

RINGING OPERATIONS.

SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1954.

Compiled by P. C. Bull, Lower Hutt.

The following is a statistical summary of the birds ringed and recovered during the past year. It includes a number of birds of various species outside the normal scope of the society's scheme, ringed by special permission of the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, and also some birds ringed with other than society rings, but details of which have been provided by the operators. No distinction is made in either case. Species neither ringed nor recovered this year, but included in last year's full summary (Notornis, Vol 5, No. 5) are omitted from the list below. The order of species has been changed from an alphabetical one to the order given in the new checklist, but vernacular names have been retained. All recoveries reported up to April 14, 1954, are included.

BIRDS RINGED AND RECOVERED.

(*Denotes coloured rings also used.)

Species.	Operator and Where Ringed.	Totals for 1953-54.		Grand Totals to 31/3/54	
		Ringed.	Recovd.	Ringed	Recovd.
ROYAL ALBATROSS	—	1	374	14
BULLER'S MOLLYMAWK—					
E. W. Dawson, Chatham Islands	44	—	44	—
GIANT PETREL—					
E. W. Dawson, Chatham Islands	18	—	19	2
FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER—					
R. B. Sibson, Big Chicken Island	27	—	27	—
SOOTY SHEARWATER—					
R. B. Sibson, Big Chicken Island	28	—	42	—
GREY-FACED PETREL—					
R. B. Sibson, Big Chicken Island	14	—	18	—
PYCROFT'S PETREL—					
R. B. Sibson, Big Chicken Island	4	—	4	—
GANNET			17	1685	35
P. A. S. Stein, Hauraki Gulf	633			
K. A. Wodzicki and F. H. Robertson, Cape Kidnappers	142			
PIED SHAG—					
Dept. Internal Affairs, Rurima Rocks, 1951	4	—	4	—
LITTLE BLACK SHAG—					
Dept. Internal Affairs, Rurima Rocks, 1951	2	—	2	—
WHITE-THROATED SHAG—					
Dept. Internal Affairs, Rurima Rocks, 1951	7	3	7	3
BLUE HERON—					
P. A. S. Stein, Hauraki Gulf	2	—	2	—
GREY DUCK—					
H. G. Warburton, Oruru, 1952	3	—	4	—
MALLARD DUCK (Cross)—					
J. M. Cunningham, Masterton, 1944	1	1	1	1
HARRIER			22	216	32
J. S. Watson, Hawke's Bay	41			
NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL			3	8	5
*H. R. McKenzie, Firth of Thames	3			

Species. Operator and Where Ringed.	Totals for 1953-54.		Grand Totals to 31/3/54	
	Ringed.	Recovd.	Ringed	Recovd.
BLACK-BACKED GULL		25	2021	76
G. W. Gummer and J. C. Davenport, Rangitoto Island	519			
W. R. Marsden, New Plymouth	3			
Mrs. O. Sansom, Bluff	12			
L. Gurr, Nelson	2			
*F. C. Kinsky, Baring Head	100			
P. A. S. Stein, Hauraki Gulf	20			
RED-BILLED GULL		63	687	83
L. Gurr, Nelson	52			
BLACK-BILLED GULL		10	1742	29
E. W. Dawson, Ashley River	513			
WHITE-FRONTED TERN		5	1542	49
E. W. Dawson and W. C. Clark, Lake Ellesmere	447			
*J. C. Davenport, Hauraki Gulf	42			
H. R. McKenzie, Firth of Thames	50			
CASPIAN TERN		-	9	-
H. G. Warburton, North Auckland	2			
BLACKBIRD		20	417	62
*P. C. Bull, Lower Hutt	77			
H. L. Secker, Wellington	30			
J. M. Cunningham, Masterton	2			
SONG THRUSH		4	100	14
*P. C. Bull, Lower Hutt	17			
HEDGE SPARROW		-	32	3
P. C. Bull, Lower Hutt	3			
SILVEREYE		4	4986	187
B. D. Bell, Blenheim	204			
OTHER SPECIES (Previous Years)			1154	224
Numbers ringed and recovered, 1953-54	3067	178		
Numbers ringed and recovered to 31/3/53			12079	663
Numbers ringed and recovered to 31/3/54			15146	841

RECOVERIES.

ROYAL ALBATROSS (*Diomedea epomophora epomophora*).

Bird No. A99, ringed as a chick at Campbell Islands by Mr. Sorensen, on 4/10/43, was recovered in Chile the following year. Full details are being published separately.

GANNEI (*Sula bassana serratator*).

Seven birds ringed as young at Cape Kidnappers have been recovered dead. No 15486 was ringed on 2/2/53 and recovered at Portland Island in May of the same year, and No. 15634 was ringed on 19/1/52, and the ring recovered at Cape Foulwind in September, 1953. The remaining five birds were ringed during the 1953-54 season and three of them were found dead at the breeding colony in March, 1954, a fourth (No. 19441) at Westshore (Napier), on 6/3/54, and the fifth (No. 19413) in Wellington Harbour on 13/4/54.

Ten young birds ringed at Horuhoru (Hauraki Gulf) have been recovered. No. 15785 was ringed on 5/4/53 and recovered on 4/5/53 at Nine Mile Beach, near Forster, N.S.W. (140 miles north of Sydney), and No. 15674, ringed on 22/1/53, was found one mile north of Wollongong, N.S.W., on 30/1/54. The remaining eight birds were ringed during the 1953-54 season and four were recovered in Australia, as follows: No. 19890, Port Elliot, South Australia, on 18/2/54; No. 20086, Korumburra, Gippsland, Victoria (18 miles inland) on 6/3/54; No. 19686, on beach between Port-

land and Nannawong, Victoria, on 13/2/54; No. 19862 landed on a trawler four miles off Twofold Bay, N.S.W., on 4/3/54. The remaining four birds were recovered in New Zealand, No. 19918 at Orewa Beach, Auckland, on 17/3/54; No. 19734, four miles north of Colville, on 19/1/54; No. 19678, near Manly, Auckland, on 10/3/54; and No. 19877, half-way between Thames and Paeroa, on 12/3/54.

WHITE-THROATED SHAG (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris*).

Three young birds ringed at Rurima Rocks, Bay of Plenty, on 8/10/51 by an officer of the Wildlife Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs, were subsequently shot, one near Edgecombe, on the Rangitaiki River, on 28/1/52, and two at Lake Rotoehu, on 2/12/51 and 30/1/52 respectively.

DUCK (Mallard-Grey Cross) (*Anas superciliosa* x *A. platyrhynchos*).

A duck reared by Mr. Cunningham in Masterton and liberated with a home-made ring at Mt. Bruce on 16/8/44 was shot on the Awatere River on 18/5/51.

HARRIER (*Circus approximans*).

Of 21 birds ringed in Hawke's Bay and subsequently recovered, seven were retrapped where ringed up to two and a half years after ringing, and 14 were recovered dead, nine within 10 miles of the ringing station, one 20 miles north-east of it (Apley), one 25 miles north-west (Waiware), two a hundred miles south (both near Carterton), and one 300 miles north-west (Dargaville). No. 15002, ringed at Turangi on 28/8/52, was shot at Rangipo Prison Farm on 1/8/53.

NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL (*Charadrius obscurus*).

Nos. 5906 and 5908 were colour-ringed at Kaiaua, Firth of Thames, on 13/12/53 when they were about 22 days old. Both birds were seen several times during the following March and April at Karaka on the Manukau Harbour, a distance of 26 miles overland from the place of ringing.

No. 5905 was colour-ringed as a young bird at Kaiaua on 7/12/52 and was seen four times during the following four months at various places on the eastern Firth of Thames coast between one mile north of Kaiaua and five miles south of Miranda.

BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus dominicanus*).

Twenty-two gulls ringed as young on Rangitoto Island have been recovered at various localities, viz., Rangitoto (3), Howick (1), Motutapu Island (1), North Shore (7), Auckland City and waterfront (6), Mt. Albert (1), Onehunga (2) and Waiuku (1). One of these birds was ringed during the 1951-52 season, 13 during the 1952-53 season and eight during the 1953-54 season.

Nos. 13823 and 13827, ringed as young birds on 10/1/54, near Waiheke Island, were recovered during March, 1954, at Henderson and Panmure respectively.

No. 13942, ringed as a young bird at Baring Head, Wellington, on 13/12/52, was recovered at Ohiro Bay five months later.

RED-BILLED GULL (*Larus novaehollandiae*).

The unusually large number of recoveries this year results from the fact that Mr. Gurr has been able to read the ring numbers on many of the gulls he has been studying in Nelson. Fifty-two gulls ringed on the Boulder Bank were subsequently identified in the vicinity of Nelson City in this way up to three years after ringing. No. 9538, ringed at the Boulder Bank, Nelson, on 9/1/53, was identified at Oriental Bay, Wellington, on 8/6/53, by reading the ring number without catching the bird. No. 9470, ringed at the Boulder Bank on 6/1/53, was caught and released at Tarakohe Wharf on 16/6/53, and No. 9548, ringed at the same place on 9/1/53, was found in a sick condition on the shores of Forsythe Island, at the entrance to Pelorus Sound, on 18/10/53. Six

gulls ringed at the Boulder Bank were recovered dead, two at Port Nelson, two at Nelson Aerodrome, and two at Picton.
No. 10043, ringed at Porangahau on 1/1/52, was shot at Whakahi Lake, Wairoa, on 3/5/53, and handed to the Wairoa Rod and Gun Club by a Maori.

No. 11358, ringed at Great Island, Three Kings, on 8/1/53, was found dead at Awanui Wharf, North Auckland, four months later.

A red-billed gull ringed with the East Coast colour combination, was seen by Mr. Secker at Lyall Bay, Wellington, on 9/1/54. The only gulls on which this combination has been used are some ringed by Mr. Cunningham at Castlepoint and White Rocks on 21/12/52 and 4/1/53 respectively. As the number on the aluminium ring could not be read this record is not included in the total recoveries listed in the statistical section of this report.

BLACK-BILLED GULL (*Larus bulleri*).

There have been ten recoveries this year from the many young birds of this species ringed on the Ashley River near Rangiora. Mr. Dawson has identified five by reading the ring numbers with binoculars; two birds ringed as young in November, 1952, were seen on the banks of the Avon in Central Christchurch, on 17/1/54, and three others ringed in 1950, 1951 and 1952 respectively, were seen at the breeding colony in 1953. The remaining recoveries were of dead or injured birds found at Kaiapoi (2), Port Underwood, Pukerua Bay (Wellington) and Lower Hutt, four to 24 months after ringing. The Lower Hutt recovery rests on the finding of the ring lying in a garden where seaweed had been used recently as a fertiliser.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN (*Sterna striata*).

Two birds ringed on the Western Firth of Thames coast in January, 1954, were recovered the following March at Waitakaruru and near Paeroa respectively, while a third bird ringed at the same colony in January, 1952, was recovered at Motuhi Island in March, 1954. Two birds ringed at Lake Ellesmere in January, 1954, were recovered dead at the colony two months later.

SONG THRUSH (*Turdus ericetorum*).

Two birds were retrapped and a third found dead at the ringing station (Lower Hutt), 12, 27 and 9 months respectively after ringing. A fourth bird was recovered dead half a mile away 18 months after ringing.

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*).

Eleven birds were retrapped at the place of ringing (Lower Hutt) up to two years after ringing. Nine birds were recovered dead within one mile of the ringing stations (Karori and Lower Hutt) up to 18 months after ringing; at least five being killed by cats.

SILVEREYE (*Zosterops lateralis*).

Four birds ringed in June 1953 in Blenheim were recovered dead less than a mile from the ringing station within a month of ringing, three of them being killed by cats.

SPECIAL RECOVERIES.

BLACK SWAN (*Cygnus atratus*).

A very interesting set of records of black swan recoveries has been received from the North Canterbury Acclimatisation Society. This society began ringing black swans at Lake Ellesmere in 1935 and may thus claim to be among the pioneers of bird ringing in this country. With a few breaks, the ringing was continued until 1952, a different colour being used each year. Unfortunately, the rings were not numbered and it is not known how many birds were ringed each year. For this reason the recoveries have not been included in the statistical part of this report.

The records consist of 34 recoveries of black swans ringed at Lake Ellesmere over the period 1935-1952. Four birds were recovered within a year of ringing, nine in the second year, three in the third, five in the fourth, five in the fifth, two in the sixth, and one each in the ninth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fifteenth year after ringing. The date of recovery of one bird was not known. Six of the birds were recovered at Lake Ellesmere, five at Lake Wairarapa, four at Lake Kaitangata, two in Hawke's Bay, two at Motukarara, and one each at Berwick Lake, Waitata Hatchery, Taieri River mouth, Waituna Lagoon, Lake Wainone, Marlborough, Lake Waiholo, mouth of Selwyn River, Cooper's Lagoon, Lake Waipori, Green Island Swamp, Greenslades Flat, Irwell, Carterton and Greenpark Sands.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the North Canterbury Acclimatisation Society for permission to publish these recoveries and to the Wildlife Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs to whom the records were originally sent.

Two recoveries of birds ringed outside New Zealand are of interest.

GIANT PETREL (*Macronectes giganteus*).

No. ANARE 2486 ringed at Heard Island on 6/1/53 by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition was recovered at Moki Island (near Stewart Island) in June of the same year.

AMERICAN PINTAIL DUCK (*Dafila acuta*).

No. 41-679296 ringed in California on 16/8/49 and recovered at Penrhyn Island, Northern Cook Group, on 15/11/49. Full details of this interesting recovery will be published separately.

VISITATION OF GLOSSY IBIS.

Towards the end of 1953, flocks of glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) appeared in Southland, Marlborough and Wellington provinces. The reports received follow:—

Southland.—On November 18 on Lake Hawkins, a marshy lagoon on reclaimed land, Invercargill Estuary, Mr. George Moffett, of Invercargill, and Mr. and Mrs. K. Bigwood, of Christchurch, saw a flock of "strange" birds and found them to be glossy ibises. Mr. Moffett and I have visited the locality frequently since then and have seen the birds on every occasion. Although they fly up and circle, they return to some part of the area. When the sun catches them the plumage has a reddish appearance; but from a distance they appear like a black curlew, which I think they have sometimes been called. They are always feeding when on the ground—busy all the time, like starlings. Many people here are interested in them, including two Dutch boys who know them from bird-watching in Europe. Yesterday, 29/11/53 there were 24 birds still there. This was the first count, on 18/11/53.—Olga Sansom, Invercargill, 30/11/53.

Marlborough.—First seen at Dillon's Point, Blenheim, by Mr. G. Holdaway on 13/11/53, about 16 glossy ibises were present for about one week and then departed. (These were identified by the Dominion Museum from a description sent in by Mr. Holdaway.) They returned to the same spot again on 6/12/53, when 16 were reported by Mr. Holdaway. (Eighteen were seen in the morning of 7/12/53 by the school teacher and school children from the Dillon's Point School, and five were seen the same evening by myself. The following dates and counts were taken by G. Holdaway with one exception: 8/12/53, 16; 10/12/53, 16 (Rev. Fr. Feehly, S.M.); 14/12/53, 18; 18/12/53, 18; 21/12/53, 18. This was the last date they were seen but the birds may have remained a few days longer as the pond was not visited for over a week. The ibis kept together near a swampy pond in the low-lying Dillon's Point area, between the