

many years past, could almost have convinced us that this wariness was indeed a valuable identification means. Actually, I am sure that there is some value in this characteristic, as *N. p. variegatus* is without doubt very much more easily approached.

It is to be hoped that there will shortly be further opportunities in this country for other observers to study this fine bird. I cordially thank for assistance with notes and reference, Dr. W. R. B. Oliver, Messrs. E. G. Turbott, R. B. Sibson, P. C. Bull and C. A. Fleming. I am also deeply indebted to Mr. Turbott for a great deal of help with the manuscript.

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LANDING ON WEST KING.—I have recently returned from my sixth visit to the Three Kings and at last managed to land and spend five hours on the previously unexplored West King. As I was collecting snails and botanical specimens I did not have time to sit down and look for the different birds. And as is usually the case when moving rapidly through the bush, the bird life shifts away and is not observed. I did, however, see a number of bellbirds and red-fronted parakeets. It always seems to me that the parakeet on the Kings is a smaller bird than the ones on the Poor Knights and on the Alderman Islands. I found only one bellbird's nest, and a hollow tree where a parakeet had nested. The West King is a razor-back. One side is a 600ft. cliff and the other a steep bush-clad slope. Practically the whole of the soft soil on this slope is honey-combed with petrel burrows. I found one young fluttering shearwater but did not have time to investigate many burrows. Judging by the mixed variety of trees on the West King I should think that it would have a big population of land birds in addition to the thousands of petrels nesting there. On the highest point, which is 607 feet high, there is a colony of nesting red-billed gulls. I have never seen them nesting at this height before. The landing and climb up the West King was difficult and can only be undertaken under the most favourable conditions. The red-billed gulls are steadily increasing on the Great King and since the extermination of the goats some years ago, several new colonies can be observed nesting in the grass at the tops of cliffs. The gannets on the Princess Rocks show no difference in number, all available nesting places being occupied. On the South-West King there is a slight increase. Last year I first noticed an increase in gannets on the S.W. King and this year there is a still further increase of about 200 to 300 as far as I could judge. There were very few gannets fishing near the Kings. All the birds appeared to be going to and returning from the north-east so there was apparently little fishing for gannet at the Kings when I was there in January. In fact, from Auckland up to the Three Kings I did not see more than a few dozen gannets. The only bird life at sea between Auckland and the North Cape were thousands of prion. I saw several flocks in which I counted well over 100 birds. A few fluttering shearwaters and a few Buller shearwaters were also seen, but it was not until I was over 12 miles off the east coast that the two last-named were seen in any quantity. On my return trip, when within a few miles of Auckland harbour two sparrows flew into the cabin and took possession. They hopped around and inspected everything. They stayed aboard for over an hour and it was not until the yacht was moored and I was ready to go ashore that they departed.—Magnus E. Johnson, Auckland.

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BIRD TICKS—I would be very interested to see specimens of *Ixodes eudyptidis* the common tick on penguins round the N.Z. coast (little blue, white-flipped and crested). The males are especially desired and these are most likely to be found in the nests and not on the birds. Other bird hosts are cormorant (shag), black-fronted tern and red-billed gull. Specimens may be sent dry or in alcohol and should be addressed to Mr. L. J. Dumbleton, Entomological Research Station, Cawthron Institute, Nelson.—L. J. Dumbleton, Nelson.