ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Grateful thanks are offered here to those members and regional organisers who collected and examined records in their areas. Particular mention must be made of B. D. Bell who forwarded 19 reports, J. C. Davenport (43 reports), and Mrs. P. J. Taylor who sent 11 reports. Acknowledgment is also made to all who contributed information in this essentially co-operative inquiry.

AN OBSERVATION ON SILVEREYES.—On October 31, 1954, I found a silvereye nest which was in an ideal position for observation. This nest, situated nine feet from the ground in a young miro tree, was almost entirely built of moss, horse-hair and spider webs. The nest contained three pale blue eggs. The first two eggs hatched about the same time before 4 p.m. on November 1 and the third egg hatched 24 hours later. A silvereye remained sitting for about a day after the third egg had hatched and on leaving the nest both adults made several trips to remove eggshells and excreta. On the tenth day in the nest the young were being fed about 263 times a day over a period of 14 hours. Visits were paid by both adults on an average every three minutes. Sometimes the chicks were fed twice in five seconds and on one occasion they were not fed for over 20 minutes. The adults, which remained at the nest for only ten seconds on each visit, fed the chicks on flies and caterpillars which were already broken into small pieces. The chicks were first fed at about 5 a.m. and last fed when the adults retired at 7 p.m. Some time before noon on November 13, the young left the nest, and supposing that the first egg hatched at noon on November 1st, the nestling period would not be less than 11 days 12 hours or more then 12 days. However, it is certain that the nestling period was almost exactly 12 days. At 5 p.m. on November 14, the three chicks were flying well, when observations ceased.—David Medway, New Plymouth.

INFORMATION WANTED ABOUT THE KAKAPO.—The kakapo is now a very rare species. Before active steps can be taken for its conservation as much information as possible must be obtained about its past and present distribution. A paper is being prepared on this subject and the author would be grateful for data which may be in the possession of members. Most of the readily-accessible literature has already been searched; what is particularly wanted now is first-hand information of birds seen or heard, references to anyone known to have seen them of recent years or in the past, and references to any accounts of distribution of the kakapo in out-of-the-way literature or diaries that members may know about. Please get in touch with G. R. Williams, Wildlife Division, Dept. of Internal Affairs. All assistance will be acknowledged.

BLACK-BACKED GULLS DISPOSE OF ENEMIES BY DROWNING.—Mr. A. L. Nugent witnessed, at Whangaroa, a savage encounter between a mated pair of black-backed gulls (**Larus dominicanus**) and a harrier (**Circus approximans**). The harrier accidentally dropped a partly consumed young rabbit into the sea near the shore. It seemed unable or unwilling to pick it up from the water. The two gulls took charge of the rabbit, gradually got it ashore and fed from it, each giving the other a turn as is usual with mated birds of this species. The harrier circled for some time, then made a sudden descent, frightened the gulls, seized the rabbit and rose with it. The gulls quickly rallied and made diving attacks in such a manner as to purposely force the harrier away from the land and over the sea, where it again dropped its prey. This time the gulls took the carcase into shallow water and fed on it, not allowing it to strand in case the harrier should be able to pick it up as before. After much waiting on the cliff-top, almost invisible, anger apparently overcame the harrier's hope of the gulls forgetting its presence and it plunged sharply downward to the attack, fastening its talons into the wings or shoulders of one of the gulls

and tearing with its bill at the gull's head and neck, also making very good attempts to lift it ashore. The other gull now entered the fray, working from the landward side to force the fight into deeper water. It grasped the harrier's head and pushed it under the water so that it had to release its grip on the first gull. Both gulls now concentrated on holding the harrier under the surface until it was drowned. Although the injured gull bled profusely and was very sick for a few days it eventually recovered. —H. R. McKenzie, Clevedon.

MAGPIES AT MARAKOPA.—In a letter from Marakopa, dated 23 May, 1954, my daughter Miss B. G. Fordham, informed me of the appearance at our farm at Marakopa, of a pair of magpies, which she first observed on the above date. Marakopa is thirty miles south of Kawhia, and I believe that this occurrence must be the first record of this species from that region. My daughter knows the magpie well, having observed it further south. During my 30 years' residence at Marakopa I did not see one nor hear of its presence in that district.—R. E. W. Fordham, Ngongotaha, 15 September, 1954.

REVIEWS.

Bird Migrants.—Eric Simms. Cleaver-Hume Press, Ltd.

All who have attempted to study the migration of birds will enjoy this well-written book, in which the author successfully presents in a popular way, the essential facts, insofar as they are known, and the problems of this branch of ornithology. Although the book is primarily concerned with British birds, it is none the less thought-provoking for New Zealand naturalists, because "the phenomena of bird migration cannot be regarded in a purely insular way."

In a valuable introduction, the author points out that the ordinary observer can collect accurate and much-needed information. A chapter on the forms of migration has some bearing on our problems in New Zealand, where migration is far from being a simple up-and-down, north-and-south affair. When the author discusses migration on broad and narrow fronts it is brought home to us how little is known about bird routes and movements in these islands. For example, would a patient watcher on Farewell Spit in the autumn be able to note a northward movement not only of waders but also perhaps of introduced passerines? Observations in recent years give grounds for believing that some harriers and many goldfinches and yellowhammers move in a northerly direction in autumn along the isthmus between Tamaki and Manukau. In spring flocks of skylarks and goldfinches in the fields, when local birds are paired and males and singing on territory, pose a problem which has yet to be solved.

This book can be read with benefit by all birdwatchers in New Zealand. The author ends with an appeal for keen and critical attiudes and skilled teamwork in dealing with observations.—R.B.S.

Bird Study.—The Journal of the British Trust for Ornithology. Vol. I., No. 1, March, 1954; Vol. I., No. 2, June, 1954.

This journal replaces the former bulletin, which ended its existence with No. 52. The new publication intends giving first place to the results of the Trut's inquiries but space will be available to the results of studies assisted by the Trust, to articles on general topics relating to research on birds and to reports of various organisations. The first number includes a paper on the breeding biology of the greenfinch by J. F. Monk, which will be of interest to New Zealanders, while David Lack writes on "Two Robin Populations." In No. 2, the loss of rings by marked herring gulls, by R. H. Poulding should be read by New Zealand bird banders. There is much of general interest in both numbers.—R.H.D.S.