

## WINTERING GREENFINCHES AT ROTORUA

The Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) is a rare breeder about Rotorua, but since the winter of 1958 real irruptions here occurred over a wide area from June to September; and 1962 was no exception.

On 29/9/62 we closely inspected two mixed flocks of passerines feeding on the lawns of the Memorial Park alongside Lake Rotorua. We estimated the flocks to contain:— 150-170 Greenfinches; 100-140 House Sparrows and 20-30 Chaffinches. A notable absentee was the Yellowhammer.

— M. J. S. BLACK  
— C. D. BLOMFIELD



## A CONCENTRATION OF GOLDFINCHES

On 28/10/62, at about 6 p.m., when motoring on one of the straights between Warkworth and Kaipara Flats, I came on what looked like stones on a shingly beach. For a hundred yards the full width of the road was covered closely with a gigantic flock of Goldfinches (*C. carduelis*). They were reluctant to fly. I slowed down and the air became full of them, both sides, above and underneath. Some hit the car and some hit each other when there was no flying space available. I should think by a well considered estimate that allowing fifty birds per running foot there would be fifteen thousand. The usual flock about here would number about one hundred. Why they would gather in such numbers at nesting time and sit still on a dry road gives food for thought.

This particular piece of road is favoured by Sparrows (*P. domesticus*) as a dusting area, there often being fifty to one hundred birds there in the late afternoon. For instance, on 11/11/62 at 5.45 p.m. there were the usual Sparrows, but no Goldfinches. On this occasion I did not see any. During the month following October 28th. I unsuccessfully watched for Goldfinches about the district and even the few present before that date appeared to have vanished.

— F. P. HUDSON



## SPARROWS AS BEE-EATERS

At Ashburton Domain on 13/1/63, I saw House Sparrows (*P. domesticus*) catching and eating bees at a wild hive in a hollow *Sequoia gigantea*. They usually flew to the lip of the hole, picked up a bee and flew down to the ground to break it up and eat it. About ten bees were seen caught by different Sparrows in half an hour.

— W. T. POPPELWELL



## COOTS IN HAWKE'S BAY

On the afternoon of 4/6/60 I visited L. Tutira with a friend who wanted to see some Black Teal (*A. novaeseelandiae*). But to my surprise some of the first birds we saw turned out to be ten Coots (*Fulica atra*) in a flock. It was their white bills that made us notice them. I was aware that Coots had been recorded at Lake Tutira before, but not in such numbers. As it was about 4 p.m. and the light was not good, we decided to return as soon as possible to make sure of what we had seen.