

So much, if very briefly, for the technical aspect of bird photography. But there is much more to bird photography than mere technique. Bird photography is a complex mixture of art, science, aesthetics, trophy-hunting, "escapism," and the desire to communicate, to mention a few of the more obvious ingredients. Above all it is something that requires honesty of presentation, scientific accuracy and a sympathetic regard for its subject matter. Without these the final photograph will satisfy neither its author nor its audience. It is not sufficient to be knowledgeable about photography (and it is against such, I suspect, that O.S.N.Z. members rail most), nor is it sufficient to be knowledgeable about birds; (indeed, in my experience, the supposed ornithologically knowledgeable person is often a greater menace than his more photographically minded counterpart); to undertake the photography of birds it is necessary to be knowledgeable about "bird photography," a skill in its own right and something that has to be learnt.

For those wishing to pursue the subject there are a number of books available. Particularly recommended are:—

"Bird Photography as a Hobby" Eric Hosking and Cyril Newberry.

"Bird Photography" G. K. Yeates.

"Bird Photography" John Warham.

In my opinion, one or other of these books is as essential to the bird photographer as is his camera, tripod, binoculars and hide.



SHORT NOTE

ROYAL SPOONBILLS AT MATATA LAGOON, BAY OF PLENTY

On 12/6/66, having learned of the presence at the above wild life sanctuary of three 'white herons,' we sallied forth from Rotorua to investigate the occurrence.

For a number of years there has been a paucity of *Egretta alba* in this region. Our party included two members of the O.S.N.Z., Wally Broun, his wife, Margaret, Max Black and wife, Muriel. Almost immediately on arrival we spotted two large white birds, which at first glance we took to be herons. They were feeding in the water along the opposite shore, just below the bridge. Their manner of feeding was quite unlike that of the heron tribe and more akin to that of Spoonbills (*P. regia*), and that is just what they proved to be.

As we watched them through 7 x 50 binoculars a Great White Egret came "out of the blue" and joined the Spoonbills. It also started to feed in the typical manner of its kind. The mode of stance adopted by both species whilst feeding is apparently diagnostic. In the case of *E. alba* the body slopes downward at an angle of c. 45°, but with *Platalea* the body stand is horizontal. However, the Spoonbill while at rest does assume a more heron-like attitude, as we have observed in the Manawatu Estuary at Foxton Beach.

This is not the first record of the Royal Spoonbill from the Bay of Plenty. In 1961, two were reported from east of Opotiki (*Notornis* 9, 240).

— W. J. BROUN

— M. J. S. BLACK