

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

contained a nest, often at very low level. Incubation time, 11 days; the young birds left the nest in a further 12 days.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)—Found three nests on ground in long grass and grass-lined. We noticed particularly one nest with four eggs; when two hatched the other two were kicked out of the nest. When blown they were found to be infertile.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).—Seemed to favour willow and elderberry trees for nests at about 8 to 10ft. from ground.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*).—Observations of the goldfinch were not wholly successful as repeatedly nests were found torn up and eggs broken.

Wild Duck (*Anas sp.?*)—Frequented a flaxy swamp in the next paddock. Family of five half-grown ducks was seen on the river near the camp at dawn. Another family of seven ducklings was seen on a nearby stream.

Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*).—A solitary bittern flew up the river almost every day.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and **Ground Lark or Pipit (*Anthus novae-seelandiae*)**.—Not numerous; ground larks seen on stony beaches by riverside.

Harrier (*Circus approximans*).—Always two or three overhead most of the day.

Gulls (*Larus sp.*) and **Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*)**.—In late afternoon numbers of both flew over on several occasions; flying from inland towards the coast; very noisy.

BLACKBIRD'S NEST IN WASHHOUSE.—On August 8, 1947, a blackbird (*Turdus merula*) flew into the washhouse on a tour of inspection for a nesting place. A blackbird had built in the washhouse the previous year. On Sept. 22 the first egg was laid in the nest which was built behind a ladder against the wall of the washhouse. The male bird was very excited and made a great fuss and outcry. On Sept. 28 the blackbird was sitting on four eggs, and on October 10 two vigorous young birds were out of the nest and two much more feeble ones still in it. A second family was hatched in this nest. The male bird met an untimely death by dashing into the closed window (his usual exit), and falling stunned into a tub of water in which he was drowned. To prevent a repetition of this tragedy the birds were shut out of the washhouse. The female found a new mate, not so confiding as the former one, and a third nest was built on the ledge of a fence among the branches of an American pillar rose. Four young were hatched but were devoured by a wandering cat, which possibly accounted for the disappearance of most of the other young birds, only two (one a female) being known to have reached maturity. When feeding worms to the young, the parents were noted to break them into pieces before carrying them to the nest.—Mrs. J. A. Moore, Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club.

REVIEW.

Bird Recognition. Vol. 1; Sea-Birds and Waders, by James Fisher. Pelican Books. 190 pages, 86 illus., 77 maps and 72 charts.

A pocket book for field use, this publication is one of the best of its kind ever seen. It is a model of conciseness and its pages contain a wealth of information. There is an excellent illustration of every species dealt with in this volume. Distribution maps and "clock" charts provide a ready means of bringing out salient points regarding seasonal movements and breeding habits that would require many more pages of text to cover in the more orthodox manner. Habitat and field character keys add to the value of the volume, which is useful to New Zealanders as it provides aids in the identification of several waders and other migratory birds that occur in this country.—R.H.D.S.

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