They obtain most of their food from the lake bed, often leaping from the water like a trout when they dive. They reappear on the surface dragging a bill-ful of water weed, which they shake up and down vigorously for several seconds. The portion that is held in the bill is generally swallowed; the rest is dropped back into the water, and whatever floats loose is quickly picked up off the surface. When they are swimming they may often be observed pecking at insects and bits of vegetation lying about on the water.

As swimmers I have seen no bird their equal; they can outdistance a Scaup with little effort. On one or two occasion I have seen them travel so fast through the water, that they almost swamped themselves with the wave of water that builds up in front of them. As they swim they bob their heads up and down, which seems to give them extra momentum, much like a runner moving his arms.

They seldom bother to fly, except when quarrelling with another member of their species. Then by dint of much flapping of their wings, they get themselves off the water, leaving their legs trailing behind. Their flight is generally not long sustained.

They have a screeching cry, which is not quite so ear-splitting as that of a Pukeko, but it is often kept up for a much longer period. I cannot say that I have found them to be as noisy as reputed. Their alarm note very much resembles the noise made by a cork when it is drawn from a bottle.

I have had no opportunity to observe their nesting. So far this season — it is now early October — the birds that are left do not seem to be showing any inclination to nest, as they are still keeping closely together in the same area.

— HAMISH LYALL

[On 27/10/63 a pair was feeding a brood of seven downy chicks. — Ed.]

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RED-CROWNED PARAKEET IN EXOTIC FOREST

On 22/2/62, Mr. C. D. Blomfield saw a Red-crowned Parakeet *(C. novaezelandiae)* in the centre of the 30,000 acre block of conifer forest, consisting mostly of Monterey Pine *(P. radiata)* at Mihi, about 20 miles south of Rotorua. He was able to watch the bird at close quarters, as it fed among the cones. This may be the first positive record of the presence of this species in a man-made forest.

This occurrence prompted me to investigate the potentiality of the exotic conifer forest in relation to the economy of seed-eating birds. For the following information I am greatly indebted to Mr. A. J. Buchanan, Officer-in-charge, Training Centre, N.Z. Forest Service, Whakarewarewa. Mr. Buchanan writes:

"The influence of birds on the forest is a scientific study on its own. Only the more advanced forestry countries (Germany, Sweden, France, Czechoslovakia and, now recently, Britain) have made a serious study of the problem. As we in New Zealand become more sophisticated, more attention will have to be given to this facet of forestry. The following species are the main plantings in exotic forests and supply the most edible seeds for birds:—

1. Monterey Pine *(Pinus radiata)*. From December to February, during the hottest days of the year, the seeds fall naturally from the cones of standing trees. The felled tree cones open any time of the

year after long dry periods, and when sun or fire open the hard resistant cone scales. Cones can remain on the standing tree for some years without shedding their seed.

2. Ponderosa Pine *(Pinus ponderosa)*, also called American Yellow Pine. Seed falls December-January. Felled tree cones may open any time of the year, during and after a spell of dry weather.
3. Corsican Pine *(Pinus laricio)*. Seed is shed during winter months, June-July.
4. Douglas Fir *(Pseudotsuga taxifolia)*. February-March.
5. European Larch *(Larix decidua)*. February-March. Like Douglas Fir the cone is soft, the seed being easily taken by birds. The cone is not retained long on the tree, as in the case of the Monterey Pine."

There are of course several other less numerous conifers, e.g. Thuya, Austrian Pine, Lodge Pole Pine, etc., which would doubtless contribute to the diet of seed-eating species, both introduced and indigenous.

— M. S. BLACK

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THE ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE, ANOTHER RECORD

In recording (Falla 1959) the occurrence of an Oriental Pratincole recovered in Nelson, I pointed out that Buller (1898) had undoubtedly been in error in recording the Australian Pratincole based on a specimen from Westport and that the record of Australian Pratincole should be expunged from New Zealand lists.

A third record in New Zealand of the Oriental Pratincole *(Glareola maldivarum)* can now be accepted as the specimen has been sent to the Dominion Museum. It was received from Mr. M. Macarthur, a resident Ranger of the New Zealand Forest Service at Stewart Island. Mr. Macarthur writes that the bird was seen apparently in an exhausted condition on the late afternoon of 29th April, 1963, on the rocky foreshore on the island of Tia off the mouth of Port Adventure. Seasonal muttonbirders were living on the island at the time. They picked up the bird but it died shortly afterwards and Mr. Robin Hopkins, a local fisherman, brought it back to Half Moon Bay and handed it to Mr. Macarthur, who prepared a study skin and determined by dissection that the bird was a female.

The specimen is in adult plumage similar to that of the specimen recorded from Appleby in 1959. Its Dominion Museum Registration number is D.M.10011, and the dimensions are:—

Wing 184; Tail 66; Tarsus 33;
Toe 25; Culmen 13.5;
Width at gape 13.5 millimetres.

REFERENCES

Buller, W. L., 1898: Trans. Roy. Soc. N.Z., 31, 23.
Falla, R. A., 1959: Notornis, 8, 5, 126-127.

— R. A. FALLA

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BATHING BY TUI

After a heavy shower of rain on the morning of 10/7/63, I observed a male Tui *(P. novaeseelandiae)* fly into the leafy top of a *titoki*, and dash about quite violently for five or six seconds in the dripping foliage before emerging. It again immediately flew into, or rather at, the canopy, and repeated the performance, doing this nine or ten times before being apparently satisfied that it was sufficiently wet. It appeared to be a novel or unusual method of taking a bath.

— A. BLACKBURN