

WET WEATHER AND STILTS.—On November 9th, 1952, a nest containing two eggs of the pied stilt was found in the thermal area at Whakarewarewa, Rotorua. By November 12 the number of eggs had increased to four and the birds had commenced sitting. The nest was on the ground in the open and within eight feet of a warm lake and a small warm stream. The weather during the nesting period proved to be very wet. Records taken at the Forest Research Institute, only about 300 yards from the nest, show that no less than 10.18 inches of rain fell on 22 out of the 26 days the birds were sitting. Several thunderstorms were also experienced during the period—one on December 7, just as the eggs were hatching, was extremely heavy and the rain was torrential. On one occasion (Nov. 14) there had been so much rain that the lake and stream overflowed their banks and it was only possible to observe the nest by telescope. Water completely surrounded and was lapping the edges of the nest which appeared like a small island. In spite of all this trouble, the birds hatched the four eggs. Chirping was heard from the eggs on December 6 but rain and the thunderstorm prevented observation on the 7th. On December 8 there was no sign of even a piece of eggshell at the nest site, but the parent birds were keeping close to a nearby mingimingi bush. The chicks were seen by telescope on subsequent occasions.—J. Johnson.

SILVEREYES AS FLESH-EATERS.—On June 6, 1953, on the Taieri River Mouth Beach, below high tide mark, was a dead sheep on which, under the overhanging wool on the shoulder of the carcase, were six silver-eyes feeding on the decaying flesh. I approached to within touching distance of the birds. They were very intent on their feast, and one refused to leave until I bent over to watch it more closely. There were no maggots present where they were feeding—O. R. Cartwright, Dunedin.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IRRUPTIONS OF BIRDS.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—I hope soon to embark upon an investigation into the occasional irruptions in the numbers of birds in New Zealand. The type of thing I will be interested in is, for example, the recent sudden apparent increase of the bellbird throughout the country, the well-known irruptions of the parakeets (cited by Oliver) in 1871, 1877 and 1888, and the apparently sudden changes in the local status of the weka (examples of which have been cited by Myers).

I should be very grateful, therefore, if members of the society (and any others interested) would supply me with any information they might have of any sudden and well-marked temporary increase or decrease in bird species (either native or introduced), the dates at which these occurred, the places and extent of the areas involved, and, of course, the species concerned. Any other information that may be thought of interest in this connection will also be gratefully received and acknowledged. The operative word in this investigation is "sudden." I am not especially interested in the slow increase or decrease occurring over a number of years that is consequent upon the establishment or threatened extinction of a species.—I am, etc., G. R. WILLIAMS.

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