

but the series is too small for satisfactory dimensional analysis, and the Lake McArthur birds have barely completed a moult. The significant environmental factors associated with the apparent cline could well be humidity rather than latitude.

Measurements of Three Specimens (millimetres).

No.	Sex	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.	Hind toe.	Culmen
		47.5	17	24.5	18	11
		49.5	18	26	21	12
		49.0	20	24	20.5	11

Treating the small comparative series from Arthur's Pass and Nelson as typical *X. gilviventris gilviventris* and giving extreme and average measurements, the result is:—

*X. g. gilviventris* (9 specimens).—Wing 50-53.2 (51.5), Tarsus 23-28.5 (26.5), Hind toe 20-24 (21.6), Culmen 10-11.5 (10.75).

*X. g. rineyi* (3 spec).—Wing 47.5-49.5 (48.7), Tarsus 24-26 (24.8), Hind toe 18-21 (19.8), Culmen 11-12 (11.3.)

The collector has recorded useful over-all measurements in the flesh of his specimens, those of the type being—total length 81mm., wing-spread 140 mm.

Summary of diagnosis of the subspecies *rineyi*:—Differs from *X. g. gilviventris* in average smaller dimensions except bill, which is less stout and tapers to a finer point, and in having upper parts uniformly brighter olive-green extending conspicuously on sides of neck; also more yellow in under-parts.

It is likely that the status of this newly-described form will be better defined when rock wrens in general are better known. Meanwhile, notes on habits and habitat preference being published elsewhere by Mr. Riney, appear to be of significance in establishing it as a distinguishable form.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Director of the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, for the loan of comparative material.

**PURCHASE OF BACK NUMBERS.**—Stocks of some issues of the Bulletin are nearly sold out, and members who wish to complete their files are urged to do so without delay. Prices are obtainable from the secretary. As there may be some members who do not require all the past issues, the council invites them to make these available to the society by returning them to the secretary. For those who desire it, payment is offered at prices fixed by the council.

**STOAT AND STILTS.**—On the morning of November 16, 1952, when passing at Taieri Mouth an area of swamp land covering about 20 acres and divided by a channel of water about the centre, we noticed that the area was dotted with pied stilts which appeared to be nesting. We stopped to observe them, and there the following incident was noted by M. E. Hickman (D.N.F.C.), J. Hickman (O.S.N.Z.) and myself:—Swimming strongly up the channel towards the area occupied by the stilts was a stoat. When it came to a bend in the channel where some rushes grew—the nearest covering to the breeding area of the stilts—it climbed the bank. The nearest stilts saw it, and, making a great outcry, flew at the stoat. All the stilts in the immediate neighbourhood joined in the attack, calling loudly and diving at the stoat, which seemed terror-stricken. It raced from rush to rush seeking cover, and, until it found adequate concealment, was followed by screaming, diving stilts. When the stoat was no longer visible, the stilts dispersed over the swampy ground, settling down on nests or hunting for food. There were at least 15 birds in the attacking party, and over 30 stilts in the area. Birds in the two localities further from the channel to the north and to the south did not join in the attack.—I. Tily, Dunedin.