

AV19,112 is an almost complete skeleton from a limestone cave, Puketiti Station, 7 miles west of Pio-Pio, Waitomo County, AV17,412, almost complete skeleton from Prouses Cave, north of Paturau River, West Nelson. AV21,335 are mixed bones from a limestone cave near Canaan Road, Nelson. The only recent skeleton I have seen that in any way approaches *G. minor* is AV22,577.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- HAMILTON, A., 1893: On the Fissures and Caves at the Castle Rocks, Southland . . . .  
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 OLIVER, W. R. B., 1955: *New Zealand Birds* 2nd ed. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington, pp. 594-596.  
 SCARLETT, R. J., 1955: A New Rail from South Island Swamps in New Zealand. *Rec. Cant. Mus.* Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 265-266.



## SHORT NOTES

### THE "PORIRUA YELLOWLEGS" AGAIN

On November 11th, 1962, Dr. C. A. Fleming discovered a strange wader in the vicinity of Porirua, which was subsequently seen and repeatedly observed by numerous New Zealand and Australian ornithologists. On the basis of available evidence at the time, Fleming (1963) identified the bird as a Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*, and published his findings, together with photographs by I. G. Andrew, in "Notornis."

The evidence presented in Fleming's paper was commented on by Dr. R. A. Falla (1964), who suggested that the bird concerned could just as well have been a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*. Since then much discussion as to the identity of the above bird has taken place within New Zealand ornithological circles. Additional sightings of Yellowlegs in New Zealand were reported during the same year (Mackenzie, 1964, and Tunnicliffe, 1964).

An eminent North American ornithologist, Dr. R. W. Storer, Professor of Zoology at the University of Michigan and Curator of the university's Museum of Zoology, visited New Zealand recently to study the New Zealand Dabchick *Podiceps rufopectus*, as part of his comprehensive study of the grebes of the world. During his visit to Wellington, the writer had the opportunity to discuss with him *inter alia* the question of sight identification of the two species of Yellowlegs in the field. Dr. Storer pointed out that the best way to distinguish one Yellowlegs from the other in the field on sight alone (i.e. not including call notes), is by comparing the length of their bills with the length of their legs (feet). The length of bill of the Greater Yellowlegs is about as long as the bird's tarsometatarsus (tarsus) whereas the length of bill of the Lesser Yellowlegs is only as long as the exposed part of its tibiotarsus (tibia). This statement was checked on specimens in the Dominion Museum collections and was found to be correct.

This simple and straightforward method of identification was then applied to check the identification of the disputed Porirua bird, and for that purpose I. G. Andrew's photograph (Notornis 10: 279, plate XXVa) was used. The comparison of length of bill with the length of the bird's exposed tibia (and with the length of tarsus), all clearly discernible on this photograph, may indicate that the bird in question was a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (Gmelin, 1789).

#### REFERENCES

- FALLA, R. A., 1964: Notornis 11: 104-106.  
 FLEMING, C. A., 1963: Notornis 10: 258-262, 279, 280.  
 MACKENZIE, N., 1964: Notornis 11: 100-103.  
 TUNNICLIFFE, G. A., 1964: Notornis 11: 103-104.

— F. C. KINSKY