

WHITE IBISES AT KAWHIA, KAIPARA AND TE AWAMUTU  
IN 1957

On 26/5/57 an Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus strictipennis*) arrived very tired at Kinohaku, Kawhia, where it was reported by Mr. C. C. H. Palmer and by Mr. R. G. Fisher, the local schoolmaster. During its stay it lived and fed on a little wet flat just above the tidal rushes and associated to some extent with domestic ducks. Its roost was a bare poplar tree. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. J. E. Scott guarded it closely. On 22/6/57 we went to see it and J.P. was able to photograph it in colour through the sitting-room window of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Scott. A few days later Mrs. Scott saw it leave. It flew round a few times calling and then headed north until out of sight.

A White Ibis at Te Kopuru in Kaipara Harbour was reported by Mr. Robert Kidd. It arrived in May and left about 12/6/57, after living in a swampy gully-head near the house of a neighbour and often associating with poultry. On 15/6/57 we went and confirmed the identification by description. An ibis, perhaps the same, was seen a few days later at Port Albert, but did not stay.

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A White Ibis was present at Ngaroto Lake, about four miles from Te Awamutu, from about the first week of November to mid-December, 1957; and I myself was able to observe it on several occasions between 14/11/57 and 8/12/57. It arrived only a few days after the departure of a Kotuku (*E. alba*) which had frequented the same area; and at first it was mistaken by local residents for the Kotuku.

I had no difficulty in identifying the ibis, as I had previously seen a bird of the same species at Kinohaku on 22/6/57. The two were very similar in all characteristics; and it is indeed possible that they were one and the same bird.

During its stay the Ngaroto ibis generally kept to a comparatively small area of four or five acres of swampy land at one end of the lake. It could usually be found feeding in a grassed paddock which lay under two or three inches of water, some cultivated peat-land, or amongst the rushes at the water's edge. It appeared fairly tame, and would have been easily approached but for the fact that it was upset by the warning cries of the many Stilts and Pukekos which were nesting in the area. It associated freely with them, especially with the Pukekos. This desire for company was also noticed in the Kinohaku ibis, which associated with domestic fowls, ducks and geese, even to the extent of flying into their enclosed runs. The Ngaroto ibis almost invariably roosted in the same tree every night, a dead or dying willow; the Kihohaku ibis resorted to a poplar.

The only utterance ever heard from the White Ibis was a short goose-like cry made just before and just after taking off in flight. The Ngaroto bird was a fairly strong flier; and in the evenings would sometimes spend several minutes flying back and forth along the shores and out over the lake.

W. R. COOPER