

streams, often very close to busy highways, or on the town outskirts, provided there is heavy cover. It seems to be thriving and to be numerous locally. In spring and early summer it is not at all uncommon to meet old birds and parties of ducklings on the streams, and even in mere ditches crossing rushy paddocks. It is the principal, if not the only, species of duck shot in the lowlands around Tauranga.

**Black Teal (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*).**—A pair was seen several years ago swimming in a pool on the course of a rocky hill stream about ten miles to the south-east of Tauranga. This is the only record.

**Blue Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*).**—Common locally, though it has only been rarely met with swimming in the sea close around the base of Mt. Maunganui. Very large numbers are stranded on the beaches in certain seasons, either dead, or in a dazed and helpless condition. The period of stranding is usually December and January, and every year sees a moderate number washed ashore during these months. Now and again the deposit becomes greatly increased, as in December, 1943, when for an unknown distance east of Mt. Maunganui, the open coast was found to bear dead penguins at almost every three to six feet. This deposit was at least seven to nine miles long, and no heavier has been seen. The weather at the time was hot with little wind and practically no rough sea. At other times of the year it is rather rare to find any stranded, though some occasionally appear. Those alive when found are weak and inert, and hardly able or inclined to do anything or to escape. If actually put in the surf they sometimes seem able to swim away. In December-January, 1947-48 the number stranded was rather small; species of petrels greatly predominating in the strandings. The weather was in general considerably more windy than on the occasion of the very heavy deposit mentioned above,

In conclusion, my sincere thanks are due to Messrs. E. G. Turbott, of the War Memorial Museum, Auckland and R. B. Sibson, of King's College, Otahuhu, for advice and help, especially in relation to the identification of stranded specimens.

**ROTORUA GULL COLONY.**—A number of observations was made during the 1947-48 nesting season by several members whose reports are collated by J. M. Cunningham as follows:—The colony was on the rocky shore and islets opposite the Ward Baths, and on November 18 there were over 400 black-billed gulls (*Larus bulleri*) present. They had about 99 nests, 15% of them being two-egg clutches, the remainder one. Three days later the number had swelled to over 600 birds, and of the nests examined, 28% had two-egg clutches. Although the total nests was not counted, this increase in percentage is consistent with the assumption that the earlier-arrived birds were still laying, completing two-egg clutches, the new arrivals not having commenced to lay of course. Red-billed gulls (*L. novaehollandiae*) were also nesting, the nests being placed indiscriminately amongst those of the black-billed, but there were fewer birds. On November 18 there were 35, with 17 nests, and on November 21 there were 44 birds with 21 nests. There appeared to be no animosity between the two species, and although there were about a dozen immature (yearling) red-billed gulls near the colony, no immature black-billed were seen. (J.M.C., F. Murray and H. R. McKenzie). Mr. M. J. S. Black reported later that this whole colony was robbed, the eggs being taken away in tins by Maoris. The birds then moved east a little way and nested again. These eggs hatched but the chicks were slaughtered by vandals with sticks. Only one juvenile of this colony was seen later. A third attempt was made by a few birds at the original site, and on February 2, 1948, on the mainland there were 13 eggs and 9 chicks, mixed birds of both species. There were others on the islets. On February 20, on the mainland was one chick only, and on islet No. 1, 10 eggs and 26 chicks, nearly all red-billed. On islet No. 2, were two eggs and 17 chicks, nearly all black-billed (so apparently the birds had eventually separated mainly into two specific groups). (H.R.McK.) On this date, the evening tally at the roost was about 250 red-billed and about 750 black-billed. (R. A. Falla, M.J.S.B., H.R.McK.).