

AN UNUSUAL CASE OF ALBINISM IN A BLACKBIRD

By D. H. BRATHWAITE

Albino blackbirds are said to be not rare, and birds with varying amounts of white in the plumage even more common, though the bird depicted in the accompanying sketch was the first of either type ever seen by the writer. It may be unusual for the distribution of black and white on a partial albino to be so symmetrical, and the following notes and sketch may be of interest. The bird was first seen at the top end of Tennyson Street, Napier, on 2 September 1953. It was obviously a male, and when seen appeared to be engaged in a territorial display with a normal male. Subsequently it was seen fairly regularly in the same locality over the next three months. It was not seen during the first three weeks of December, 1953, but again appeared on the 23rd, this time singing on an exposed branch of a macrocarpa tree. It was reported as having been seen a few weeks later, but the writer has seen nothing further of it.

As will be seen from the sketch, it had a white body except for an irregular black band on the chest and two narrower broken bands across the shoulders; the wings and tail were black and the bill and legs the normal colour.

