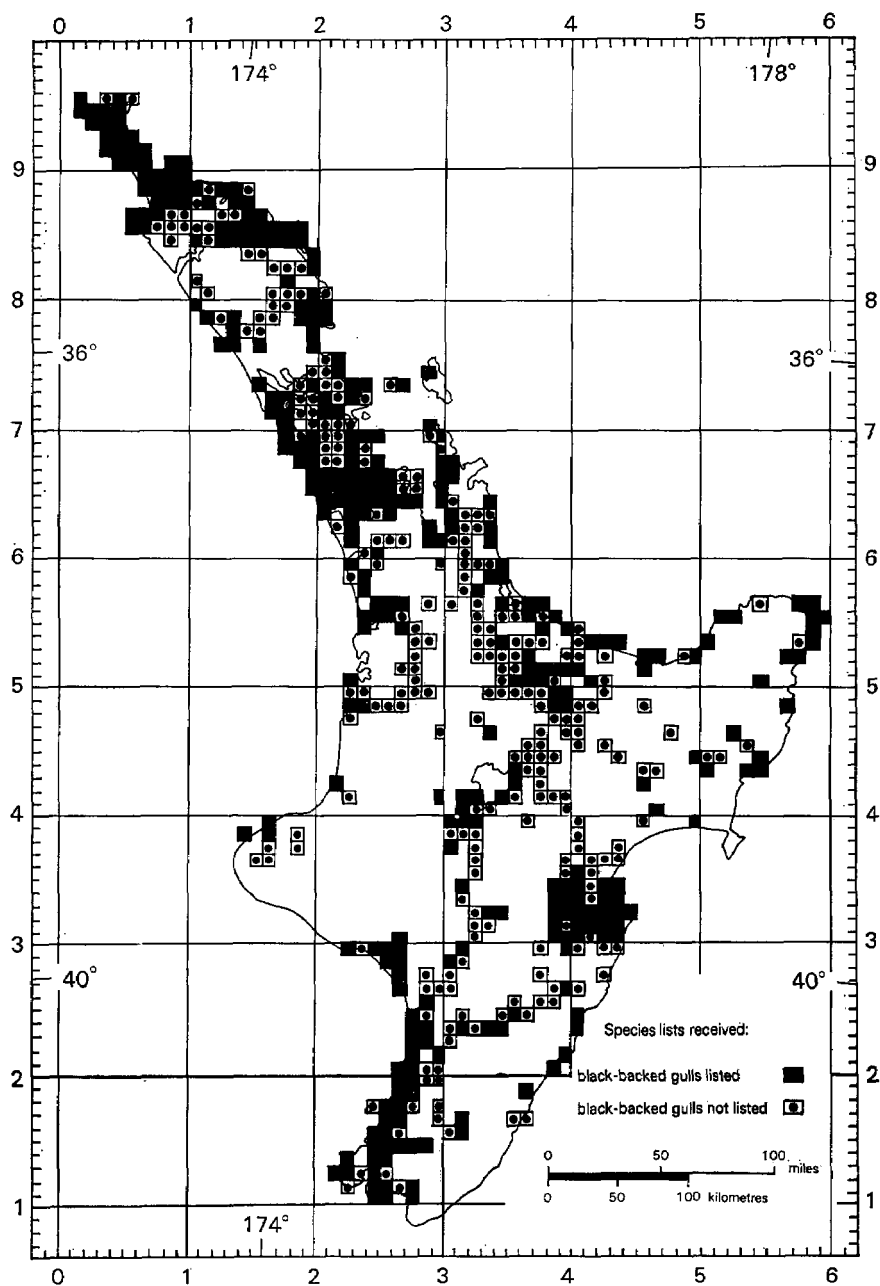


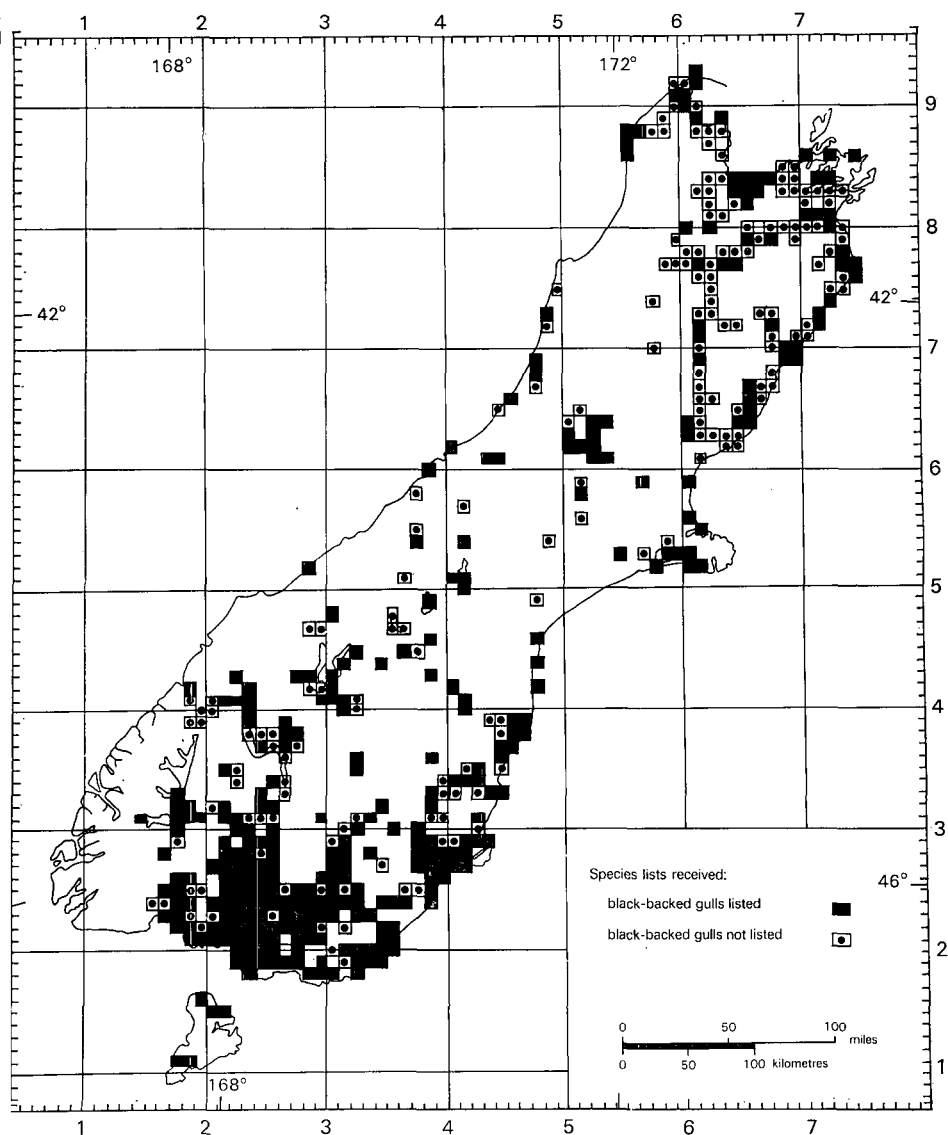
BIRD DISTRIBUTION MAPPING SCHEME REPORT FOR 1970-71

The bird mapping scheme, based on lists of species from the 10,000 yard squares of the National Grid, provides much needed information on the detailed distribution of birds throughout New Zealand; its success requires the active participation of a large and widely scattered group of people able to identify birds accurately. Some results of a two-month feasibility trial, and a general account of the scheme's purpose and methods were published in *Notornis* for September 1970 (Vol. 17, pp. 231-235). On this basis, Council accepted the scheme as an official activity of the Society for three years as from May 1970; after this, its future will be reconsidered. The main achievements during the past year have been the compilation of lists from many new squares and the printing of new stationery to facilitate field recording and subsequent analysis of results.

A total of 1061 lists of species, contributed by 102 observers, was added during 1970-71. By 30 April 1971, lists had been received from 29% of the 1599 North Island squares (up 8% since last year) and from 19% of the 2006 South Island ones (up 9%). The maps (Figs. 1 and 2) show the squares from which lists were available on 30 April 1971; several additional lists, compiled before this date, were received too late for inclusion in this report and have been held over for next year. Although several districts have already achieved very good coverage, more lists are needed, especially from Urewera-East Cape, Taranaki, Wairarapa, North-West Nelson, Canterbury, Westland, Otago and Fiordland. As coverage improves, progress will be slower because many of the remaining squares are difficult to reach or are in areas with few resident ornithologists. On present indications, greatly increased efforts are needed if anything like complete coverage is to be achieved within the next two years. To this end, perhaps some of the stronger ornithological centres will mount occasional week-end expeditions to areas that are too large to be covered by local observers. Good lists are always welcome from any square but, at least for the next two years, it is better to visit a new square than to go on searching for additional species in squares already well covered.

Although the main purpose of Figs. 1 and 2 is to show which squares have at least one bird list and which have none, the maps also indicate the squares from which Black-backed Gulls have been reported. These birds were present in all coastal areas from which lists were available and also at many inland localities scattered along the lengths of both islands. Although these findings are not particularly novel, the supporting data are more numerous and detailed than any previously published. Nevertheless, the available data still fall far short of what is required. For instance, many more lists are needed to establish whether any substantial areas are free of gulls or if there are well marked seasonal differences in the birds' distribution. Further, the plotting of mere presence or seeming absence fails to





differentiate between a square that has a large breeding colony of gulls and one in which someone once saw a gull passing overhead. These deficiencies will be overcome gradually as more lists are accumulated thus providing a better geographical coverage and permitting the plotting of distribution in terms of frequency of occurrence, season, or breeding.

New record cards and instructions for using them are now available from your Regional Representative or, failing him, from Mr. P. D. Gaze (Ecology Division, D.S.I.R., P.O. Box 30466, Lower Hutt); the new cards are of convenient size for field use, reasonably simple to complete and allow easy transcription of data for computer analyses. In the past, some observers were unable to find maps showing the 10,000 yard grid squares for their districts. Recently, however, several new sheets have been published in the NZMS 18 series (about 4 miles to 1 inch), and there are now comparatively few districts where lack of maps remains a serious problem.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The new record cards and the instructions for using them are the outcome of much discussion and field testing and I am grateful to the many people who assisted in this, especially Dr. B. D. Bell and Mr. C. J. R. Robertson. Mr. P. D. Gaze, Ecology Division, D.S.I.R., took over the despatch and receipt of cards, the tabulation of data, and the drafting of the maps (Figs. 1 and 2), which were later redrawn for publication by the Cartographic Section of D.S.I.R. The printing of the new cards and the Xeroxing of the instructions were arranged by Mr. C. J. R. Robertson of the Wildlife Division of Internal Affairs. Special thanks are due to the Society's Regional Representatives for organising and supervising the scheme in their districts and, last but not least, to the many people who compiled bird lists.

— P. C. BULL,

Organiser, Bird Mapping Scheme