

On 18/4/57 about 400 Pied Stilts with other waders had gathered at full-tide on the dry mud bottom of the explosion crater below Mangere Mountain. On the edge of them was a partially erythristic stilt quite differently marked from the earlier specimen. It had the gray smudgy markings on the head which are typical of many young Stilts in their first autumn. The reddishness began on the lower neck and was darkest on the belly where it seemed to be about the same shade as the lower band of a male Banded Dotterel (*C. bicinctus*), a rich, deep chestnut. This bird was not seen to be molested by the other Pied Stilts, but it stood apart near the edge of the flock where it was most conspicuous.

If it is permissible to speculate on the occurrence of stilts with reddish markings, one interesting thought which arises is whether there may be a latent tendency towards the development of red feathering in the non-black areas of the tall black-and-white waders. In Australia the Banded Stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*) has a broad, reddish chest band and the Red-necked Avocet (*Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*), which seems to have attempted to establish itself in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, has a chestnut-coloured head and neck, while in the American Avocet (*R. americana*) these parts are pale rufous or cinnamon.

R. B. SIBSON



#### KOKAKO IN LAWSON'S CYPRESSES

Waitekauri, an old mining settlement in the Colville Range, ends in half a mile of rough track two miles beyond Golden Cross. Where the heavy bush begins, there is a derelict farm-house with a row of *Cupressus lawsoniana* on the upper side of the track. On 6/6/59 Mr. A. Blackburn and I first heard clicking and sucking notes above us in the cypresses and then a tui-like whistle. After considerable movement of the foliage a single Kokako (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*) planed from the trees to the deep gully. No details of plumage could be noted.

On the following day we had better luck when just before noon two Kokako made their way from the gully and remained in close view for about five minutes. Both birds flew across the track, a distance of about thirty feet, with a heavy laboured flight. The first made a very bad landing in a makomako, the second landed more neatly. While under observation the Kokako were seen to feed on the leaves of tawhero, mahoe and possibly kotukutuku. On both days the weather was dull and overcast with intermittent rain and cold winds.

N. HAMERTON



#### KOKAKO REPORTED FROM WILKIN VALLEY, LAKE WANAKA

On 15/2/58, while I was tramping with two companions down the Wilkin Valley at the head of L. Wanaka, I saw a bird with a dark blue, glossy body colour and a patch of orange below the eye. The bird was on the ground. As we approached, it first fluttered onto a dead trunk about four feet high, and then flew clumsily up the valley at a height of only six feet or so above the ground. The flight was very poor and we thought at first the bird must have been a fledgling.

This incident occurred in the first patch of bush, which was mixed