

A further visit to the area was made on April 14 by I. Tily and L. E. Walker and the following records were made:—

White-fronted Tern.—On the rocks at the extreme end of the Mole, 700 plus were seen. The pink flush was still apparent on the breasts of the birds but not quite so marked as on the previous visit in March. Birds were still in the process of moulting and there was a difference in the degree of greyness on some of the birds. Although a very careful check was made, no juveniles with the mottling on the wings could be seen.

Stewart Island Shag.—Seven birds of the bronze phase were seen in the water and two flying. Four birds with the alar bar and white dorsal patch were noted and one of these dived into the sea close to the observers. It came up with a red cod about 18 inches long in its bill and promptly swallowed it.

Buller's Mollymawk.—Five seen on the water off the stern of a small fishing boat moored close to the Mole.

Royal Albatross.—Six counted on the sanctuary.

Harrier.—Three on mudflats.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher.—On the mudflats, 150 plus were seen, including a partial albino.

Banded Dotterel.—A count of 55 plus was made but only over a section of the feeding area.

Bar-tailed Godwit.—Six feeding with some South Island pied oystercatchers.

Pied Stilt.—Fifty plus on the mudflats.

---

BLACK-BACKED GULL COLONY ON WAIRUNA PEAK.—On November 30, 1952, a friend and I visited a colony of black-backed gulls which is situated on the southerly slope of Wairuna Peak, South Otago. The colony is not far from the top of the peak which is about 1550 feet above sea level and probably 30 miles from the coast itself. On the shady side of the peak there are two or three more or less distinct, vivid green patches totalling perhaps an acre or two, and from a distance flocks of gulls are often to be seen hovering over them or else resting there. On our approach to the lower patch of rank green grass, we startled hundreds of mature gulls into flight and agitated squawking. Every few yards there would be a nest. We could not stand anywhere without seeing a nest within a short range in at least one direction. Some were vacated, but many contained one, two or three eggs. Soon we found that many of the vacated nests were really still being used but that the screaming of the startled parents had sent the chickens to the cover provided by the nearest available lush grass, which was usually right beside the nest. It was quite impossible to estimate just how many young birds there were burrowed in among the grass, and it was with difficulty that we managed to avoid standing on some of them. The young we found in all stages from hatching to chubby birds 6in. or 8in. high. The larger nesting site, 100 yards or so further up the hill, we thought contained a greater number of chicks in proportion to the yet unhatched eggs, and, although most of the chicks seemed to be bigger, we did see some small ones, and, indeed, it was here we watched one push out of its shell. All the nests were made of soft grass.—Haddon Taylor, Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club.

SILVER-EYE'S SONG.—Here is evidence of the silver-eye being an expert imitator. During October, 1952, it was noted that a hedgesparrow was singing lustily every morning in the garden. However, it was not until a closer inspection was made that it was discovered that the bird singing was not a hedgesparrow at all but a silver-eye. While the bird perched in a privet tree he preened and paused at intervals to utter the identical song of the hedgesparrow. Previously there had been a pair of hedgesparrows in the garden, but early in October they were observed in a neighbour's garden where they probably nested.—Noelle Macdonald, Howick.