

these birds are often to be seen winging their way across the sky towards evening in the summer.

White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*).—Common. They seem to prefer to dwell in the bluegum trees—perhaps because it resembles their Australian conditions.

Black-backed Magpie (*G. tibicen*).—Very rarely seen. We do not think it breeds in the immediate vicinity.

Thus we have recorded 17 native and 16 introduced birds which are more or less regularly found here, with 27 species, recorded by T. H. Potts and other early residents, which are now either extinct or very rarely grace our shores. So we conclude with an extract from a paper read by T. H. Potts in December, 1872, before the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, which expresses our feelings also in a better way than we could word them:—

“Living close to the beach in a sheltered nook in Port Cooper (i.e., Lyttelton Harbour) . . . it may be that I have been more than usually attentive to these wandering voices, since few woodland birds now frequent the slopes of our picturesque hills, like many other districts once clothed with stately trees and bright-leaved shrubs. Shade and shelter gone, bare stems with whitened tops remain, and point to the work of the ruthless bushman.”

BREEDING OF NATIVE PIGEON.—A native pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandia*) has been reared within 40 yards of my house. The nest was built in a young, densely foliated totara tree about 20 feet high and was constructed entirely of small twigs which the adult birds collected from a young rata tree within 20 feet of my house. (Both the totara and rata were planted by myself.) The nest was started early in November. Several months elapsed before I dare climb the totara to investigate for fear of disturbing the birds, and I seldom saw the adults go to the tree. At last, I decided to take a peep, and there was a chick, about the size of a Californian quail with pin feathers coming through on the wings. On March 6 the young bird appeared to be full grown and a friend took a photograph of it. I was away for a week and on my return the young one had flown.—A. R. Annabell, Waitotara.

NORTHWARD MOVEMENT OF RED-BILLED GULLS.—On October 24, 1948, during a visit to the Far North, I noticed for the first time a movement of the red-billed gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*). When we left Scott's Point at about nine in the morning we were passing small flocks of these gulls every few minutes, flying north, in quite a business-like fashion. I did not take any notice for a while as it is usual for birds to move about on the beach, but it became increasingly obvious that it was a definite movement northwards of these birds, so I stopped and watched them. They did not make any attempt to settle but just flew straight along the beach in small flocks from half a dozen to about forty; I estimated that there must have been between 2000 and 3000 pass during the day. No doubt these birds were making for the Three Kings Islands for nesting. A few pairs had nests without eggs on a rock at Scott's Point. Red-billed gulls feeding along the beach made no attempt to join the flocks en route.—R. H. Michie, Kaitiaia.

STARLINGS NESTING ON TRACTOR.—Last year, one or more starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) had an urge to nest in the open tool box of the tractor which, at night, is covered with a waterproof cover. Most mornings I would have to throw out a nest, and on one occasion an egg was laid overnight. The fact that the tractor was left in different paddocks did not interfere with the nesting, but I do not know whether the tractor appealed to starlings in different territories or whether the same birds faithfully followed it. Once, after a few idle tractor days, there were four eggs and another time most of the engine was filled with nesting material.—A. J. Hodgkin, Moa Flat, Heriot.