

CASPIAN TERN. Not known to breed; but there is an influx after the breeding season. Winter census figures: 123 on 26/6/55, 128 on 17/6/56.

TERN (species?). During recent years very small Terns have been frequenting the Firth of Thames, but, as far as is known, not breeding. They do not appear to be Fairy Terns (*S. nereis*) as none has yet been seen with a wholly yellow beak. A detailed account will be published in a future issue of *Notornis*. Sample records: 5 on 4/12/55; 13 on 2/1/56; 11 on 21/4/56; 1 on 17/6/56.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN. Seldom numerous in winter. Census, 51 on 26/6/55; by October some birds may be prospecting past nesting places, e.g. 20 at Wrybill Reach on 8/10/55 and c. 1,000 at Kaiaua on 13/10/56. The '55-'56 breeding season was disastrous. Two shellbanks were chosen as nesting places: (a) Finschi Spit, 4/12/55, c. 460 birds and c. 170 eggs. 18/12/55, colony washed out, c. 400 birds and c. 20 new eggs; most of these were also washed out by the exceptionally high tides about the New Year. (b) Wrybill Reach. 4/12/55, 8 birds present. 27/12/55, c. 400 pairs, all but four nests contained single eggs. 15/1/56, Not a single Tern present; colony washed out. 19/2/56, in a group of 80 birds there was only one juvenile; c. 250 on 6/5/56 was a big increase on most autumn counts.

MANUKAU (a) UPPER MANUKAU

GANNET. 28/6/56. 5 above the bridge.

PIED SHAG. Usually a few near the bridge.

REEF HERON. 28/6/56. 1 in Puhea Ck.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER. Summering at Tararata Ck. was proved for the third successive year, after numbers had steadily declined in the spring, e.g. 72 on 8/9/55; 42 on 24/9/55; 24 on 7/10/55; 17 on 21/10/55; 15 on 8/11/55; 16 on 24/12/55. Apparently missing in autumn and most of winter. 64 on 22/8/56; 50 on 13/9/56.

WRYBILL. Some appear at Harania Ck. after mid-summer, e.g. 4 on 4/1/56, 15 on 12/1/56, 23 on 6/2/56. A big flock of 450+ on 27/4/56 had almost certainly come from Puketutu. 1 on 9/8/56.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT. As usual few if any Godwits were present during the winter; c. 300 at Tararata Ck. on 24/9/55 may have been recent arrivals; c. 2,000 on 2/12/55. 2,400+ on 4/1/56. Most had gone by the end of March; c. 20 on 27/4/56. On 14/9/56 some hundreds of Godwits suddenly appeared in the evening at Harania Ck. and flew round excitedly, but would not settle. They may have been returning migrants.

KNOT. Some were often present with Godwits between November and March, c. 1,000 on 4/1/56. None throughout winter. A few on 14/9/56.

TURNSTONE. 1 on 27/4/56, at Harania Ck., the first record for this area.

STILT. c. 1,200 at Harania Ck. on 11/8/55 was an unusually big number for the season; 300+ on 24/9/55; c. 30 on 13/10/55; c. 60 on 29/11/55; c. 600 on 29/12/55; 1,000+ on 4/1/56; 1,500+ on 6/2/56. Winter census of whole area 2,340 on 8/7/56. A nearly black Stilt, but with some white on the face and belly, was seen near the bridge on 31/3/56.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN. On 28/12/55 after an interval of nine months a W.W.B.T. in eclipse plumage was again found at Harania Ck., and it stayed in this locality throughout the autumn and winter of 1956, being reported two or three times every month by several observers till 9 August. By 6/2/56 it was obviously assuming nuptial dress, and by 16/2/56 this moult was nearly completed. It was still in magnificent plumage in August, though the upper wing surface was noticeably paling, and the moult into eclipse plumage had evidently begun. This is evidently the same bird as was reported in Upper Manukau in 1954 (*Notornis*, 6, 159-160).

CASPIAN TERN. This area benefits from the general influx into Manukau which occurs after mid-summer. Tararata beach is the main roost, but at very big tides some birds will resort to the grass of Waikaraka Park.

MANUKAU (b) PUKETUTU

The tidal flats of Puketutu have become part of the new Auckland sewage disposal scheme, and the current year has seen the start of works which will radically alter the character of what has been for many years a well-known haunt of waders.

BLUE HERON. 2 on 30/5/56.

WHITE-FACED HERON. 2 on 25/4/56. 1 on 1/5/56.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER. C. 170 had settled in by 20/3/56 and a flock of 190-200 wintered and were still present on 2/8/56.

BANDED DOTTEREL. These appear to be decreasing in this area. 1 juv. was seen on 24/12/55; c. 50 in Ascot paddocks on 7/2/56 and c. 90 on 30/5/56.

WRYBILL. 52 on 9/9/55 and 41 still left on 22/9/55. There was then the usual blank period of about three months. 10, all adults in frayed plumage, but still with good bands, had returned by 24/12/55; after which numbers increased till on 26/2/56 there were about 510. On 23/3/56 there may have been c. 600 present; but the wintering flock numbered c. 500. By mid-August numbers had dropped to c. 400 and by 26/8/56 to c. 250. 106 on 13/9/56; c. 30 on 28/9/56.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT. No very big flocks recorded this year; 1,000+ on 20/3/56, of which so high a proportion were red birds that one had the impression that in this flock small red males easily outnumbered the larger and duller females. 500-600 wintered in 1956.

KNOT. c. 1,100, mostly in red plumage, on 20/3/56. Only a few stragglers in winter.

TURNSTONE. 8 on 12/1/56. 40 on 7/2/56. 47 on 21/2/56. 25+ on 20/3/56. 11 on 19/4/56, when pairs frequently broke away and would fly round calling excitedly. 3 on 13/9/56.

PIED STILT. After an interval of five months, 2 had reappeared on 12/1/56. Most of the winter population of c. 400 had settled in by the end of February. The numbers were much reduced by 2/8/56 and not one could be found on 14/8/56.

CASPIAN TERN. Only 8 on 11/10/55; but the post-breeding influx was well under way by 24/12/55 when 64 were counted. 90 on 26/2/56. ~~120+ on 14/6/56. Only a few left by the end of September.~~

WHITE-FRONTED TERN. Rarely recorded here; some heard but not seen on 7/2/56.

MANUKAU (c) KARAKA - PUHINUI

LESSER BROAD-BILLED PRION. 27/6/56, 1 picked up inland at Manurewa.

GANNET. 8/9/56, 61+ fishing off Seagrove.

LITTLE BLACK SHAG. Up to three reported several times in small creek at Weymouth.

WHITE HERON. 28/8/55, 2 seen by B. Smith at Oaklands Rd., Karaka.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER. c. 200 on 5/11/55 at Puhinui were evidently summering. Winter census figures were 1,092 on 24/7/55 and 1,025 on 8/7/56 for the south Manukau coast. This wet winter they resorted in hundreds to flooded low-lying paddocks.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER. 1 on 5/11/55 at Puhinui; 1 at Karaka on 8/9/56.

ASIATIC GOLDEN PLOVER. 19 on 5/11/55; 36 on 25/2/56; 48 on 4/3/56; all at Karaka. 4 in Higham's marsh on 23/9/56 were still showing much nuptial black and appeared to have arrived very recently.

BANDED DOTTEREL. 5/11/55, 2 males at shellbank. 24/2/56, 81 in paddocks. 8/7/56, 35. 12/8/56, c. 120, mostly in fine plumage. 8/9/56 and 23/9/56, none.

RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL. 2 on 4/3/56.

WRYBILL. 350+ on 3/9/55; c. 130 on 2/10/55; 24 on 5/11/55 were evidently summering; 600+ on 25/2/56; 850+ on 4/3/56; c. 1,500 estimated on a census on 8/7/56 probably included the Puketutu flock. 270+ on 8/9/56; c. 120 on 23/9/56. At high tides this winter considerable numbers resorted to Higham's paddocks, which they seemed to prefer to the shellbank.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW. 1 at Puhinui on 5/11/55. Probably the same bird at Karaka on 8/7/56 and 8/9/56.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT. 24/7/55. Census 1,815. 3/9/55, c. 3,000 and 6,000+ on 2/10/55 on Karaka shellbank. 5/11/55, 4,000+ at Puhinui. Winter census 8/7/56, 4,575. 23/9/56, 7,000+.

GREENSHANK. 25/2/56, one seen on the ground and in flight; white rump noted; call heard.

GREY-TAILED TATTLER. The bird reported (*Notornis*, 6, 243) was seen again on 3/12/55.

TURNSTONE. 11 on 3/9/55; 42 on 2/10/55; 132 on 3/12/55; c. 120 on 25/2/56 and 4/3/56. 50+ wintering on 8/7/56.

KNOT. Winter census, 8/7/56, c. 800.

RED-NECKED STINT. 1 on 5/11/55; 2 on 25/2/56 and 4/3/56; 1 on 12/8/56 and 23/9/56.

PIED STILT. Plentiful as usual in winter, e.g. c. 1,500 in the Karaka-Puhinui area, when censuses taken over most of Manukau showed 5,091 on 24/7/55 and 5,621 on 8/7/56. On 12/8/56 there were still plenty of Stilts scattered about the flooded paddocks; but not one could be seen on the Karaka coast on 8/9/56. On 23/9/56 there were two on Yates' dam, where a pair or two may occasionally breed.

CASPIAN TERN. A few non-breeders during the nesting season. 180+ on 25/2/56; 105 on 8/7/56; 20 on 23/9/56.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN. 10+ on 25/2/56 at Karaka. 12 on 4/3/56 in Seagrove Ck. and 20 at Karaka; 12 on 8/7/56 at Clark's Bay.

HARRIER. A nest found at Puhinui on 14/10/56 contained 4 eggs, all of which had hatched on 5/11/56, one youngster being very small.

FERN BIRD. At least seven pairs located at Puhinui on 5/11/56 in a belt of salt-marsh scrub.

NOTICE

NEST RECORDS SCHEME

Members are asked to forward records for the 1956-57 season to the Organiser, Mr H. L. Secker, by 28/2/57.