

## PROBABLE WHITE-CAPPED (LESSER) NODDY IN KAIPARA

At the invitation of Mr M. A. Waller a small group of Auckland ornithologists visited South Kaipara Heads on 11/10/53. M.A.W. was soon describing a black tern-like bird which on the day before, during the rough weather which had prevailed at the time of the London to Christchurch air race, had flown in from the north-west and made a clumsy landing in a big Norfolk Island pine growing on the top of the cliffs. The bird was so tired that M.A.W. climbed the tree to examine it more closely. It was quite black except for a conspicuous white cap, and its long beak was like that of a White-fronted Tern. It was about the size of a prion or a little bigger. From this description there was little doubt that the straggler was either a Common Noddy (*A. stolidus*) or a White-capped Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*), with the evidence strongly inclining towards the latter.

On 21/11/54 another visit was made to South Kaipara Heads and through the courtesy of Mr E. G. Turbott, of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, M.A.W. was shown specimen skins of both these noddies. Without hesitation he picked that of *A. tenuirostris* as agreeing with the bird which had flown into his garden. This species has not previously been recorded from the mainland of New Zealand. It has a wide distribution in the tropics and breeds in some numbers at Norfolk Island, which well may have been the provenance of this bird.

R. B. Sibson

## NEW ZEALAND YELLOW BUNTINGS (YELLOWHAMMERS)

By Dr JAMES M. HARRISON, Sevenoaks, Kent, England

*Editor's Note:* In the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, vol. 74, No. 9 (1954), and vol. 75, Nos. 1 and 2 (1955), Dr Harrison has published an important paper, 'Remarks on the Taxonomy of the Yellow Bunting, *Emberiza citrinella* Linnaeus', in which he discusses geographic variation in this species throughout the Continent of Europe, and also compares a small series of New Zealand specimens with the European races. The subspecies recognised are: (1) *E. c. citrinella*—Scandinavian Peninsula, Western Siberia and Baltic countries. (2) *E. c. sylvestris* Brehm—central Germany, Switzerland, much of the Great Lowland Plain of Europe, Italy, south-western France and probably northern Spain and Portugal. (3) *E. c. nebulosa* Gengler—England, eastern and south-eastern counties. (4) *E. c. caliginosa* Clancey—Scotland, Wales and Eire, intergrading with (3) *E. c. erythrogenys* Brehm—Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, and eastwards into Asia Minor and western U.S.S.R.

Because the *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* is not readily accessible to New Zealand readers, and because Dr Harrison modified his original pronouncement upon the racial affinity of the New Zealand birds, we here reproduce the section of his paper dealing with the New Zealand skins.

'The introduction of the Yellow Bunting into New Zealand, about which there is unfortunately no exact information as to the source from which the birds were obtained, makes a detailed study of the characters of birds taken in the Islands of unusual interest and importance. I have been enabled to examine a small series of both sexes through the kind offices of Mr C. A. Fleming. The writer believes that it is most unlikely that the original stock were of British breeding birds, but that the birds would have been trapped in the non-breeding season, and may therefore have included a percentage of Continental immigrants.

A study of the characters the specimens presented bears this out. The males examined do not wholly match Gengler's race, *E. c. nebulosa* (*sensu stricto*), i.e. from the eastern and south-eastern counties of England. They diverge from that form in the following respects: firstly, in the rather small sample investigated, the mantles are variable, both in colour and pattern.