeated liberations gave these birds a flying start, and they remain a constant and conspicuous sight in the Napier and Hastings area. Their present southern limit in the countryside is just south of Waipukurau (J.M.C.), though there are small but flourishing colonies in Dannevirke (1947, J.M.C.). There are none in Woodville (C.A.F., 1941; 1947, J.M.C.) though R.H.D.S. saw one between here and Dannevirke, 31/10/39. From Waipukurau they extend to the coast, as far south as Porangahau (J.M.C. and K.A.W., 1948). I imagine they are probably present inland as far south as Weber. Though present in Waipukurau and Waipawa (1931, R.H.D.S.; 1947, J.M.C.), not many are seen along the main road until about Te Hauke (1940, I.T.; 1947, J.M.C.), but from there on they are conspicuous to well past Napier. They may be seen almost anywhere on the coastal plains, on the shingle river spits, amongst the nesting gannets at Cape Kidnappers (Wodzicki and McMeekan, 1947), but do not extend inland far into the hills. In 1947 I saw none further than two miles west of Puketapu (and Oheiti Station, c. 20 miles west of Hastings, present 1940, I.T.). Further inland, as is expected, R.N.K. says there are none in the areas of the headwaters of the Waipawa River, and the Kaimanawa and Kaiweka Ranges.

Continuing north, they may be seen at intervals right through to Gisborne, particularly in the townships, and are numerous at Wairoa, (1931, R.H.D.S.; 1940, I.T.; 1947, H.B.R.S., J.M.C.), and present at Tangoio (1940, I.T.), Tutira (Guthrie-Smith, 1921; 1931, R.H.D.S.; 1940, I.T.; 1947, J.M.C.); Mohaka Gorge (1931, R.H.D.S.; 1940, I.T.; 1947, J.M.C.). Inland, it is probable they extend a few miles only up the Esk Valley and Waikaremoana roads: they are not seen at Waikaremoana (I.T.). North of Wairoa, groups may be seen here and there: Morere (1931, R.H.D.S.; 1947, J.M.C.). There is a complete break caused by the Wharerata Hill (1675ft.) on the Morere-Gisborne Road (1947, J.M.C.), and there are few if any on the Frasertown-Gisborne Road (1940, I.T.). Inland from Gisborne, they extend to between Te Karaka and Otoko (1931, R.H.D.S.; 1940, I.T.).

Further north, rural birds are not often seen beyond Tatapouri (1947, J.M.C.) but are reasonably common in Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay (1947, J.M.C.), Ruatoria (1947, R.K.), Tikitiki (1947, J.M.C.), and Port Awanui (as long as he can remember, A.H.). These colonies do not give the impression of being flourishing. Birds doubtless extend up all the valley roads to station homesteads, e.g., P.J.T. gives the following information concerning the Kopuapounamu Valley Road, inland from Te Araroa: Six or seven miles up from the Awatere Bridge, A.H. said, they were not present 30-40 years ago, but two or three pairs have nested each year since his return six or seven years ago. Two miles on, C.W. reports two or three nesting pairs, each rearing one young only, and W.F.M. says they are only rarely seen another two miles on. They may be commonly seen at and near Te Araroa (20, 1940, R.B.S.; 1947, J.M.C.), and have been seen in recent years at Hicks Bay (1937, P.C.H.) and a little beyond (1940, R.B.S.).

Liberations c. 1890 at Matahura Station (? inland from Tolaga Bay) by a member of the Williams family (to help control the sheep tick) were successful and by 1910 birds had spread to Cape Runaway (A.E.K., R.H.W., R.K.). However, A.E.K. has seen only four here, years apart, since 1909, and J.F.W. a few in 1913. To all intents and purposes, therefore, their limit in this area is at present at Te Araroa (I saw none at Hicks Bay in 1947), and it will be interesting to see if they spread along the Bay of Plenty coast. Apart from a single bird which has resided at the Convent in Opotiki for five or six years (N.P.), there are no others in this area until well beyond Whakatane (N.P., A.E.K.).

MANAWATU—TARANAKI.

In the Manawatu and Taranaki areas Thompson (1922) said they were to be found in 1875-76: later they were said to be less numerous though still common in Taranaki, in 1922. For many years now their southern limit has apparently been at Palmerston North (H.T.W., 1941). They are not numerous there: two were in the hospital grounds "for years," and there are several there now (1947, E.C.M.). Two were seen in the Square and some at the Railway Yards (1943, R.H.D.S.), though I have never seen any on my infrequent visits. Southwards, they have not been seen at Levin (H.T.W., 1941; 1947, A.S.W., E.C.M.). A.A.S. says a pair released at Foxton at the east end of Lady's Mile, increased in four years to eleven. They all remained in the vicinity until 1946, when some established themselves at the racecourse a quarter of a mile away. The original pair was liberated by Mr. Battersby, having been given them by Mr. Bismark, who brought two pairs from Napier, releasing one pair nine miles north of Levin. One bird was drowned in a milk vat, and the other disappeared a year later. Mr. Battersby stated they were common in Foxton 30 years ago, and were fairly common at Tokomaru up to 10 years ago. Mr. Stevenson, of Tokomaru, said that the last he saw there was about 10 years ago. A.A.S. can find none there now, or in Shannon.

Present 30 years ago in Feilding (C.C.H.P.), there are still small numbers there near the railway yards (1947, J.M.C.). Seen in Ashhurst in 1927 (R.H.D.S.) and one or two pairs being present (in the town only) between 1933 and 1942 (C.C.H.P.), I looked for them in vain several times during 1946 and 1947. I have not seen them at Bunnythorpe, Halcombe, Sanson, Bulls or Marton, though I think they may be present in small numbers at the latter place. Thompson (1922) mentions them as following the plough in that area. I have not seen them, and feel confident there are none, up the Cheltenham-Taihape Road or up the Hunterville-Taihape Road. There are none at Waiouru or over the Desert Road (1946, 1947, J.M.C.) or the Taihape-Napier Road (1948, J.M.C.), or at National Park (1947, R.H.D.S.).

They commence again, perhaps even without a break, near Turakina, and are common in parts of Wanganui. (Correspondent to James Drummond's Nature Notes "Auckland Weekly News," 27/2/22; 1928, R.H.D.S.; 1947, W.P.M., J.M.C.). C.A.F., however, did not record them in January, 1948, at Turakina, Mangamahu or Fordell. F.W.D. says they are also to be seen at Castlecliff. There are some in Raetihi (1928, 1933,

R.H.D.S.; 1947, H.R.M., W.P.M.), and possibly in small numbers in between (W.P.M.). After a gap round Waitotara (W.P.M.), they may be seen in most towns right through to New Plymouth, e.g., Waverley (J.F.W., only odd ones during last eight years, but very numerous 35-40 years ago); Patea (1928, R.H.D.S.); Hawera (1935, R.H.D.S.; 1947, J.M.C.); Eltham (1920-23, plentiful, M.E.F.; 1928, R.H.D.S.; 1947, H.R.M.); Tariki (1933, R.H.D.S.); Inglewood (1933, 1941, R.H.D.S.; 1939, A.A.M.; 1947, J.M.C.). They are common in parts of New Plymouth (1928, 1941, R.H.D.S.; 1946, J.M.C.), and in 1928 R.H.D.S. recorded them from nearby localities such as Ratapihipihi Bush, Puketi Pa, Huatoki, Rotokare, and in 1941, from Egmont Village. The only information I have from west of the Hawera-New Plymouth Road is that there are between 10 and 30 in the Opunake township (none outside it) and that they have been there at least 10 years (1948, F.D.C.). Seen in 1933 at Te Wera (R.H.D.S.), they were just appearing at Matiere in 1931, and believed to be spreading up the Ohura Valley (P.A.S.) though possibly these birds are spreading from the Te Kuiti-Taumarunui colonies. They may also be seen (1947, J.M.C., S.D.P.) right through Waitara as far as Uriti and Mt. Messenger, with a decided break here to Mokau, the southern limit of the Waikato expansion.

WAIKATO—AUCKLAND.

Beyond Thompson's (1922) statement that mynas were liberated "in all centres," and he makes no direct mention of this area elsewhere, I have no information as to the origin of these birds. C.E.C. says that in 1905 and 1906 it could occasionally be seen in the streets of Auckland, disappearing later, and there is a report of one being shot in Epsom c. 1891 (J.R.), and another c. 1900 (A.W.). It seems strange that these are the only early records that have come to hand.

During the last 30 years they seem to have spread fanwise in a general northerly direction, apparently from the Te Kuiti area. Though I do not know when they arrived, they were present 30 years ago in Te Kuiti (W.F.I.H. and H.M.) and Morrinsville in 1912 (N.T.), where they evidently died out later. C.W.K., writing to James Drummond's Nature Notes in the "Auckland Weekly News" of 9/9/23, stated that the first two seen at Te Mawhai, south of Te Awamutu, appeared in that week. C.W.K., who still lives there, states that they have not increased since then as much as expected. The first birds reached Matamata in 1923 (fewer than 6, M.E.F.); Arapuni, about 1927 (J.R.); Tirau, 1928 (M.E.F.); Taupiri, 1929 (S.D.P.), and Morrinsville, 1929 (S.D.P.). C.A.F. says he has no recollection of them between Hamilton and Cambridge, c. 1928. In 1928 and 1929 they were also present at Mokau, Awakino, Mahoenui, Te Kuiti, Hangatiki, Otorohanga (E.G.T.), and Waitomo (S.D.P.). There were several pairs at Pirongia, west of Otorohanga, in 1929 (S.D.P.); an odd bird appeared for a day or two at Paerata, north of Pukekohe, on 28/5/28 (S.D.P.), and information from J.R. suggests that they reached Huntly, advancing at 8-10 miles annually, in the early 1930's (S.D.P. gives 1936). There were only a few at that time at Waingaro, north-west of Hamilton (P.C.B.).

In 1935 they were present in the Mangaotaki Gorge, north-west of Pio Pio, and at Te Anga (R.H.D.S.). They were still to be seen up the Awakino Valley, and were also in the Raglan-Kawhia district (R.H.D.S.) though I do not know when they reached there. A few were breeding at Te Aroha in 1936, and one was seen at Patetonga to the north-west (S.D.P.).

The years 1936 to 1942 appear to have been a period of consolidation in preparation for further advances, for I have no new records during that period. In 1941 P.C.B. suggested that the northern limit was at Ohinewai, just north of Huntly. They were first noticed in Paeroa in 1942 (G.V.M.); Netherton, to the north-west, in 1943 (D.S.C.); and Hikutaia further north c. 1942 (a few only, P.A.S.). There were odd parties near Tauranga (M.H. 1943, and 1944 J.O.). By 1945, the northern boundary had reached East Tamaki—Howick (L.A.B., 1946), though odd birds had been seen, never staying long, at Otahuhu (1/10/42, R.B.S.; 25/10/43, A.T.; 8/7/44, 20/11/45 and 11/4/47, 7 together, R.B.S.).

From 1944 to 1947 they were also appearing at more frequent intervals in the vicinity of Papatoetoe, and R.B.S. has given me 16 occurrences for Manurewa, Papatoetoe (flock 25, October, 1947, Mr. Gray), Tamaki East, Howick, Mangere, Buckland's Beach, Pahruranga, Westfield, Penrose, West Tamaki and Glendowie. At the same time birds were turning up in South Manukau, the first pairs breeding at Karaka in 1942 (I.U.). On the west Manukau peninsula, there appeared to be none at Waiuku (R.B.S.) or Awhitu and Orua Bay (B.C.B.) in 1942, but were occasionally seen here in 1947 (B.C.B.), and also at Waipipi 1945-46 (W.J.I.).

It will be seen that the birds have been lining up for a frontal attack just south of Auckland proper during the last year or two. A.W.P. received a report of a bird at Remuera c. 1944, but 1947 has seen the advance guards enter the city. In November, 1946, a pair bred at Panmure (D.M., L.D. and others), and subsequent records are: Three Kings, 1 seen 2/1/47 (T.L.); Auckland Domain, 1 seen 21/7/47 (T.L.); Hobsonville, occasional 1947 (R.B.St.P.); New Lynn, four, 2/9/47 (M.P.) Blockhouse Bay, two, 10/10/47 (F.W.); Northcote, reported 13/10/47 (E.G.T.); St. Heliers Bay, for the last three years, up to four at a time (W.H.B.).

Thus, by 1947, mynas were present and common over practically all the Waikato and Hauraki Plains and entering the southern suburbs of Auckland, e.g. Te Kuiti (W.F.I.H., C.C.H.P., J.M.C.); Waitomo, Kawhia, Te Awamutu, Parawera, Arapuni, Putaruru, Waingaro (P.C.B.); Morrinsville (N.T., F.G.S.); Te Aroha (F.G.S.); Paeroa (G.V.M.); Netherton (D.S.C.); Hikutaia, increased from a few to "hundreds" in five years (P.A.S.); Cambridge, Hamilton, Mercer (J.M.C.); and they could be seen in the country between all these towns. They still extended down the Awakino Valley in small numbers (J.M.C.) and as far south from Te Kuiti as Tangitu. From here there was a break to Okahukura, but there was a good number in Taumarunui (W.A.P.). I have no information from west of Huntly-Mercer, but they have been present in Clevedon and some six miles east for some years, and are some two miles south of Duder's Beach (H.R.M.). On the west side of the Firth of Thames none was seen until 23/5/43 (H.R.M., R.B.S.). Breeding started near Miranda in 1943-44 and there are now c five pairs. They breed as far north as Whakatiwai and have been seen up to Wharekawa North (five, 24/8/47, R.B.S.). They extend as far as Thames (W.P.M., R.B.S.) but no further (F.G.S.). They were not seen at Waihi Beach in February 1947 (J.H.C.), but were stated to be common at Katikati (J.S.W.). In Tauranga there were still only a few breeding (S.D.P., M.H.), and there were some, arrived within the last two or three years, at Te Puke (F.G.S., A.S.). The most easterly record in this area is from Pongakawa, c. 30 miles east of Te Puke (occasional in 1944, G.A.M.). In 1947 I saw one breeding in the Kaimai Bush, south of Tauranga, but none on the Bay of Plenty coast. On the Taupo Road they extend to just south of Tokoroa (J.M.C., K.A.W.) and on the Rotorua Road as far east as Fitzgerald Glade in the outskirts of the Mamaku Bush (J.M.C., H.R.M., K.A.W.) In Taupo, J.S.A. stated (30/10/31) "odd ones turn up every few years." He has only seen one since. At Rotorua they had not been recorded up to 1943 (M.E.F. and others). D.R. saw three at the Whakarewarewa Forest, 1946; R.B.S. and R.M. each have a record for 1946-47; and there is a report of two at the Ohau Channel, Lake Rotorua, in 1946. Two were reported to R.B.S. from Hamurana Springs, 1947, and R.M. was told of one here in March, 1948. He also saw two more in Rotorua at this time.

North of Auckland, they have not yet been reported. They are stated to be absent from Waiheke Island (P.A.S.), Little Barrier and Great Barrier (W.M.H.), and the Warkworth area (W.M.H., D.N.L.).

ROAD COUNTS.

Road counts have been furnished in a number of cases: the method is to count birds seen between the edges of towns. Those seen within the boundaries of towns such as Cambridge are omitted. In the smaller townships such as Putaruru, Tirau, a division is made in the centre.

Such road counts are not of great value in themselves except as a convenient way of learning the limits of range and making a journey of more interest, and can only be applied successfully to conspicuous birds such as the myna, magpie and harrier. However, in a number of cases where sufficient counts are available, I have shown the results below. Partial counts have been heavily culled and seasonal variations have been noticed. No apology is made for converting such small sample counts to figures accurate to a decimal place in the average. A perusal will show that there are three areas of density, viz., near Tirau, Huntly and Otorohanga. Even the casual observer can hardly but be struck by the numbers seen in these places.

| | Miles. | Counts. | Avg. | Highest Count | Avg. per mile. |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|------|---------------|----------------|
| Rotorua to East Mamaku | 14 | 4 | — | — | — |
| East to West Mamaku | 11 | 4 | 0.25 | 1 | 0.02 |
| West Mamaku to Tirau | 6 | 4 | 8.5 | 16 | 1.4 |
| Taupo to Atiamuri | 26 | 3 | — | — | — |
| Atiamuri to Tokoroa | 12 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 0.4 |
| Tokoroa to Putaruru | 17 | 4 | 8.5 | 17 | 0.5 |
| Putaruru to Tirau | 8 | 3 | 1.3 | 4 | 0.16 |
| Tirau to Cambridge | 21 | 9 | 22 | 57 | 1 |
| Cambridge to Hamilton | 13 | 7 | 4.3 | 6 | 0.33 |
| Hamilton to Ngaruawahia | 12 | 4 | 3.5 | 6 | 0.3 |
| Ngaruawahia to Huntly | 9 | 3 | 11 | 21 | 1.2 |
| Huntly to Mercer | 24 | 4 | 6.5 | 11 | 0.27 |

(Pokeno, Ruņciman, Papakura, Manurewa, Papatoetoe and Otahuhu have been taken as divisions in counts, but there are as yet insufficient to publish.)

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----|---|-----|----|------|
| Awakino to Te Kuiti | 47 | 4 | 3.8 | 9 | 0.08 |
| Te Kuiti to Otorohanga | 12 | 3 | 12 | 32 | 1 |
| Otorohanga to Te Awamutu | 18 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0.06 |
| Te Awamutu to Hamilton | 18 | 3 | 11 | 20 | 0.6 |

APPENDIX—INFORMANTS.

The names of those supplying information are as follow, their initials only appear in the text. (Correspondents of Mr. E. G. Turbott, and members of the King's College Bird Club are shown under their own names, and members of the society are shown with an asterisk):—Anderson, E. N.; Anderson, Miss S. I.*; Balme, G.; Bell, B. D.*; Bell, V. M.; Blake, W. H.; Boyne, S.; Brewster, L. A.*; Bull, P. C.*; Bunting, G. D.; Buttimore, B. C.; Carden, D. S.; Chalmers, P. C.; Chambers, F. D.*; Clarke, C. E.; Cunningham, J. H.*; Cunningham, J. M.*; Danson, E. W.*; Dephoff, L.; Fitzgerald, M. E.; Fleming, C. A.*; Gray, Mr.; Gunson, Lady J. H.*; Hamilton, Dr. W. M.*; Hawke's Bay Branch Royal Soc., members * Ornith. Sect. (H.B.R.S.); Hindmarsh, P. C.; Hitchen, S. R.; Hodgins, M.; Horton, B. R.; Hughes, A.; Hunt, W. F. I.*; Irwin, W. J.; Jones, J.; Kelliher, J.; Kemp, A. E.; Kemp, R.; Kennedy, D.; Keys, R. N.; Kimpton, B.; Kimpton, R. J.; Kirkham, C. W.; Lambert, T.; Lilburne, D. N.*; Maxwell, D.; Mead, W. P.*; Mends, G. A.; Metcalfe, Mrs. W. F.; Morrison, H.; Moss, A. A.; Murray, G. V.; McCrystal, R. J.; McDonald, Miss E. C.*; McKenzie, H. R.*; McKenzie, R.*; McWatt, B.; Oliver, J.; Palmer, C. C. H.*; Paul, W. A.; Philipps, W. J.*; Piper, Mrs. M.; Potter, D. B.; Potter, S. D.*; Potts, N.*; Powell, A. W. B.; Rees-George, J.; Robertson, Rev. F. H.*; St. Paul, R. B.*; Savell, A. A.*; Short, F. G.*; Sibson, R. B.*; Sigley, R. J.; Simpson, S. D.; Sorensen, J. E.; Spratt, G. A.; Stein, P. A.*; Stewart, D.*; Stidolph, R. H. D.*; Strang, D. N.*; Taylor, Mrs. P. J.*; Thompson, A.; Tily, Mrs I.*; Todd, N.; Trewith, B.; Tucker, W. N.; Turbott, E. G.*; Urquhart, I.; Waller, A.; Watts, F.; Wenham, H. T.*; Wickstead, R. H.; Wilkinson, A. S.*; Williams, J. S.; Williamson, Mrs. C.; Wilson, J. F.; Wilson, R. C.; Wodzicki, Dr. K. A.*.

SUMMARY.

1. This paper summarises the past and present (1947 and early 1948) distribution of the myna (*Acridotheres tristis*).
2. It is the result of an investigation carried out amongst members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and others—in all 98 co-operators took part.
3. In the Wairarapa the myna is confined to five towns and is probably dying out, or at most, barely holding its own.
4. In Hawke's Bay—East Cape the limits are from Dannevirke to the coast in the south to Te Araroa in the north. The population nowhere extends far inland into the hills and is more or less stable, being exceedingly numerous in parts.
5. In Manawatu—Taranaki the myna is not numerous south of Wanganui, though extending to Foxton. In small numbers up two inland watersheds, the northern limit is reached on the coast at Mt. Messenger. Numbers seem to be stabilised.
6. The aggressively expanding Waikato population is encroaching into the Auckland suburbs, and is bordered elsewhere at Tauranga, the Mamaku Bush, the Atiamuri Bush, Taumarunui and Awakino.
7. Mynas had disappeared completely from the South Island by the beginning of the present century.

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A VISIT TO FAREWELL SPIT.

By R. H. D. Stidolph, Masterton.

Farewell Spit, a renowned haunt of waders, had long held a vision in my mind of an ornithological treat in store and when I was on holiday in the Golden Bay district in October, 1946, by a fortunate set of circumstances I was able to spend a day at the tip of the Spit, beyond the lighthouse, in an area where the shore birds assemble at high tide. I never before saw so many interesting birds in one day, in spite of having fears that my visit might have been too early in the season to see waders in any numbers.

Probably no more prolific feeding ground for waders exists in any other part of New Zealand and it is some satisfaction to know that the whole of the Spit and its tidal flats have been proclaimed a sanctuary. Section 33 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal Act, 1938, declared an area of 4,397 acres of Crown land on the Spit as reserved for the preservation of flora and fauna, authorised the reservation by Order-in-Council as a sanctuary of areas between high and low water marks in the vicinity and made special provisions for the care and protection of all the areas. Since the legislation was passed the tidal flats concerned have been defined by survey and set apart by Order-in-Council as a reserve, a sanctuary for the preservation of wild life. Their area is some 23,300 acres.

I arrived at Takaka on the evening of October 8, and as a good augury of things to come, I was delighted to hear, from the hotel, the