

habits the two birds also differ, the reef heron breeding among rocks on the coast or on islands, and occasionally low down in cavern-like places in trees overhanging the water, whereas the white-faced usually has its nests high up in lofty trees.

There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the greater number of birds now to be seen has resulted from natural increase or from an influx of birds from Australia, though it appears that there is an ecological niche in which this bird seems to be quickly establishing itself. It may be of some significance that there is also an apparent increase in the numbers of the white heron (*Casmerodius albus*) indicated by the many birds now seen in the period of winter dispersal. In earlier days it was an event to see a solitary white heron in any one North Island district; now as many as four and five may be seen on one lake or lagoon. The numbers now reported from both islands in the winter period suggest that there may be one or more unknown breeding colonies in addition to the one near Okarito.

REFERENCES.

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A NOTE ON FLUTTERING SHEARWATERS.—The fondness of fluttering shearwater (*P. gavia*) for inshore waters was demonstrated in rather a remarkable manner on May 21 at the northern end of Goose Bay, Kaikoura. To judge by the excitement of the gulls, mainly red-billed, with a few black-billed and black-backed, the sea around the rocks was swarming with some favourite food. Just outside the line of rocks, riding a smooth swell, were about three hundred fluttering shearwaters. From time to time they would take to flight, only to return shortly to the same place. It was then that I noticed that some of the shearwaters were swimming and feeding inside the outer fringe of rocks with swaying kelp on all sides of them. As they were scarcely half a chain distant from me I was able to see that they had two distinctive methods of diving. Sometimes the actual dive was preceded by a little leap out of the water; sometimes there was no leap but they half-opened their wings and seemed to push themselves under the water. Often on surfacing they stood on their tails and shook their wings as if to adjust the feathers. Such feeding close inshore would only be possible if the breeze were blowing off the land. On May 21 the wind was a light north-wester. It would be interesting to know if anyone else has observed fluttering or other shearwaters behaving in a similar manner when conditions were such that they could safely feed so close inshore.—R. B. Sibson, Auckland.

NOTES ON THE GANNET.—These observations were made from my sword-fishing launch, Lone Star, up to seven miles off-shore from Whangaroa Heads. I was out several days each week throughout the season. Records of young gannets seen are: January 27, 1951, 1; Jan. 29, 1; Feb. 9, 3; Feb. 19, 1; March 2, 2; March 3, 1; March 4, 2. All of these birds were flying north singly, not feeding and taking no notice of any adult birds which were at times in their vicinity. The adults took no particular direction. On March 12, one of mixed plumage (white breaking through) was feeding on piper. Although out in the ocean, it was not high diving but using the long slanting dive which is normally adopted when fishing in very shallow water.—T. M. Roberts, Whangaroa.