

where 15 years ago only odd pairs seen.—(E.D.) Two birds, Arthur's Pass, 29/5/49; one male, Lake Te Anau, 29/11/48.—(L.W.McC.) Amberley, a harrier, an old male, was reported killed by four magpies, being "severely knocked about"; both eyes had been gouged out. Leithfield, near Amberley, a young opossum was attacked in a willow tree by three magpies who tore pieces of fur out of it before it was rescued by two boys.—(L.W.McC.) Christchurch to Dunedin, 19/5/49, number seen from main highway was 316; numbers were noticed on the cross-arms of the power poles and it was noted that the birds were feeding on insects which had collected in the insulators. More birds were seen south of the Waitaki than I had previously recorded, showing this species is spreading south in great numbers. A friend at Te Moana reported that when power poles were first erected in the Mayfield district, Canterbury, large numbers of dead magpies were found at the foot of the poles, these birds having been killed through sitting on the iron crossbars.—(L.E.W.) Near Orari, 13/1/49, one chased a small bird which at first flew in a straight course trying vainly to outstrip its pursuer. When speed proved hopeless the small bird tried dodging, but was soon exhausted and caught.—(I.T.) Heard calling from several different directions; reported breeding for previous three years in this district, Waikouaiti, 13/8/49.—(L.G.) Heard, Pigeon Flat and two seen, 14/5/49. Their presence was viewed with much misgiving; first time seen in this vicinity, but for years has been steadily moving southward from Canterbury, where they are common.—(D.N.F.C.) Farming district of Knapdale, five miles north of Gore, solitary bird seen. From the close view I had of it, there seemed little doubt of its being a male of the white-backed species. From local inquiries I found it had been in the district since about December, 1948, but no one knew exactly how or on what date it arrived. As these birds have apparently not yet penetrated further south than Oamaru, the presence of this one here is interesting and, in a measure, unwelcome.—(W.M.B.)

BLACK-BACKED MAGPIE (*G. tibicen*).—A magpie with a black band across the upper back appeared as a casual at Karaka on 2/5/49.—(D.A.U.) Numerous birds seen in various localities between Waipukurau and Hastings, 25/4/49.—(L.W.McC.) Near Pahiatua, 13/2/49, one seen by Dr. C. Cottam.—(D.L.S.) One seen with two white-backed at Raumatī South, 20/2/49; two old birds, Western Lake, Wairarapa, 18/6/49, the first seen here; one had the black band broken obliquely in the middle.—(J.M.C.)

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*).—Halswell, Canterbury, 13/5/49, flock of approx. 200 seen in a paddock.—(L.E.W.)

BIRD OBSERVATIONS IN TORY CHANNEL.

By Elliot Dawson, Christchurch.

Returning from Wellington after the Society's meeting and interesting field trip to Kapiti Island, I was fortunate to be able to spend some time at the Tory Channel whaling station, near Te Awaīti, in the Sounds district. The journey to the station and the return trip to Picton and the area round the station provided opportunity for bird observations which, while of not much value in themselves at present, give an indication of the relative numbers of species found in the area during this season. Every endeavour was made to avoid duplication in counts and estimates. (For scientific names see classified notes.)

Picton to Tory Channel (May 18, 1949).—

Little Blue Penguin.—Two swimming at Oyster Bay.

Fluttering Shearwater.—Six, Curious Cove; nine off Dieffenbach Point: 48, Te Rua Bay.

Large Black Shag.—One, East Bay; five, Erie Bay; one, Maraetai Bay.

Large Pied Shag.—Two, Te Weka; 13 in group on rocks, Oyster Bay; five observed singly, Oyster Bay; one, Maraetai Bay; one, Te Iro; one, Jackson Bay; one, Hitaua Bay; 12 in channel between Jackson's Bay and Whekenui; three in group on rocks, Whekenui.

Little Pied and White-Throated Shag.—Three, Te Pangu; one off Tekatea Point; two off Onapua Bay.

Spotted Shag.—Three, Te Rua Bay.

Gannet.—One off Karaka Point, Whatonga Bay; one at Te Pangu.

Reef Heron.—One on rocks at Whekenui.

White-fronted Tern.—18 plus off Karaka Point, Whatonga Bay; 17,

Curious Cove; 3, Te Pangu; 110 plus, in channel off Te Weka; 16 off Tikimaeroero Point; seven off Ruamoko Point; one, Te Iro Bay; 11, Jackson's Bay; 3, Te Rua; two in channel off Te Awaiti.

Black-backed Gull.—Six, Curious Cove; two, Erie Bay; three, Te Pangu; three, Te Weka; two, Onapua Bay; four, Maraetai Bay; 15, in channel, off Maraetai; seven, Te Iro; eight, Jackson's Bay; two on Tikimaeroero Point; four, Hitaua Bay; three, Te Rua; 170 plus, in channel between Jackson's Bay and Whekenui with estimate of further 300 plus.

Red-Billed Gull.—Two, Curious Cove; two off Maraetai; one, Oyster Bay; one, immature, Tekatea Point; 15, Te Rua; 130 plus and c. 100 in channel between Jackson's Bay and Whekenui.

The remaining notes on the trip can be conveniently summarised thus:—

May 19, 1949.—In Whekenui Bay, 1 reef heron, 2 large pied shags, 1 kingfisher corpse, 1 blue penguin corpse, 1 red-billed gull corpse, torn by wild cats. In Okukuri Bay: One kingfisher, 1 harrier, 1 black-backed gull corpse. Puponga Point: One harrier. A clear area of Tory Channel was visible from the northern hill slope above Te Awaiti for a considerable distance, and the number of each species present could be counted, with the aid of glasses, with appreciable accuracy: Black-backed gulls, c. 360; red-billed gulls, c. 10; large pied shags (?), 14; white-fronted terns, 3.

May 20, 1949.—In Okukuri Bay: 26 black-backed gulls, including six brown-plumaged birds, at mouth of creek, south end of beach, a favourite haunt of these gulls; one reef heron on rocks with two large pied shags; a fishing boat came in with 115 plus gulls of both species flying round it with 12 black-backed gulls resting on water and five on shore by creek mouth.

May 21, 1949.—One reef heron at Whekenui. Fishing boat with 70 plus mixed gulls and 14 black-backed gulls from Whekenui.

May 22, 1949.—One gannet off seaward point of Okukuri Bay. Penguins (presumably blue) heard calling from rocky shore in eastern bay north of East Head, Tory Channel.

In bush (approx. 1580ft.) on spur rising between East Head, Tory Channel, and Otanerau Bay, Queen Charlotte Sound: A pair of yellow-breasted tits, male and female. Bellbirds commonly seen and heard. Pied fantails, common. Only one pigeon seen but many feathers and other traces. Pipit, common in open areas.

May 23, 1949.—From whaling look-out hut, 250 feet above sea, on West Head, Tory Channel: 18 fluttering shearwaters, off West Head; 15 white-fronted terns; 2 albatrosses (wandering?) at sea, due east of hut; 3 gannets, flying from Jordy's Rocks to West Head; another gannet, N.E. of look-out hut, at sea; c. 40 gulls (mixed) accompanying Tamahine as she passed through the Heads; 14 shags flying over West Head to sea towards dusk, possibly Marlborough shags. Blackbirds and skylarks seem to be the commonest introduced birds in open country at Whekenui.

May 24, 1949.—Whaling factory, Fishing Bay: 373 black-backed gulls in bay, about 90 of which were immature in plumage; one giant petrel, the first of the season, I think, although a large dark bird seen from a distance on the up-trip may have been this species, possibly the same bird; two wandering albatrosses, presumably those seen at sea on 23/5/49; one large pied shag.

May 25, 1949.—A dull overcast day with rain likely. Okukuri: In early morning, 358 black-backed gulls, 2 red-billed gulls, 1 large pied shag. On rocks between Okukuri and Whekenui, one white-throated shag; three large pied shags. The number of gulls at Okukuri increased by noon to c. 600.

Tory Channel to Picton.—

Little Pied and White-Throated Shags.—One near Te Awaiti; 4 on the islands at Te Awaiti; 1, Deep Bay; 1 in channel west of Tio Point; 1 near Clay Point; 1, Ngaruru Bay; 1 on Puke Point; 1 in cove on Wiriwaka Point; 2 pairs in same place, each pair with a pied shag (!); 1 on The Snout, near Mabel Island; 2 flying off Allport's Island.

Large Pied Shag.—Three near Te Awaiti; 1, Jackson's Bay; 2, Deep Bay; 2 off Clay Point; 3, Ngaruru Point; 2, each with two melanoleucos in cove on Wiriwaka Point; 1 flying near Wiriwaka Point; 1, Te Iro; 1, Dieffenbach Point; 1, East Bay; 1, Karaka Point.

Black-Backed Gull.—In Tory Channel, east of Okukuri and Puponga Point, 600 plus and c. 100. In channel off Te Awaiti and further towards Picton, 78. Three, Ngaruru Bay; 45 in Sound between The Snout and Wedge Point; quite numerous on waterfront at Picton.

Red-Billed Gull.—Three in Tory Channel; 18 in Sound between the Snout and Wedge Point; c. 50-60 on waterfront at Picton.

Large Black Shag.—One, between Mabel Island and Picton.

Spotted Shag.—One, near Te Awaiti.

White-fronted Terns.—22, in Tory Channel; two off The Snout.

Fluttering Shearwaters.—Two in channel out from Curious Cove; 4, Monkey Bay; 8, Whakamonga Bay; 1, off Karaka Point; 3, in Sound, near Allport's Island.

On The Snout, near Picton, a harrier was chasing four small passeriforme birds.

On the return trip to Christchurch, further gulls were seen along the east coast, including the following (There was a very strong wind blowing and the sea was very choppy):—

Black-Backed Gull.—Large groups, very common on beach at Mungamaunu, north of Kaikoura; two mature birds in group of red-billed gulls at Kaikoura. This species is very common all along the coast and of those seen a considerable number were brown-plumaged immature birds.

Red-Billed Gull.—110 in group on Kaikoura Beach; c. 200 fishing off Oaro. This is a common species along the coast also, but not so abundant as the black-backed gull.

The Tory Channel-Queen Charlotte Sound region would no doubt provide an interesting locality for detailed field observations on the *Phalacrocoracidae* with special reference to what might be termed the *P. melanoleucus-brevirostris* complex and the obvious resulting hybridisation. *P. melanoleucus* is a most convenient "lumped" species since many birds seen in this area could not be placed in one or other of the two earlier species, as described in Oliver. There is reason to believe also that a shag frequenting the Cloudy Bay region is a yet unrecognised species closely related to the Marlborough shag (*L. carunculatus carunculatus*.)

The bird life at the Tory Channel Whaling Station, when the season is in full swing, is of special interest with the great abundance of gulls, cape pigeons, giant petrels and occasional albatrosses, etc.

Mr. J. R. Eyles, who has been a regular whaler now for some years, as well as a keen bird watcher, has informed me that this season he saw an all white Cape pigeon (*Daption capensis*), possibly a true albino, at the whaling station. The silver-grey petrel (*Priocella antarctica*) has been recorded from here as an individual straggler for several seasons but I was not fortunate to see it during my stay.

The localities mentioned may be found in any standard map of the area, e.g., Queen Charlotte Sound, S. 16, N.Z., 1.63 360, Provisional.

NOTICES TO MEMBERS.

LIBRARY.—The society's library is now housed at the Auckland Museum. This is possible through the courtesy of the Director, Dr. Gilbert Archey, and of Miss Enid Evans, librarian to the Auckland Institute and Museum, who have kindly agreed, with the approval of the Museum Council, to accept the care of the society's library. Members requiring books on loan should note the address to which all applications should be sent: "The Librarian, Ornithological Society of New Zealand, care Auckland Institute and Museum, P.O. Box 27, Newmarket, Auckland, SE1."

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—Remittances should again be sent to the hon. secretary-treasurer, Mr. J. M. Cunningham. Accounts are sent out to all members whose subscriptions are due. It is requested that the accounts should be returned with the remittance. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the society, not to the secretary, and have exchange added. If more than the amount due is sent, it will be credited as an advance subscription unless stated to be a donation.

MEMBERSHIP.—A considerable number of members have become endowment members, and the extra funds thus realised will be used to the best advantage. Whatever time of the society's year (April 1 to March 31) new members join they are entitled to the current numbers of the Bulletin for a full year, viz., the July, October, January and April issues.

BACK NUMBERS.—All back numbers are available, the costs being: Volume 1 (numbers 1-11; supplement and index), 15/-; Volume 2 (numbers 1-8 and supplement), 10/-; and Volume 3 (numbers 1-5), 5/-; total 30/-. The balance of the current Volume 3 is received under the 1949-50 subscription.

RINGING SCHEME.—The arrival of rings from overseas has been delayed, and it is now unlikely that they will be available for use this nesting season.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT REGIONAL ORGANISER.—During the absence of Mr. R. B. Sibson in England, the duties of regional organiser for the Auckland district will be undertaken by Mr. J. C. Davenport, 718 Remuera Road, Auckland, SE2.

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