

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF BIRDS IN N.Z.—VI.

BLACK-FRONTED TERN.

The photograph of the black-fronted tern (Plate IX.) at its nest in North Canterbury should be compared with that of the white-fronted tern which appeared in Vol. 3, N.Z. Bird Notes, facing page 200. The main differences of these two species in the breeding plumage are mentioned in the text accompanying the last-mentioned plate.

WHITE-HEADED STILT.

The study of the white-headed or pied stilt (Plate XII.) also photographed by Mr. K. V. Bigwood in North Canterbury, is an excellent one of this unmistakable bird, at once to be distinguished by its black and white plumage and very long legs. The stilt has increased in numbers in recent years and is to be found in many districts formerly clothed in dense forest. It is one of the native species that has benefited by settlement and is now widely distributed. Members should keep a watch for the black stilt, which, as the name suggests, is a black-plumaged bird. All records of its occurrence are of interest, as formerly it was more numerous, whereas now it is rarely seen.

WANDERING ALBATROSS.

The two fine photographs of a wandering albatross (Plates X. and XI.) which appeared in Waitemata Harbour on September 18, 1950, are reproduced by courtesy of the "N.Z. Herald." Reporting the occurrence, the "Herald" stated that the bird aroused considerable interest and that many of Auckland's "old salts" had never before seen an albatross on the Waitemata. The photographs bring out clearly the characteristic field marks of the species. Photographic details are: $\frac{1}{4}$ -plate Speed Graphic, 200th at F16. HP3 cut film developed in pyro-metol.—(R.H.D.S.)

STILT AT BROTHERS LIGHTHOUSE.—The occurrence of a stilt at The Brothers, in Cook Strait, is reported by Mr. J. H. Sutherland, assistant-keeper. After a southerly storm on October 17, 1950, a stilt was found dead at the foot of the tower. This bird, he states, had not been seen there before. A good description of the bird, with measurements, was supplied, also an excellent sketch, which left no doubt as to its identity.—(Ed.)

BIRDS IN A FIG TREE.—On a morning in April, 1950, our two fig trees, only a few feet from the house, appeared to be a veritable bird sanctuary. Just as a matter of interest I noted the following, all within the branches at the same time:—Myna, 4; blackbird, 9; starling, 8; silvereye, 23; house sparrow, 18; grey warbler, 2; total, 64. Needless to say there were few ripe figs left for human consumption.—Noelle Macdonald, Howick, Auckland.

CONGREGATING OF BRONZE CUCKOOS.—Notes on the communal display of *Chalcites lucidus* ("Communal Display of the Shining Cuckoo," Watson and Bull, N.Z. Bird Notes, Vol. 3, p. 226) recalled an observation of an allied species, *C. basalis*, which I made near Corrigin, Western Australia, on August 4, 1946. My field note reads: "Found several of these birds associated in the forest. As the birds were moving from place to place I could not determine the exact number. There were certainly three, probably five and perhaps more. The birds were uttering an unfamiliar cry and from time to time would pursue one another." The unfamiliar cry was probably identical with a call I later described as a loud "Cheer-r-r-r," quite distinct from the usual mournful "Here!" or "Here it is!" Bronze cuckoos had appeared in the district in June and apparent adults were noted as late as the third week in November. Fosterers with fledgling cuckoos were observed during August, September and November.—Eric H. Sedgwick, Leonora, Western Australia.