

SUMMARY OF REPORTS ON N.I. KOKAKO 1962 - 1964

By M. G. MACDONALD

"Classified Summarised Notes" was an annual feature of the Society's publications until December 1961. In most of the lists published after the first Annual Report in 1939-1940, there is a report on the small colony of N.I. Kokako (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*) in the Hunua Ranges near Clevedon. Less frequently, there are references to observations in other parts of the North Island. Since the institution of the present scheme in 1962 (see *Notornis* Vol. 10, Nos. 3 and 4), a much greater volume of reports has been recorded for this species, and the summary of these presents a more comprehensive picture of the known range of the Kokako. In the following summary, reports contained in "C.S.N." have been included where appropriate.

While most of the reports received are the results of members' observations, a good deal of worthwhile information has been collected from local newspaper articles and from conversations with local people associated with bush work and sent in for filing. As will be seen from the summary, a useful feature of many of the reports has been the attempt to ascertain the actual number of Kokako in a given locality. Where this species is concerned, more information of this nature, rather than the recording of a generalised statement such as "widely distributed," could perhaps lead to some conclusions regarding the present population. More fieldwork is needed, but from the present incomplete state of our knowledge it appears that small groups of Kokako persist in many of the remaining bush areas of the North and Great Barrier Islands, the most promising parts being those above about 1000ft. on the N.I. west coast ranges from the Waikato southwards into eastern Taranaki and the King Country, and the areas in bush to the north of the Volcanic Plateau through the Urewera Country to the Raukumara Range. This order of localities has been followed, more or less, in the summary.

DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY

NORTHLAND:

Puketi Forest (west of Kerikeri). Kokako were seen in Sept. 1962 by R. Lawn, N.Z.F.S. (per A. T. Edgar).

Tutamoe Range (east from Waipoua Kauri Forest). A specimen from here was sent to the Auckland Museum (C.S.N., *Notornis* VI, 7, Jan. 1955).

CLEVEDON:

Moumoukai, Hunua Range. The usual numbers were present during the 1961/62 and 1962/63 summers (J. W. St. Paul).

RAGLAN:

Kokako Trig (1114ft., on Hakarimata Range to the north of the Hamilton-Raglan highway). Two Kokako were seen within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the trig in Nov. 1960 and on Feb. 5th 1961 (J. L. Kendrick). A dead half-fledged bird was found on Feb. 18th 1961 (L. Templer). In Mar. 1961, two birds were seen feeding

young at a nest 40ft. up in a kiekie clump (J.L.K.). An extensive search made in April 1962 failed to locate Kokako elsewhere in the Range (J.L.K.). Refer also C.S.N. VI, 7, Jan. 1956. *Bridal Veil Falls* (on Raglan-Kawhia road). Kokako were seen on many occasions around 1920 by J. L. G. Martyn, whose farm adjoins the Bridal Veil Falls Scenic Reserve, but they now "seem to have disappeared from this area" (N.Z. Herald, 15/9/62).

KAWHIA:

Te Rauamoa (on main Te Awamutu-Kawhia road, Pirongia Range). D. Jenner had a close view of Kokako in Oct. 1962.

Hauturu. A pair was reported by D. Norman in 1959 (W. S. Sutherland).

Oparau. A group, estimated to be eight in number, has been under observation by J. L. Kendrick since Aug. 1964 in the near vicinity of the Waikato Junior Naturalist Club Lodge.

Taharoa. On the track between the settlement and the Kawhia Harbour (south), Kokako were seen in Feb. 1962, and were in good song (J.L.K.).

MARAKOPA-WAITOMO:

Vicinity of Te Anga. Kokako have been heard here by T. Brown (per M. G. Macdonald), and two were seen by J.L.K. in May 1964.

Whareorino (2130ft. peak south of Marakopa). The activities of one bird were watched and the calls of others heard in June 1961 (J.L.K.).

Further report on the Kawhia-Waitomo areas appear in C.S.N. in VI, 3, Jan. 1954.

RANGITOTO RANGE (east of Te Kuiti):

One Kokako was photographed and others heard by P. McLean in the vicinity of Rangitoto Trig (2832ft.) near the headwaters of the Waipa River (per M.G.M.).

A colony was reported by M. Black (Feb. 1964) to be at Pureora Forest, but it was not found by a party which went to look for it (G. Yerex, Feb. 1964).

A. E. Beveredge records (1964) that an old bushman at Pureora Forest recalls having heard Kokako there frequently twenty years ago, but he has not heard them in recent years. However, a description of a Kokako was given to him by a logging ranger there in 1958.

An honorary Forest Ranger at Ngaroma, C. Bryan, reports presence of Kokako in that area still (A.E.B., 1964).

TARANAKI-WANGANUI:

Waitaanga (extensive bush area west of Ohura). Two Kokako were seen and heard by M. G. Macdonald near Kokako Trig (1711ft.) in Dec. 1962. A local resident (V. Till) has seen Kokako regularly at this and two other locations nearby.

A group of about 15 Kokako were seen by A. Machaado near Rerepahunu Falls in May 1955 (per M.G.M.).

A Kokako shot near Ohura in June 1964 was sent to the Taranaki Museum. Another was shot in the Tongaporutu Valley about Feb. 1963 (per M.G.M.).

Tahora. A small group at Skinner Hill (1483ft.) has been under observation by M. G. Macdonald, R. W. Macdonald and B. Tucker. Four birds were seen in Aug. 1962, one in Dec. 1962, and three in Sept. 1963.

Calls were heard at another locality nearby in Sept. and Dec. 1962 (M.G.M.).

Whangamomona. Calls, believed to be those of Kokako, have been heard at the school for some time (D. Capon, per M.G.M.).

Upper Waitotara River. Calls were reported by Wanganui Tramping Club members in 1960 (R.W.M.).

Wanganui River. In C.S.N. in Bird Notes I, 7, of Dec. 1944, W. P. Meads records that Kokako are present in some numbers near Pipiriki.

Calls have been heard near the Mangatiti Tributary, but not in recent years (R.W. M. 1964).

Egmont Park. Calls, suspected to be those of Kokako, have been reported recently from the western parts of the park (G. G. Atkinson and Dr. E. Gibbons, per M.G.M. 1964).

GREAT BARRIER ISLAND:

Many calls, indicating a fair population, were heard by J.L.K., D. V. Merton and J. Spiers in Oct. 1963 in the Ahuriri catchment, the neighbourhood of Mt. Hobson, and in a gorge near Miners Head, where two birds were seen.

COROMANDEL RANGE:

Waitehauri. Several Kokako seen by R. McKenzie and H. Morgan, and others heard in March 1949 (N.Z.B.N. III, 160).

Calls were heard in Wentworth Valley, behind Whangamata, in 1958 (F. Moresby, 1964), and a pair was reported at Papa Aroha (C. A. McCall).

BAY OF PLENTY - ROTORUA:

Mamaku. Kokako were heard and observed in Sept. 1962 on the track to the Mayors Waterfall, about 12 miles in from the Hamilton - Tauranga highway (J.L.K.).

Calls have been heard on the Mamaku Plateau "N.W. Opuiaiki Stn. and N.E. Mangarewa Stn." (per R. W. Jackson, 1964), and the bird is scattered singly or in pairs throughout the Mamaku and Kaimai Ranges (H. Lyall, 1964).

Kokako are reported to be in Orope Bush (Mrs. R. V. McLintock), and in the Mangarewa Gorge (F. Moresby, 1960), both between Rotorua and the Tauranga area.

Birds were observed in the late 1930's in Brakes Bush, between Oturoa Road and the Rotorua - Hamilton highway (W. H. Tong: N.Z. Herald, 1962).

Te Puke. Two Kokako were seen and more were heard by J. Armstrong in Jan. 1963 on a forest bluff behind Mr. T. Diprose's property on No. 3 Road (R. M. Weston, 1964).

Pongakawa Valley. Small groups of 3 or 4 were seen by J. Penniket on four occasions in 1943. One bird was shot (per R.W.J., 1964).

Rotorua Lakes. R.W.J. records a call near Hongi's Track (1964), from where there have been persistent reports in C.S.N. through the years. H.L. reports that the birds are distributed throughout the bush country to the east of Lake Rotorua.

H. W. Axbey saw two Kokako to the east of Lake Tarawera in 1949 (per H.R.McK.).

UREWERA:

Two Kokako were seen in Aug. 1962 at Tutaepukepuke clearing near Te Whaiti (M. J. Carswell, N.Z.F.S.). A persistent call was heard near Te Whaiti school about 24 years ago (J. Hill, N.Z. Herald, 18/9/62).

Kokako were sighted by a Mr. Price in June 1964 near Galatea "on a ridge above a deerstalker's hut and helicopter landing ground at a site between the Waiohau and Tangamoko Streams" (Miss V. Rucroft, per H.R.McK.).

Near Maungapohatu in Mar. 1962, R. M. Weston with K. W. Moore recovered a nest blown from a tree, believed to be of this species.

RAUKUMARA:

Motu. A group of 12 Kokako was seen in Motu Bush in 1959, but the bird appeared to be absent in 1963 (A. Blackburn). They have been reported from several areas near Toatoa and from many localities throughout the southern parts of the Raukumara Range (A.B.).

Tangitirau Stream, Raukokore Valley. One Kokako was seen by J.L.K. in 1961.

TARARUA RANGE:

One Kokako was observed by N. Simpson (Wanganui Tramping Club) in Jan. 1961 on the Tauwharenikau Ridge about 500ft. above Cone Hut (J. D. O'Brien, per B. D. Bell).

Nil Reports were received from the Regional Representatives in Hawkes Bay and Manawatu.



FAREWELL SPIT, APRIL 1965

By B. D. BELL

The high tide period of April 6 and 7 was spent on Farewell Spit, between the 6 and 12 mile, by a party including J. L. Kendrick, J. S. Adams, R. A. Anderson and the writer. The trip was planned to give wader experience to fellow wildlife officers. The trip proved so outstandingly successful in the number of rarer species seen that a short record seems called for.

The weather throughout was fine; there was a strong westerly wind on both days. The central sand flats of the Spit were mainly dried out, except for a shallow extended pool at the six mile and a few deep unattractive pools spaced along forward of the 12 mile. The tide was not a spring high tide; and two suitable roosting banks were available on the inside of the spit at the 2 and 12 mile respectively.