

centration of small native birds. There must have been at least fifty or sixty birds visible, and, judging from the noise, many more hidden in the tree tops. The birds did not appear to be at all agitated by our presence. Several Robins, Fantails and Tomtits came closer to inspect us. The birds were feeding on insects in the higher branches of the trees. Although it was mid-morning, the animated conversation of the birds was comparable to that heard in the dawn.

Upon enquiry, I learned that this particular area, where the birds were concentrated, was six miles from the nearest native forest, Te Apuahou, and eight miles from Tauhara Mt. Te Apuahou Forest consists mainly of Five-finger, Rewarewa, Whau, Tutu, all second growth, as fire destroyed that stretch of forest some years ago. The plantation at the spot where I observed the birds consisted of *Pinus radiata* and was planted in 1932. There was scarcely any native growth visible in the fire-breaks, which are bulldozed fairly regularly. In another part of the forest we saw a large flock of Silvereyes feeding high up in the trees.

On our return journey I observed two Blackbirds, a Song-thrush and several Pipits on the outskirts of the plantation.

Mrs AVIS ACRES

BIRDS ON TRAWLER 'THOMAS CURRELL' IN COOK STRAIT

During a period of fog and drizzle between 10 and 13 April 1956 a number of land birds appeared aboard the trawler 'Thomas Currell' when she was operating between Cape Campbell and Kaikoura. Some sea birds also came on board. Details were as follows —

10 April: Position seven to ten miles off Welds Cone, eight miles south of Cape Campbell; light drizzle. Lying to, awaiting daylight to start fishing operations. Four Fairy Prions came on board between 8 p.m. and midnight.

11 April: Position three to four miles off, steaming south towards Kaikoura; thick fog over land. At 9.30 a.m. eight small birds, which appeared to be Goldfinches, flew by in an erratic manner and disappeared in a southerly direction. At 11 a.m. seven more small birds, this time definitely Goldfinches, circled the vessel, and then, after appearing to be about to settle, made off to the south.

12 April: Position four to six miles off, just north of Kaikoura; intermittent fog, thick over the land. A Fantail came on board at 9 a.m. and seemed to be very exhausted; its tail feathers were wet. It immediately drank salt water and died some three hours later.

Between 8 p.m. and midnight several land birds were seen flying about the vessel in the glare of the deck lights, and their call notes could be clearly heard. Two Fairy Prions and a Diving Petrel came on board during this time.

13 April: Position five to eight miles off and south of Cape Campbell; fog cleared at noon. At 7 a.m. a Song-thrush, a Goldfinch and two Pipits or Skylarks were on board.

Observations of the above type are not unusual aboard 'Thomas Currell'. In rainy weather or in fog, the birds seem to get dazzled by the deck lights. Prions and Storm Petrels are the most common of the sea birds, and Diving Petrels appear occasionally. When found the birds are gathered up and placed in the lifeboat, where they remain until the first sign of daylight; then they fly away. On occasions land birds have stayed about the ship for two or three days when fog or rain has persisted.

F. ABERNETHY

POMARINE SKUA AT WAIKANAE

On 26 April 1953 we twice saw a large *Stercorarius* Skua chasing a Caspian Tern up the meandering tidal estuary of Waikanae River. The Skua appeared larger than the Caspian, and had projecting central tail feathers, conspicuously longer than the rest. The projecting feathers were broad and