

CONTRIBUTION TO GANNET CENSUS.

XV.—HORUHORU, January 21, 1949.

By P. A. S. Stein, Auckland.

Fine, clear, very hot day. Light N. breeze. Very heavy swell with high waves. Too rough to land at 11 a.m. Swell had moderated by 2 p.m. Landed at south tip of island and clambered round to Central Terraces. Twenty-six adults took off as we landed and 26 stayed with young chicks. Most of the chicks were well into their second plumage (222) but 24 were still at the fluffy down stage (all white). Two of these were being fed by one adult. In addition there were eight naked chicks, six of which were under a week old. There were four eggs, two of which were hatching.

On the South Ridge were 7 adults, 66 second plumage chicks, 18 fluffy and 3 dead-looking eggs. The North Ridge had 43 adults of whom four stayed to shelter their day-old chicks from the sun. There were 70 second plumage, 12 fluffy chicks, and three eggs. The North Cliff chicks may have mixed in with this lot. Birds and weather had done a lot of damage to the vegetation and all separate nests had been trampled into a shapeless mess. We counted on the North Stack 15 adults, 60 second plumage and 10 fluffy chicks. It was too rough to get over to count the eggs. About half-a-mile to the N.E. we could see c. 150 adults floating, not fishing. There were three dead adults on the rock.

I have numbered the sections of the Rock from north to south as was done by C. A. Fleming in his account of 2/10/46 (N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 2, No. 5, page 109). H. R. McKenzie advises me that he meant to adopt this order in his report of 12/12/48 (N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 3, No. 6, page 159) but accidentally transposed the numbers. Fleming, McKenzie and I have decided to use the north to south order as given below. The figures in parentheses are those obtained by H. R. McKenzie and party. Those marked "large chicks" were in down except for something less than 5% which were going into second plumage.

| | North Stack I. | North Cliff II. | North Ridge III. | Central Terraces IV. | South Ridge V. | (near) | Total |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------|-------|
| Adults | 15 | | 43 | 52 | 7 | 150 | 267 |
| Chicks— | | | | | | | |
| 2nd Plumage | 60 | | 70 | 222 | 66 | | 418 |
| (Large) | (64) | (20) | (82) | (261) | (69) | | (496) |
| Down | 10 | | 12 | 24 | 18 | | 64 |
| (Small) | (6) | | | (6) | (3) | | (15) |
| Naked | | | 4 | 8 | | | 12 |
| Hatching | | | | 2 | | | |
| | (4) | | | | | | |
| Eggs | | | 3 | 2 | 3 | | 8 |
| | (25) | (7) | (6) | (58) | (15) | | (111) |

REDPOLLS (*Carduelis cabaret*) and STRAWBERRIES.—In 1941 I grew Royal Sovereign strawberries. There were perhaps 1000 plants which were covered with lin. mesh string net. The season was very wet and cold, but the berries swelled. When they were still hard and green, before any sign of ripening, the redpolls came in numbers and picked off and ate the seeds. I could see the berries going brown on top where they failed to swell, but they grew normally on the underside. When I went past the beds a few redpolls would fly up to the net from underneath and get through the meshes. On examining the fruit, I found the seeds had been taken out and the shells lying on the ground beside the berries. These fruits were useless and usually rotted on the side on which the birds had been working. This incident has not happened again, but for some years since I have grown a different variety of strawberry.—W. H. Davidson, D.N.F. Club.