

deeper into the area would be necessary. Downstream there is heavy bush for fifty miles alongside the river. Upstream there are clearings, though much bush still remains. The robin also appears to favour the area where the bush is continuous, as in every gully we crossed downstream we saw or heard robins, whereas none was in evidence in the bush-covered gullies between clearings upstream.

[Confirmation of Mr. Mead's report of the presence of the native thrush in the Wanganui River district will be awaited with keen interest. It is unfortunate that a more precise and more detailed description of the bird's plumage and appearance could not have been given, sufficient to prove that the bird was the species it is believed to be, but the difficulties of doing so in heavy bush country are fully recognised. The omission of certain salient points precludes a definite conclusion about the identity of the birds from the description supplied.—Ed.]

## PAST AND FUTURE OF THE SOCIETY. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AT ANNUAL MEETING.

The president, Mr. E. G. Turbott, in his address at the society's annual meeting, said:—'It is of particular interest that tonight the secretary presents the society's tenth annual report. The first meeting was held in May, 1940, and this is, therefore, an important anniversary in the life of the society. I should like to initiate this annual meeting by referring briefly to certain aspects of the society's work—past and future. In thinking of this I have found it interesting to read again the brief paragraph in our constitution which originally gave the society's aims and objects and was repeated in our first publication: Annual Report No. 1, for 1939-40.

'The paragraph differs from most formal statements of aims and objects in that it is brief, and, I think, inspiring: 'The object of the society is to encourage, organise and carry out field work on birds on a national scale.' It goes on to state that the collecting of specimens is not one of the society's objects, and this sentence ends with a further telling phrase that the society is 'concerned with the study of living birds in their natural state.' I think that now, on its tenth anniversary, the society can claim to have progressed very effectively towards this end. If nothing else had been achieved it could at least be claimed that in these ten years of its growth the society has seen the craze for bird-watching 'catch-on' in New Zealand.

'Bird-watchers in New Zealand are perhaps a less varied assemblage than is the same group in Britain, where, according to James Fisher's well-known book, they range from a Prime Minister to at least forty-six schoolmasters! But from the first our membership has represented a wide cross-section of the community, all with a common interest in birds, although with their many different points of view. Bird-watching has been referred to as both a hobby and a science, and it is one of its chief attractions that, while retaining an all-absorbing fascination, it has a noteworthy contribution to make to scientific bird study. I wish to refer to this because I should like to express our special indebtedness to those who have held one particular office of the society—that of editor of our publication.

'The society has planned a number of co-operative investigations, some of which have proved too ambitious, and some, like the gannet census, which are going with a swing. I think, however, that our main achievement in the past ten years has been the steady recording in our early reports and 'New Zealand Bird Notes' of observations which have filled many gaps in our knowledge of the habits and distribution of New Zealand birds. In this our editors have set a particularly high standard, and the successive bulletins have, I think, given a lead to many observers who might not have passed beyond the stage of accumulating interesting but unrelated facts. Our thanks are due, in particular, to

Dr. R. A. Falla and Professor B. J. Marples—also respectively, the society's first president and secretary—who were joint editors during the extremely important period up to 1945; and to Mr. R. H. D. Stidolph, who has so admirably expanded and maintained 'New Zealand Bird Notes' since then, and who will, we hope, survive the impact of the new name to be proposed for the journal.

"In the early stages of the society in particular, the summarised notes were most important in drawing contributions from so many members. As the society and the status of New Zealand bird study moves towards maturity, it may have to be considered whether some of this accumulating material might not be better collated at longer intervals instead of being written up annually. It might be noted that the ambitious aim of the early summarised notes was to give each year an indication of the distribution and status of native and introduced birds. Subsequently, more general data on such aspects as breeding and migration accumulated, and the summarising of all this material is likely to be an increasingly difficult task with every year. Such thoughts as this indicate that the society and its journal have still perhaps not ended their growing pains.

"On the other hand, signs of maturity are the increasingly high standard of individual contributions to the bulletin; the initiation, with the ringing of the first bird on February 27, 1950, of our long-planned ringing scheme; the establishment of a Checklist Committee of certain members who have undertaken to draw up a revised check-list of New Zealand birds for the society; and, lastly, the natural growth in several centres of groups of our members who join as often as they can in field work and discussion, discussion interrupted, I may say, only by the impulse to leave again for the field. With these brief remarks I have much pleasure in welcoming you here again and in opening this meeting."

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BIRDS AT WAIMUMU BUSH, SOUTHLAND.—The following birds were recorded during a walk of about 1½ miles through bush beside the Upper Waimumu Stream, Hokonui Hills, 9 miles from Gore, on 29/1/49: Three wood pigeons, 3 rifleman, 6 fantails, 4 tomtits, one silver-eye and two small flocks of brown creepers, 5 plus and 10. Grey warblers were heard on four occasions. The weather at the time was very windy, and only three bellbirds were heard. Several days later, during a calm misty morning, many bellbirds were singing gloriously and continuously.—W. A. Watters, Gore.

ADVANCE OF THE ROSELLA IN NORTH AUCKLAND.—Fleming (1944: N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 1, p. 60 and map p. 59) gives the range of the eastern rosella (*Platycercus eximius*) in 1944 as extending north to Wellsford, and to Leigh on the east coast; there had been no records from the Kaiwaka-Maungaturoto district immediately to the north of Wellsford, or from the country bordering on the Kaipara Harbour north of Tauhoa. The following reports which I received from more northern districts indicate the extent to which the rosella is increasing its range. On 26th November, 1949, Mrs. J. A. Goodwin wrote describing two rosellas which she had seen at Maungaturoto for some weeks previously, with a sketch of one which had been killed by a cat. Mr. R. F. Graham has given me information from the Mangapai South district, some fifteen miles in a direct line to the south of Whangarei: the parakeet was first seen here in April or May, 1949, and has since been observed regularly. On the east coast, a member of the society, Mr. D. G. McMillan, reports that the rosella has been well established at Mangawai since 1946 when he came to the district; Mr. McMillan also mentions this bird's attacks on fruit. On occasional trips along the Auckland-Whangarei main highway between 1946 and 1950 I have observed the rosella only as far north as Wellsford-Te Hana, and have received reports from others who in passing along this highway have noticed it in the latter district.—E. G. Turbott, Auckland Museum.