

and carefully order their toilet before dropping down to their roosting places in the bare branches of a row of scraggy willows. This procedure seemed never to vary, except that on wet days they did not linger so long on the pine trees.

The first birds to come, being very light in colour, were apparently young ones, but later they appeared in all stages of plumage, from almost white to slaty-blue, but all with the characteristic white strips on the face. Unlike the blue heron, which always seems a doleful, solitary bird, they seemed a happy and playful crowd, and would spend hours chasing one another and twisting and tumbling in the air. This was particularly noticeable on wet or misty days.

They became more timid as their numbers increased, and although I tried many times to obtain a photograph of them, it was without success, as there always seemed to be a sentinel posted in some prominent place to give warning of my approach.

About the middle of June we had a series of severe frosts which covered the pools with thick ice, and it was amusing to see them all sitting along the sunny side of the trees, while at intervals, two of their number would fly down and hover, like helicopters, over the water, and then fly back to report "Water still unfishable." However, this was evidently too much for them and they moved off after a sojourn with us of almost four months.

The white ones were evidently made of sterner stuff, as they stayed on for another three weeks, their number by this time having increased to five; and five white herons sitting on the sunny side of a green pine tree is an unforgettable sight.

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KING SHAG IN MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS.—During a dredging expedition on m.l. Alert from 29/8/51 to 2/9/51, the following observations were made by R. K. Dell, C. A. Fleming and J. Moreland:—White Rocks, 31/8/51: About 70 birds, including several flying immature, very timid, none on nests; a few new nests visible were further west on ledge than in 1950. Stack, off Forsythe Island, 1/9/51: On penultimate of chain of stacks off west side, Forsythe Island, on a south-facing ledge, about 150 adults, 29 nests with young in various stages of down. No brown flying young seen. North Trio, 1/9/51: 95 to 110 birds including 18 feathered young which may not have been flying as they remained when the rest flew at approach of the vessel. Fifteen nests visible on slope. The Sentinel was not visited.

OCCURRENCE OF THE BROLGA (*Megalornis rubicundus*) in New Zealand.—From March to May, 1947, a large bird was seen and heard in the vicinity of Clevedon by more than 80 people. From a study of all reports, and comparison with museum specimens of a feather found, it is concluded that the bird was a brolga (*Megalornis rubicundus*). The feather appeared to be abraded at the edges in a manner suggesting it had come from a captive bird, but this damage had apparently occurred in the removal of the feather from the mud, into which it had been trampled by a cow. The brolga, a native of Australia, is frequently kept in captivity there, but careful inquiries have not revealed the presence of any of these birds at any time in New Zealand. Whether the occurrence of the bird, which has not hitherto been recorded in the country, can be accepted as a valid addition to the New Zealand list, will be a matter for the Checklist Committee to decide. Full details of the occurrence were published by us in "The Weekly News," July 18, 1951, page 38, "Mystery Bird Puzzles Observers—Australian Brolga Visits Auckland District."—(H. R. McKenzie, Clevedon, and J. M. Cunningham, Masterton.)