

Miranda on 17/2/57. Of c. 500 present on 7/4/57, less than 2% were males in nuptial red. 510+ wintered. On 3/6/57 a very red godwit was seen near Waitakaruru; and c. 200 pale birds were seen some way inland on the Hauraki Plains.

**ASIATIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** — At least two were present throughout the summer. One in full nuptial dress on 25/11/56 was evidently the aberrant bird first recorded at Miranda on 30/8/52. One in grey plumage was seen on 22/12/56 and 5/1/57, when it was resting with stilts in a hollow among the Miranda shellbanks, exactly where two were seen during the previous summer. (v. *Notornis* 7, 58-59.) One in nuptial red near Kairito Creek on 7/4/57 was this bird, rather than the aberrant bird.

**TURNSTONE** — Five closely watched on 13/10/56 were adults in quite bright breeding dress; 10 on 24/10/56; 22 on 25/11/56, census; 24 on 17/2/57; 18 wintered being seen on 3/6/57 and 9/6/57; 15 on 3/8/57; 26 on 29/9/57.

**KNOT** — Census, Kaiaua - Thames, c. 5400 on 25/11/56. Only c. 40 remaining by 7/4/57; c. 200, many red, on 2/6/57.

**SIBERIAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER** — Four on 8/10/56; seven on 25/11/56; ten on 5/1/57; nine on 20/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one with well-developed crescentic spots on the flanks; six on 29/9/57.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** — Of five found on 9/10/56, three were still partly red, and two were very pale juv. Presumably these five stayed all summer, being located several times till 3/3/57, when one was more reddened than any other yet seen in the Firth of Thames, and another was heavily blotched with red on the underparts. Two wintered with the Wrybills; being seen twice in June. There is only one previous record of wintering.

**RED-NECKED STINT** — As usual, odd birds straggled in during the spring: five on 5/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one showing some red; three on 7/4/57, one with neck well reddened; two on 2/6/57; two on 29/9/57.

**PIED STILT** — Census 25/11/56, Kaiaua - Thames, 152; Kaiaua - Miranda, 22/12/56, 162+; 5/1/57, 251, including juv. Successful breeding season, 3/3/57, Kaiaua - Waitakaruru, c. 1110. The biggest numbers are found on the southern stretch: e.g. c. 5000 on 18/2/57; 3000+ on 5/3/57.

**BLACK-BILLED GULL** — c. 400 on 9/9/56; c. 150 on 24/10/56; 18 (including 12 at Parawai) on 25/11/56; one on 22/12/56; three on 5/1/57; c. 40 on 3/3/57; 125 on 7/4/57; c. 330 on 3/6/57.

**[WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN** — A tern, believed to be of this species, at Parawai on 1/10/57 (W.M.G.).]

**CASPIAN TERN** — 59 on census, 25/11/56, rather a large number for the season. c. 100 on 17/2/57.

**WHITE-FRONTED TERN** — c. 1000 at Whakatiwai and a few prospecting the Miranda shellbanks on 13/10/56. c. 700 nests, Kairito shellbank, 25/11/56, where breeding was unusually successful. Some young were just airborne on 5/1/57. A later colony at Miranda had 105 nests (14 with two eggs and the rest with one) on 5/1/57. This colony was not very successful. On 20/1/57 it contained c. 15 'live' nests and 15 chicks just hatched. At the Kairito colony there were still c. 150 young at all stages and c. 30 eggs. Many flying young were foraging up and down the Firth.

#### MANUKAU — (α) UPPER MANUKAU

**S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER** — 21 at Tararata Creek on 28/9/56; eight on 4/11/56; four on 24/12/56; six on 19/9/57; 27 on 30/10/57.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** — Some hundreds on 2/10/56; 2000 - 2500 on 5/11/56 and during the ensuing months; few remaining on 21/3/57; c. 100 at Tararata Creek on 19/9/57.

KNOT—Some hundreds on 5/11/56; c. 1000 on 10/1/57; 1000+ on 13/3/57; c. 100 on 21/3/57; 11 on 19/9/57 at Tararata Creek.

STILT—As usual, many non-breeders were present throughout the spring, and there was a steady influx after breeding. Not a single pair is known to nest locally. 150+ at Harania Creek on 2/10/56; 200+ on 5/11/56; 400+ on 19/11/56; young stilts of the year had appeared on 13/12/56; 500+ on 1/1/57; c. 600 on 10/1/57; 1000+ on 13/3/57; and immense numbers estimated at c. 4000 by several observers on 24/3/57; c. 350 on 15/9/57; c. 200 at Tararata Creek on 19/9/57.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN—The single bird first reported in Upper Manukau on 30/10/54 spent a third summer about Harania Creek. After escaping notice for three months, it was rediscovered associating with stilts at Westfield on 5/11/56. Between then and 26/4/57 it was seen many times by many observers. Between 10 January and 29 January it changed from winter plumage into almost full breeding dress.

TERN (Sp?)—A very small tern, either *albifrons* or *nereis*, was watched at Harania Creek on 13/3/57. It flew in with Knots and rested on the mud while they fed busily. A light rain was falling and visibility was poor. Its cap appeared black and clear cut, the cap of a tern assuming breeding plumage rather than of one losing it.

SHINING CUCKOO—One reported in a Mangere garden, 23/3/57.

LONG-TAILED CUCKOO—One seen at Mangere, 5/11/56.

#### MANUKAU — (b) PUKETUTU

The quiet of this area has been disturbed throughout the year by the roar of heavy lorries and earth-moving machines. In 1956 the 'explosion crater' which lies below Mangere Mountain in the corner of the Puketutu flats was cut off by a new sea-wall, so that tidal water was virtually excluded. As a result, at the highest tides flocks of waders resorted to its very even muddy floor, a thing which they could not do in the past when tidal water covered it. In October 1957 another sea-wall linking Puketutu Island with Farm Point was thrown up, so that the flats to the north of the causeway will now gradually dry out.

BLUE HERON—One on 22/2/57; two on 24/3/57.

WHITE-FACED HERON—One on 10/3/57; four on 11/8/57.

ROYAL SPOONBILL—Three on 15/11/57.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER—c. 135 on 31/1/57. Varying numbers later.

BANDED DOTTEREL—10+ on 22/2/57.

WRYBILL—One on 24/12/56; 114 on 10/1/57; c. 250 on 31/1/57; 450+ on 4/2/57; 627 on 23/2/57; 700+ on 9/3/57; c. 700 on 24/3/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT—Some hundreds on 31/1/57; 3500+ on 9/3/57; a mixed flock of Godwits and Knots off Ihumatao on 24/3/57, estimated to contain 7000 birds; c. 500 on 18/4/57.

TEREK SANDPIPER—One among the Wrybills on 22 and 23/2/57; and again on 16/7/57. This bird evidently flitted between Karaka and Puketutu.

GREY-TAILED TATTLER—One standing quietly among Stilts and Wrybills in the explosion crater on 18/4/57. It is likely that this bird was the same as the one which has frequently been recorded at Karaka.

TURNSTONE—c. 40 on 1/1/57; 45 on 23/2/57; four on 24/3/57; 13 on 10/6/57.

KNOT—2000+ on 22 and 23/2/57; c. 4000 on 9/3/57; 3000+ on 24/3/57; c. 50 on 18/4/57.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** – One with Wrybills on 6/4/57 and 28/4/57, a grey first-year bird.

**PIED STILT** – Few had returned to this corner of Manukau by the end of January: e.g. only 12 on 31/1/57; but by 9/3/57, 350+ had appeared and on 18/4/57, 400+ were present.

**CASPIAN TERN** – 26 non-breeders at a high tide roost at Ihumatao on 4/11/56. There was the usual influx after the breeding season. Significant counts were 131 on 31/1/57 and 174 on 18/4/57, 168 of which were in the explosion crater.

#### **MANUKAU – (c) KARAKA - PUHINUI**

**WHITE-FACED STORM PETREL** – Dr O. F. Lamb saw two in mid-harbour in mid-October.

**LITTLE BLACK SHAG** – 120+ at Weymouth on 21/7/57.

**WHITE HERON** – Five on 8/5/57 and 21/7/57, and probably throughout winter.

**WHITE-FACED HERON** – Four at Clark's Beach on 22/12/56; one at Kidd's on 17/3/57; three at Shark Island, their usual winter headquarters, on 20/4/57.

**ROYAL SPOONBILL** – One in Waiuku Creek on 7/4/57, photographed by Dr S. R. West; four on 21/7/57 and till 14/9/57 between Weymouth and Papakura. Apparently only three in October.

**S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER** – c. 400 on 22/10/56. Probably some hundreds of non-breeders summered. 330+ on 18/12/56; c. 850 on 19/1/57; 1000+ on 17/3/57; 500+ on 29/10/57.

**BLACK OYSTERCATCHER** – 31/7/56-4/11/56, one reported several times between Weymouth and Karaka.

**ASIATIC GOLDEN PLOVER** – 22 on 4/11/56; 23+ on 11/1/57; 34 on 26/1/57; 50+ on 16/2/57; 45+ on 17/3/57, many being in almost full nuptial dress.

**BANDED DOTTEREL** – One on 4/11/56; 17 on 18/12/56; c. 150 on 1/2/57; 300+ on 16/2/57 and 20/4/57, when three were already in breeding plumage with lower band in full colour.

**RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL** – One on 17/3/57 and 20/4/57.

**WRYBILL** – 24 on 22/10/56; 16 on 11/4/56; c. 100 on 11/1/57; c. 600 on 1/2/57; c. 800 on 17/3/57; 600+ on 20/4/57; 1200+ on 4/8/57 may have included the Puketutu birds.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** – 8000-10,000 on 22/10/56 after the main influx. Between November and February numbers appeared to be rather fewer, perhaps 7000. Some hundreds at least wintered.

**GREENSHANK** – One closely watched with Stilts in Higham's paddocks, 17/3/57.

**TEREK SANDPIPER** – The first to be recorded in Manukau was found on 1/2/57, when it had come into Higham's paddocks with Wrybills. Subsequently it was seen on numerous occasions and was still present in October. Evidently the same bird visited Puketutu causeway from time to time.

**GREY-TAILED TATTLER** – One seen several times between 1/2/57 and 17/3/57. At full tide it sometimes perched conspicuously on the posts of a partly submerged fence. It is likely that this is the same bird as was first recorded on the Karaka shellbank on 25/4/55. One on 29/10/57, probably the same bird.

**TURNSTONE** – One of the characteristic waders of the Karaka coast. c. 108 on 22/10/56; c. 130 on 18/12/56; c. 160 on 26/1/57; c. 180 on 3/2/57

and 17/3/57; 14 on 20/4/57. No winter counts made. 100+ on 29/10/57.

**KNOT** – Only five on 22/10/56, when Godwits were in thousands. None recorded on a census on 4/11/56; 15+ on 18/12/56; some hundreds on 11/1/57; 2000+ on 1/2/57; perhaps 5000 on 16/2/57; c. 2000 on 17/3/57; 300+ on 20/4/57.

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** – One on 29/10/57.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** – One with Wrybills in Higham's marsh on 4/8/57, perhaps the same juvenile as was seen at Puketutu causeway in April.

**RED-NECKED STINT** – One on 22/10/56; two on 11/1/57 and 26/1/57; three on 23/2/57 and 17/3/57; four on 20/4/57; one on 4/8/57 had evidently wintered; five on 29/10/57.

**PIED STILT** – 22/10/56, Oaklands Road, four pairs on winter floodwater, one on nest, one brood of three seen. c. 12 on 4/11/56 near Yates' dam, a regular spring resort for non-breeders. The open Karaka coast is generally without Stilts in spring; but some are coming back by Christmas: e.g. 41 on 18/12/56; c. 500 on 17/3/57 in Higham's marsh. In winter hundreds frequent the more sheltered creeks: e.g. c. 200 near Shark Island; some non-breeders may linger near here: e.g. c. 50 at Whangamaire Creek on 14/9/57.

**CASPIAN TERN** – c. 30 non-breeders on 22/10/57; c. 83 on 18/12/56; 160+ 17/3/57, 60 being in Kidd's marsh.

**WHITE-FRONTED TERN** – Six on Karaka shellbank making noises which sounded like a nesting colony on 22/10/56; c. 40 at Puhinui on 4/11/56; 26 on 1/2/57 on derelict jetty at Kidd's; c. 10 on 17/3/57. There are breeding colonies on the outer Awhitu coast and at Manukau heads.

**HARRIER** – Two nests located in rushes by the sea, both had clutches of four eggs in mid-October.

## OBITUARY

W. R. B. OLIVER

New Zealand lost one of its most versatile naturalists by the death on 16 May 1957 of Walter Reginald Brook Oliver, D.Sc., who was Director of the Dominion Museum from 1928 to 1947.

Practically all phases of natural science claimed his interest, and although he had the cool, calculated outlook of the scientist, he was always ready to listen and to assess any information forthcoming from an amateur observer. His quiet, unassuming nature and a certain coldness of manner somewhat obscured his undoubted genuineness. In the thirty years in which I had known Dr Oliver I had never found any difference in his demeanour – he was always courteous, ever ready to be helpful and most approachable. His scientific training and background were no deterrent to his seeking the advice or the opinion of the amateur naturalist on any problem that was exercising his mind. His enthusiasm was remarkable, especially when in the field. Although many years my senior, it was an effort to keep abreast of him when he was climbing a hillside, intent on a botanising or bird observing quest. Only about five years ago he told me that he had planned work to occupy him for another fifteen years. Had he lived that time, he undoubtedly would have planned another fifteen years ahead.

Born in Tasmania in 1883, he came to New Zealand in 1890, and later to Tauranga, where he told me he remembered Mount Maunganui when there was one house there – the pilot's. After attending the Tauranga High School, he went to Victoria University College, where he graduated M.Sc. with honours in botany. For some years he was engaged as a Customs officer in Auckland. After serving with the Forces in the First World War,