

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.

It was interesting to find that many of the waders had not yet left for the north but a high proportion had assumed breeding plumage. Two new waders were added to the list from Farewell Spit, namely American Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) and Wandering Tattler (*Heteroscelus incanus*). The former was found at the 12 mile on the inside of the Spit associated with godwits and curlews. Our attention was drawn to it by the call. It appeared slightly smaller than a godwit and was very alert. It did not take up the "camel" stance I had seen in Asiatic Whimbrels. We were able to flush it several times and were all quite satisfied that the back had the uniform dark pattern of the general plumage.

It was most interesting to find the Wandering Tattler as we had been watching two Grey-tailed Tattlers in the centre of the Spit shortly before crossing to the inside, where we found this other tattler feeding on the *Zostera* flats as the tide receded. The bird had to be flushed several times before it gave its distinctive trilling call. The two Grey-tailed Tattlers offered an informative comparison, as one was in eclipse plumage while the other was in full breeding dress.

Little attention was paid to the larger waders — Bar-tailed Godwits, South Island Pied Oystercatchers, Black Oystercatchers and Knots — as these tended to congregate on the outside beach and spits on the inner side of the Spit. Three Long-tailed Curlews were seen at the 12 mile. The most prominent wader in the section which we covered was undoubtedly the Turnstone and we estimate the number seen (supported by counts) at c. 400, of which 80% would be in breeding plumage. The other common species was the Banded Dotterel whose numbers we put at 200+.

However it was the variety and numbers of the smaller waders which made the scene. Of the northern migrants, with the exception of the Pacific Golden Plover, about 50% were well advanced in attaining breeding plumage. The figures shown are those for birds actually counted and are therefore the minimum number present as large portions of the Spit were not visited. However, from past experience, the area covered has proved to be the most productive: —Golden Plover 3; New Zealand Dotterel 3; Wrybill 3; Greenshank 2; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 12; Curlew Sandpiper 7; Red-necked Stint 25; and Pied Stilt 1.

In addition to the waders a few other interesting birds were seen and are worthy of note. At Freeman's pond at the base of the Spit 400+ White-throated Shags were counted when temporarily disturbed from their night roost. Between the 6 mile and 12 mile on the inside of the Spit 126 White-faced Herons were counted. This total was made up of two flocks of 96 and 30. At the 6 mile again on the inside of the spit 2 Royal Spoonbills roosted over high tide. As we were returning along the Spit a Pomarine Skua was seen flying seawards. Although only an occasional White-fronted Tern was noted the number of Black-fronted Terns (including a high proportion of juveniles) was estimated at 200+. At the 12 miles 7+ Welcome Swallows were seen. These were probably the same birds the Freeman family had seen about the base of the Spit for several days prior to our visit.

27 other species typical of the Spit were seen but the numbers were not recorded.