

GODWITS AVOIDING HARRIER.—On April 1, 1949, on Ohiwa Harbour, Bay of Plenty, I saw a party of c 50 feeding godwits threatened by a harrier hawk. The godwits rose and flew low and straight to a party of c 25 black-backed gulls as if seeking protection. The move succeeded, the gulls driving the harrier away. It looked remarkably like a deliberate manoeuvre on the part of the godwits.—P. H. Basley, Ohiwa.

BIRDS AT PYRAMID VALLEY, NORTH CANTERBURY.—There follows a list of birds seen by Jim Eyles and myself at Pyramid Valley during February, March and early April, 1949, while we were excavating moa remains:—Black shag, one seen by J. R. Eyles. Paradise duck, (March), 6 in flight; 11/3/49, female at swamp. Black-backed gull, often flew over. Rock pigeon, feral, in the limestone rocky outcrops. Harrier, two seen at once and single birds at other times, which may or may not have been the same ones. Bush hawk, 3/4/49, one flew over, pursued by magpies which attacked it in relays; magpies also pursue the harriers. Pipit: Not uncommon on the swamp, which is dry in summer; up to six seen at once. Grey warbler: Several times heard singing but not seen. Yellow-breasted tit: One or two about; not plentiful. Fantail: Several pied and one black form (3/4/49 in plum tree) seen. Greenfinch: One nested in a pine outside our hut, but while we were away during the Science Congress week, some predator, apparently, got the eggs or young; nest was empty when we returned. Chaffinch: Several about. Goldfinch and silvereye: A few present. House sparrow: Plentiful. Yellowhammer: A few about. Blackbird, song thrush, starling: Some about, but not very plentiful. White-backed magpie: Plentiful, cheeky and raucous; valued by Mr. Hodgen, the owner of Pyramid Valley, as a useful bird. Pyramid Valley is in limestone country—on the left, looking up the valley, Amuri and Weka Pass limestone; on the right, Mt. Brown limestone, and in summer a glorious suntrap. The trees, nowadays, are mainly rows of exotic pines. As will be seen from the list, the birds there are mainly introduced ones. I was informed wekas (probably *Gallirallus australis*) and skylarks were not uncommon until the big snow of circa 1918, which wiped out nests. I think rodents may also have played a part. Hedgehogs, which are fairly plentiful there, would account for many larks' eggs.—R. J. Scarlett, Christchurch.

VISIT TO MILFORD SOUND AND LAKE MANAPOURI.—April 2, 1949: Near Mossburn huge flocks of paradise ducks were seen, and numbers of harriers and pukeko noted between Gore and Te Anau. April 5: Recorded at Glade House: Robin, 1; paradise ducks, 2; pied fantails, yellow-breasted tits, bellbirds, silvereyes. Recorded along the track by the Clinton River: Robins, 2; paradise ducks, 6; fantails, 12 mostly pied; yellow-breasted tits, 6; pigeon, 1; S.I. weka, 2; bellbirds, 2 seen, many heard; silvereyes; blackbirds, 2. Pompelona Hut, weka, 1. April 6: At foot of McKinnon Pass: Weka, 1; keas, heard, 1 seen on the Summit; paradise ducks, 12; yellow-breasted tits, 4. April 7: Quinton Huts to boatshed: Pigeons 2, fantails 8, yellow-breasted tits 4, riflemen 2, wekas 2, paradise ducks 2, bellbirds 2 and several finches. On the Arthur River beyond the boatshed were two blue ducks. Lake Ada: Kingfisher 1, pied shag 6, black shag 3, paradise ducks and 12 small ducks which were possibly teal, black swans 2 in flight; and on an islet in the lake about 12 small gulls too distant for identification. April 7 to 11: Milford Sound: Kingfisher 1, black shags 2, paradise ducks 4, pigeon 1, fantails, yellow-breasted tits, grey warblers, silvereyes, red-billed gulls and black-backed gulls. April 15 to 18, Lake Manapouri: Blue ducks 2 on a river at the head of the lake, paradise ducks, grey ducks, wekas 3, riflemen 2, fantails very numerous, yellow-breasted tits, silvereyes, grey warblers, bellbirds numerous, tuis and pigeons.—Miss M. Bayne, D.N.F. Club.

BIRDS IN MONOWAI DISTRICT, MAY 15-20, 1949.—At Borland Burn on May 15, four brown creepers were noted in young beech trees on the river bank. Parakeets (?sp.) were heard in numbers but only one a yellow-fronted, was seen close at hand. Two bush hawks were seen

near west branch forks. Yellow-breasted tits were common, as were pipits in manuka scrub near Monowai Settlement. Robins were common. Four pied fantails were seen investigating spider webs, etc., in exposed tree roots where a high river bank had been undermined by flood waters. On May 16, on the Lake Monowai-Mt. Cuthbert Track, parakeets (*sp.*) were heard in numbers. Three wood pigeons were seen and yellow-breasted tits were common on bush margins. In the same locality on the following day, no pigeons were seen: In a patch of undergrowth about six feet high, the following were seen: Yellowheads 4, silvereyes 2, and yellow-breasted tits, male and female. Parakeets were common in the treetops but not close enough for identification. Bellbirds were common in the bush at all levels to the bush line.—B. W. Campbell, D.N.F. Club.

GANNET WITH EEL.—With Mr. Bernard Sladden, I was rowing on 5/9/49 on Ohiwa Harbour, Bay of Plenty. A gannet dived about 20 yards from our boat and came up with an eel about 18 to 24 inches long. The eel coiled tightly round the gannet's bill, preventing the gannet from getting at its head to kill it or to swallow it alive. After a struggle lasting for some minutes the gannet put its head under water and either lost or released its catch. It spent some time washing its bill before it flew away.—P. H. Basley, Ohiwa.

ROOKS IN FEILDING DISTRICT.—Periodically numbers of rooks appear in the Feilding district. Twenty-five years ago a colony was destroyed at Mt. Biggs, to the west of Feilding. Two years ago, Mr. Mason, nurseryman, of Sandon Road, Feilding, was compelled to destroy four which had been playing havoc in his nursery. The nearest known colony is in Hawke's Bay. This bird evidently crosses the Ruahine Ranges periodically, perhaps when Hawke's Bay is engulfed in a drought, to the greener pastures of Pohangina and northern Manawatu. It would be no surprise of a well-established colony was discovered at any time in this area.—E. Dear, Kopane.

GREY WARBLER AND EPEIRID SPIDER.—A grey warbler (*Pseudogerygone igata*) was recently (about mid-January) observed in the act of capturing a small epeirid spider (*sp. inconn*) from the centre of its vertical orb-web on the edge of a track through low scrub. To effect the capture, the warbler was hovering in front of the centre of the spider's snare with its wings vibrating so rapidly as to appear as quite undefined blurs: the poise and action of the bird were very strongly reminiscent of a hummingbird taking nectar from a flower, and, although not actually timed, the pose was held for approximately half a minute (by counting). The spider's snare was more than 18 inches in diameter, so the method of catching the spider adopted by the warbler was about the only one practicable. The observation was made from a distance of about three yards and every movement was distinctly visible.—H. C. Abraham, Mangonui.

SONG THRUSH EATING GREEN BUG.—A young song thrush (*Turdus ericetorum*) was observed on January 30, 1951, from a range of about six feet, to capture a green bug (*Nezara viridula*) from a clump of verberna, take it on to the adjoining path and there devour it. In spite of the (to humans) extremely disagreeable odour emitted by these bugs when disturbed or squashed, the thrush displayed no sign of discomfort and hopped off gaily in search of more food, and has since been seen frequently apparently in the best of health. If it should be that the song thrushes are adopting *Nezara* as a new item of food it will be a blessing to all horticulturalists in North Auckland—and the thrushes should wax very fat!—H. C. Abraham, Mangonui.

MEMBERS HOLD PICNIC.—A pleasant picnic afternoon to which all local members of the society were invited, was spent at Kourarau Dam, Wairarapa, on February 11, 1951. Five car loads enabled many members to see an abundant selection of wild fowl, including a pair of dabchicks and young, which have not before been known from the district.