

KOKAKO

The most notable of Mr. Merton's finds was a strong colony of Kokako in the Ahuriri River catchment. This valley has a heavily wooded basin of taraire/tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) bush. One bird was observed feeding on the young leaves of mapou (*Myrsine australis*) and the fertile fronds of *Lygodium articulatum*.

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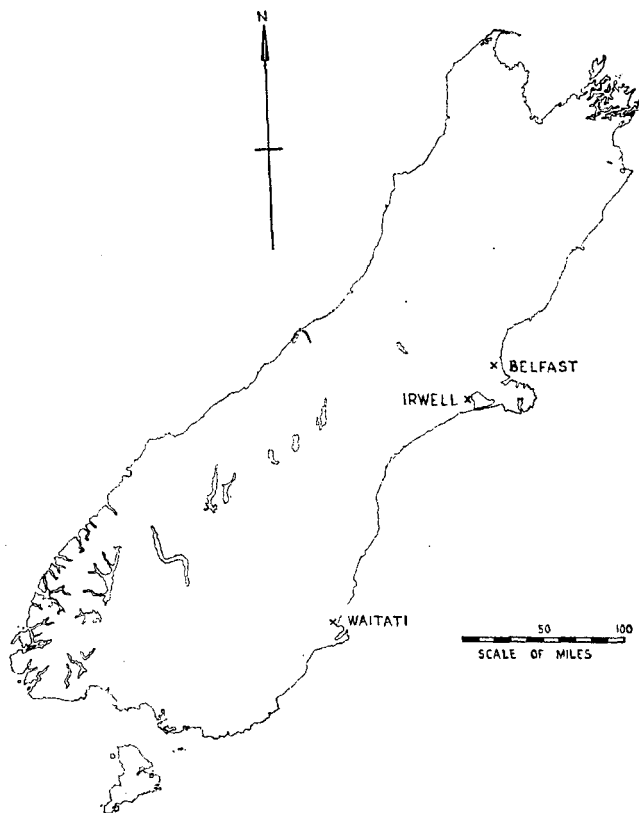
CATTLE EGRET: A SECOND CANTERBURY RECORD

By E. G. TURBOTT, Canterbury Museum

On 1/1/64 Messrs. A. G. McFarlane and J. G. Penniket, of Christchurch, on a visit to the Irwell district (about 25 miles by road southwest of Christchurch on the western shore of Lake Ellesmere) saw a buff-headed white heron, evidently a Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis*), with a dairy herd: I visited the farm on 5/1/64, and on this visit the bird was seen in full view feeding in shallow water at the far end of the field from the herd. It was wading in a shallow pool adjacent to the lake edge, and was feeding in the water in company with three White-faced Herons. When the four birds were at last disturbed the White-faced Herons flew off, but the Cattle Egret flew to the end of the field and settled on a fallen log near the cows.

The bird was in breeding plumage — white with orange-buff head and face (except for chin and area surrounding eye), throat, upper breast and dorsal train; the buff coloration formed a V down the sides of the neck and across the throat and upper breast; facial skin pinkish; bill yellow, with a faint dark portion at the tip; feet greenish-grey. The head was strongly crested.

According to Mr. A. Patterson, on whose farm the bird was seen, it was first noted in September when it was seen regularly for some weeks, but disappeared for a fairly long period probably in October, and has been seen constantly since its return at some time in November. It is usual for the bird to obtain its food from the grass close to the cows, but sometimes it has been seen feeding in shallow pools. It is tame, and has often been seen at close quarters. As the Cattle Egret previously recorded at Belfast, North Canterbury (Turbott, Brathwaite and Wilkin, 1963) was observed regularly in September, the bird at Irwell is clearly a new one.



CATTLE EGRETS AT BELFAST AND WAITATI: FURTHER NOTES

The Egret reported at Belfast (Turbott, Brathwaite and Wilkin, *ibid.*) was seen by a number of observers on visits between 28/9/63 and 26/10/63: the most interesting feature of these visits was that the bird was then in the process of changing into breeding plumage. On 13/10/63 Messrs. D. H. Brathwaite and B. Ellis observed it at close quarters, noting that a wash of very pale buff had appeared on crown, nape and hindneck; the same was recorded by Mr. J. R. Jackson and

the writer on 17/10/63 and the additional observation made that the bill showed dark shading and an overall distinctly pinkish tinge. On 26/10/63 various members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand taking part in a field study week-end obtained good views — the buff feathers on crown and nape had lengthened and the buff coloration intensified; the buff dorsal train had appeared and there was now a little buff on the breast. From soon after this date the bird deserted this farm — it had been observed regularly by the farmer, Mr. B. F. Johns, since May — and enquiries in the district provided no evidence of its whereabouts until 9-10/1/64 when a farm hand again saw it with Mr. Johns' cows; it had disappeared again, however, on 11/1/64.

As mentioned in an editorial comment on the record of the Cattle Egret seen at Belfast (Turbott, Brathwaite and Wilkin, *ibid.*), a "young" white heron thought probably to be a Cattle Egret had earlier spent some time in the Waitati Valley (approximately 17 miles by road to the north of Dunedin). I am most grateful to Mrs. L. E. Walker and Mr. John Allan for additional information on the record.

The bird was recorded at Waitati by Mrs. B. Kelly, who observed it during a period from March to May, 1963 (arrived in last week of March, last seen approximately third week of May). During this time it was seen regularly with a dairy herd adjacent to the fish hatcheries; it was seen for most of the time with the same herd, but would disappear periodically and enquiries by Mrs. Kelly did not produce any records from other farmers in the district. The bird could be approached as closely as 20 feet.

It will be noted that this bird was last seen at approximately the same time as Mr. Johns' first record on his farm at Belfast. However, experience of the Cattle Egrets so far recorded in New Zealand has shown that the bird's presence in a district may remain unrecorded, and it would be rash to credit the Waitati Egret with having moved quarters to Belfast.

I am much indebted to Mr. D. H. Brathwaite for drawing the map accompanying this paper.

REFERENCE

Turbott, E. G., Brathwaite, D. H., and Wilkin, F. E., 1963 — Cattle Egret: A New Bird for New Zealand. *Notornis* 10: 316.

[Correction: Mr. Wilkin's name was incorrectly given as "F. W. Wilkin" in *Notornis* Vol. 10, p. 316. — Ed.]

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NOTICE

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Beach Patrol Records for 1963 are now being analysed. Would people who have not sent in their 1963 records kindly do so as soon as possible to the undersigned.

B. W. Boeson, P.O. Box 30, Carterton.



[D. H. Brathwaite

XLVIII (a) — Cattle Egret: telephoto of the bird observed at Belfast, near Christchurch (taken 13/10/63, by which date it had pale buff crown, nape and hindneck).



[M. J. Hogg

XLVIII (b) — Pycroft's Petrel (*P. pycrofti*) on the forest floor of Marotiri (Big Chicken) in December 1962, when it was one of six species of tubinares coming ashore. Blue Penguins, tuatara and kiore also compete for burrow-housing.