

anchor gear. The last two shags were seen on the evening of 8 November at a position 39.9°S 170.3°E, some 160 km off Cape Farewell. By morning, land was in sight and presumably these shags made for the coast.

It is impossible to know if the same birds followed the ship across the Tasman but some of the behaviour suggests they may have. For example, the shags on occasions seemed content to swim near the ship while it was on station rather than to fly off. Also, the same sleeping positions were occupied each night, suggesting that the same birds returned to the ship. On occasions birds coming on board seemed exhausted and, while resting, were easily approached.

B. R. STANTON, *N.Z. Oceanographic Institute, DSIR, P.O. Box 12-346, Wellington North*



ADDITIONAL BIRD RECORDS FROM RAROTONGA

In his recent account of Rarotongan birds, Turbott (1977, *Notornis* 24 (3): 149-157) lists only three waders, which had all been previously recorded by Holyoak (1976, *Bull. Br. Orn. Cl.* 94: 145-150). My wife and I visited Rarotonga in August 1975 and noted two more waders.

Two Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) were seen in Natangia Harbour on 25 and 27 August 1975.

A Yellowlegs was seen on the reef at Avarua on 24 August and one in Ngatangia Harbour on 25 August. Since these birds are uncommon in the S.W. Pacific and unknown in southern Polynesia, the following identification data are provided from field notes. On both occasions the birds were estimated to be about the size of a Pied Stilt and rather larger than some Wandering Tattlers (*Tringa incana*) which were not far away in Ngatangia Harbour. The most conspicuous features were the long yellow legs, white tail, and mottled black/grey/white back. The beak was typically sandpiper-like and dark. There was a pale supercilium. The chest was dark, but one bird had a whitish patch beneath the chin; the abdomen and undertail were white. The wings were uniformly dark with no white patches in flight. Flight was rapid and erratic. On the shore they were busy birds and, when they ran, the tail bobbed. The call was a shrill piping. Whilst I feel that the records refer to the Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*), Dr D. T. Holyoak considers that the field description is inadequate to decide between this and the Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*).

Most of Turbott's records of land birds are from the northern part of the island. The following birds were either seen or heard in the southern part of the island.

White-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaethon lepturus*) — six birds around the cliffs of the prominent peak Te Kou.

Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra*) — at various places round the coast, but only the grey phase seen. One bird was disturbed 1 km beyond the end of the road up the Avana Valley (6 km inland) and flew further upstream.

Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*) — three in Ngatangiia Harbour.

White Tern (*Gygis alba*) — two birds near Ngatangiia and one near Titikaveka.

Pacific Pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*) — heard in the forest south of the Needle.

Rarotongan Fruit Dove (*Ptilinopus rarotongensis*) — one bird near a waterfall, Avana stream.

Long-tailed Cuckoo (*Eudynamis taitensis*) — one bird in forest remnant near Ngatangiia.

Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) — common everywhere in the coastal cultivated country.

F. J. TAYLOR, *Marine Research Laboratory, Leigh*



THE CIRL BUNTING IN MARLBOROUGH

The Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirrus*) in the Ward district of Marlborough is common but not conspicuous. Its size, manner of flight and its inconspicuous colouring, particularly of the female, do not make it easy to find. Since its size is about that of the Yellowhammer and Greenfinch, it is difficult to pick out at a distance when there are so many birds present of similar size. The manner of flight is almost the same as a Yellowhammer's but with a slightly more dipping flight just before settling.

From October through summer to April, male birds are easily located by their clicking or rattling call. Calling is usually from a tree but often from such high places as power wires and poles. I have not heard them calling from the ground but have seen one call from a Matagouri bush less than a metre high. In this district the calling of males may be heard occasionally from about mid-August, slowly increasing to regular calling by the end of October. The most consistent times for calling are early morning and late afternoon to dusk. Calls may be uttered up to nine times a minute. Calling seems to be territorial but the first bird calling in September 1977 appeared to have no mate so that his early start may have been to attract a female. From my general observation, males seem to remain spread on their territories throughout the year.

Other calls of the Cirl Bunting are a very high-pitched *see* from a bird that is perched, apparently unoccupied; also a contact chatter when adults are attending juveniles that have left the nest.