

## BIRDS IN NELSON PROVINCE.

By (Mrs.) E. M. Moore, Dunedin.

Last summer (1947-48) with my husband and two other members of the Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club I had a tramping holiday in the Nelson province, in the Whangapeka, Karamea and Taipo valleys.

The following observations were made during an eight-day return trip from Tadmor to the foot of the Little Wanganui Saddle, in the vicinity of Mt. Zetland, from December 29, 1947, to January 6, 1948. The rough nature of the country made it rather difficult to study the bird life thoroughly, and it was mostly when spells were called for and at camp in the evening and early morning that any records could be taken.

**Black Shag (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).**—Four were seen flying above the Whangapeka River about ten miles from Tadmor.

The riflemen (*Acanthisitta chloris*), tomtit (*Petrocia macrocephala macrocephala*) and the bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*) were plentiful throughout the trip.

**Pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*).**—Three were seen on the way up to the Whangapeka Saddle, and two near the head of the Taipo.

**Yellowhead (*Mohoua o. ochrocephala*).**—Six on Wangapeka Track, and songs were heard throughout the Karamea and Taipo valleys.

**Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*).**—Three in Whangapeka Valley and three in Karamea Valley.

**Robin (*Miro australis*).**—Five on Whangapeka Track and numerous in the Karamea and Taipo valleys. They would hop all over our packs whenever we stopped for a spell.

**Weka (*Gallirallus* sp. ?).**—Two at the foot of Whangapeka Saddle; three on the Saddle; 12 in Karamea Valley and five in the Taipo Valley.

**Blue Duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus*).**—Male, female and three young at the head of the Karamea, and one heard in the Taipo Valley.

**Paradise Duck (*Tadorna variegata*).**—One pair in the Karamea Valley.

**Kea (*Nestor notabilis*).**—Five in the Taipo Valley.

**Kaka (*N. meridionalis*).**—Two in the Karamea Valley and two in the Taipo Valley.

**Morepork (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*).**—Heard at night in the Taipo Valley.

Five strange birds were seen which were similar in every detail to the native thrush (*Turnagra capensis*) which later I saw in the Otago Museum, and the call was also similar to that described in books. As this district is rarely frequented I think it is possible that these birds were the native thrush.

The Heaphy Track between Collingwood and Karamea, was traversed from January 9th to 13th, 1948. It is approximately 60 miles in length and is mostly through bush with patches of open tussock country, and along the sea coast. The following birds were noted:—

**Kiwi (*Apteryx* ? sp.)**—One was heard on the banks of the Aorere River between Seventeen Mile Creek and Brown's River, and one at the Goulard Downs Hut.

**Tomtit and Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*),** both pied and black, were plentiful.

**Pigeon.**—Nine counted between Brown's River and the Goulard Downs Hut, and three from Goulards Downs to Lewis Hut.

**Bellbird.**—Seen and heard most of the way through the bush.

**Tui.**—Seven counted on the way to Perry's Pass.

Blue Duck.—Male and female and three young on Blue Duck Creek near the Goulund Downs Hut.

Morepork.—Heard at night.

Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus unicolor*).—Counted 21 along the coast between the Heaphy Hut and Kohaihai Bluff.

Black Shag (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).—Five along the coast between the Gunner and Kohaihai rivers.

Spotted Shag (*Stictocarbo punctatus punctatus*).—Eleven between the Heaphy Hut and Kohaihai Bluff.

Sea birds were very plentiful along the coast, especially towards the mouth of the Heaphy River, but we were unable to identify many of them.

## BIRDS IN TEMUKA DISTRICT.

By Crawford Pennycook, Timaru.

Observations on the breeding habits of the grey warbler (*Pseudogerygone igata*) and references to other species occurring in a small area between the Waihi and Te Moana rivers, in the Temuka district, are:—

### GREY WARBLER.

Aug. 24, 1947.—Nest found about 7ft. above ground in broom, entrance facing N.W. Thinking at first it was an old nest, the observers cut down the branch of broom; but when fresh moss was seen, as well as feathers in the doorway, they tied the branch on the bush again, this time with the opening facing east. Soon after, the pair of birds came fussing round with feathers, trying to find the opening on N.W. side. The nest was then turned round to face the original direction, and the birds almost immediately went in with feathers.

Aug. 30.—Nest seemed to be deserted. Found two other completed nests in gorse and a half-finished one, also in gorse; all about 7ft. from ground and facing N. to N.W.

Sept. 14.—The nest which had been cut down now has four eggs, so disturbance had not frightened birds away after all. The other two nests contained sitting birds which we did not disturb, while the one we thought to have been incomplete was still the same. (From observations made later in the season we concluded that this was an old one, not a half-built one.)

December.—No nests to be found, but several groups of warblers (up to 10 in number) observed daily in the willows. All old nests appeared to be torn down so that they hung by one small piece, the "bag" being torn wide open.

January, 1948.—Though camped in this area for six weeks, we did not this year see or hear the shining cuckoo (*Chalcites lucidus*) as we did in the same area during January, 1946, and January, 1947. The families of grey warblers seemed to be very numerous.

Other birds noticed in this riverside spot, which is fairly thick with broom and gorse, were:—

Fantails (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*).—Several pairs. In August, 1947, we saw a pair (one pied and one black), nest building, both gathering punky rotten wood from fallen willows. On Aug. 30 we found the nest in a gorse bush about 4½ft. above ground level. While standing right by the nest, we observed the black fantail leave and the pied one sit on the nest, the change-over being made so quickly that we did not even get a glimpse of the eggs. Saw another two pairs, all pied, but did not find the nests.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) and Thrush (*T. ericetorum*).—Very numerous; many nests found in broom.

Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*).—In January, 1948, the place seemed alive with redpolls, and every other little broom bush in the open