

in 1943, partly because the author has been stationed in this district and knows it fairly well. A similar spread of magpies in other parts of New Zealand is shown by the many new records outside the 1943 distribution limits published in the annual summarized classified bird notes in "Notornis."

One fact which has struck me while travelling through magpie country in North Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Taihape-Wellington, Wairarapa, Canterbury and Otago has been the apparent association of magpies and sheep. Magpies seem to thrive in sheep country, whether it is pleasant green pasture of coastal areas, or vast sheep stations in the rugged back country of Hawke's Bay. To what extent magpies may be dependent upon certain factors generally correlated with sheep farming is not known. The main reasons are undoubtedly that the requirements of magpies are satisfied in most areas suited for sheep farming; it may be that their food is abundant in sheep-grazed pastures, and that their nesting requirements are met in the form of wind-breaks and plantings around farms.

Ornithologists and sportsmen living within the Rotorua District or visiting it, are urged to watch the appearance of magpies in new localities and to report such observations to "Notornis."

In 10 years or so it may be possible to map quite a different distribution of magpies in the area, and as the very limited distribution of magpies in the district by 1952 is known fairly accurately, it may be possible to correlate a further spread of the species with environmental factors and maybe arrive at basic facts in the spread pattern in magpies.

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WEKAS IN GISBORNE DISTRICT.—I have recently (May 1, 1953) returned from the East Coast, 20 miles north of Gisborne and ten miles inland. I found that the weka is there in considerable numbers. Every night during my stay of two weeks, wekas could be heard calling. The area is sheep country—grass hills with isolated patches of native bush. At a friend's place it was not uncommon to see six wekas walking on the lawn just before dusk, and earlier in the season six wekas and seven (three and four) chicks were seen on the lawn. At another homestead about five miles distant about a dozen wekas appeared on the large lawn in front of the house which is surrounded by a plantation of pine and native trees. The owner informed me that he considers that there are about 30 wekas in this plantation and that they are a great nuisance as they take the hen and duck eggs.—Magnus Johnson, Auckland.

LAND BIRDS AT SEA.—Last January (1953), when cruising in my yacht a pipit came aboard. It was very tired, but took some food and drink and recovered. Later it flew off and fell in the sea. When recovered it was dead. The yacht was 30 miles from the nearest land and on the west coast a N.E. gale was blowing. On another occasion when about six miles from Auckland a song thrush flew aboard at dawn. It appeared to be very tired and judging by its plumage was a young bird. It made several landings on the yacht but could not be caught. Later it left the yacht and was forced down into the sea by a black-backed gull, which swallowed it whole.—Magnus Johnson, Auckland.