

ARCTIC SKUA — A few seen during the summer. 2 on 26/4/59, one light-breasted, one dark-breasted.

BLACK-BACKED GULL — The Kairito colony increases. In 38 nests, 19/10/59, only one egg had been laid. Of 48 nests on 5/11/59, 18 had three eggs, 13 had two, 6 one, and 11 were empty. A few pairs are now nesting between White Bridge and Miranda.

BLACK-BILLED GULL — 200+ on 3/8/58; c. 180 on 21/9/58; 3 on 13/12/58; 18+ on 15/2/59; c. 200 on 28/3/59; c. 375 on 16/6/59. These gulls now occur from Kaiaua to Waitakaruru, usually near the tide-line. Small groups may easily be overlooked.

CASPIAN TERN — No evidence of breeding. 37 on 21/9/58; 28 on 15/2/59; 50 on 26/4/59; 28+ on 22/8/59 scattered along several miles of coast.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN — A few between Kaiaua and Miranda on 3/8/58 and 18/10/58. The Kairito shellbank was not used for nesting; but on 13/12/58 there were c. 400 nests, about half with eggs and half with small chicks, on the shellbanks north of Miranda lagoon. On 2/1/59, 66 chicks were ringed in the third section of this colony, after the first and second sections had been flooded out. One of these ringed birds was subsequently reported from Australia. On 15/2/59, 79 well feathered chicks were ringed from the south and last section of this colony, where c. 150 flying young were present. These terns were numerous in the Firth on 26/4/59. 300+ on old nesting ground on 22/8/59, playing at breeding, courting and making scrapes.

TERN (*Sp?* *albifrons/nereis*) — A few were again present during the summer, viz, 2 off Kairito Creek on 5/11/58 and 5+ at Miranda lagoon on 13/12/58.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN — Early in February one was found by N.M. on the Miranda pools, where it spent the winter, during which it was seen by many observers. It was evidently a first-year bird. It did not moult into breeding plumage and on 26/9/59 looked much the same as when it first appeared. It often settled and rested quite happily among Pied Stilts.

MANUKAU — (a) UPPER MANUKAU

BLUE HERON — 1 on 28/3/59 near the bridge.

WHITE-FACED HERON — 2 on 2/3/59 at Harania Creek.

BITTERN — 1 in Westfield swamp on 9/5/59.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — c. 120 on 23/12/58 near the bridge; c. 50 on 8/11/58 at Tararata Creek.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — This remains a favoured feeding ground in summer. 2000+ on 29/10/58; c. 3000 on 13/11/58.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT — One of two known to be wintering in Manukau was reported three times near Tararata Creek and may have fed there regularly.

KNOT — c. 500 on 12/3/59 at Harania Creek. c.80 on 8/10/59.

PIED STILT — Fewer non-breeders than usual during spring, many having been lured away to the new Puketutu pools. c. 1500 on 17/4/59 at Harania Creek. Mid-winter census, 4020 between Onehunga Bridge and Westfield.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN — One, in obviously worn breeding plumage but still very black, at Harania Creek on 22/10/59, 8 and 9/11/59.

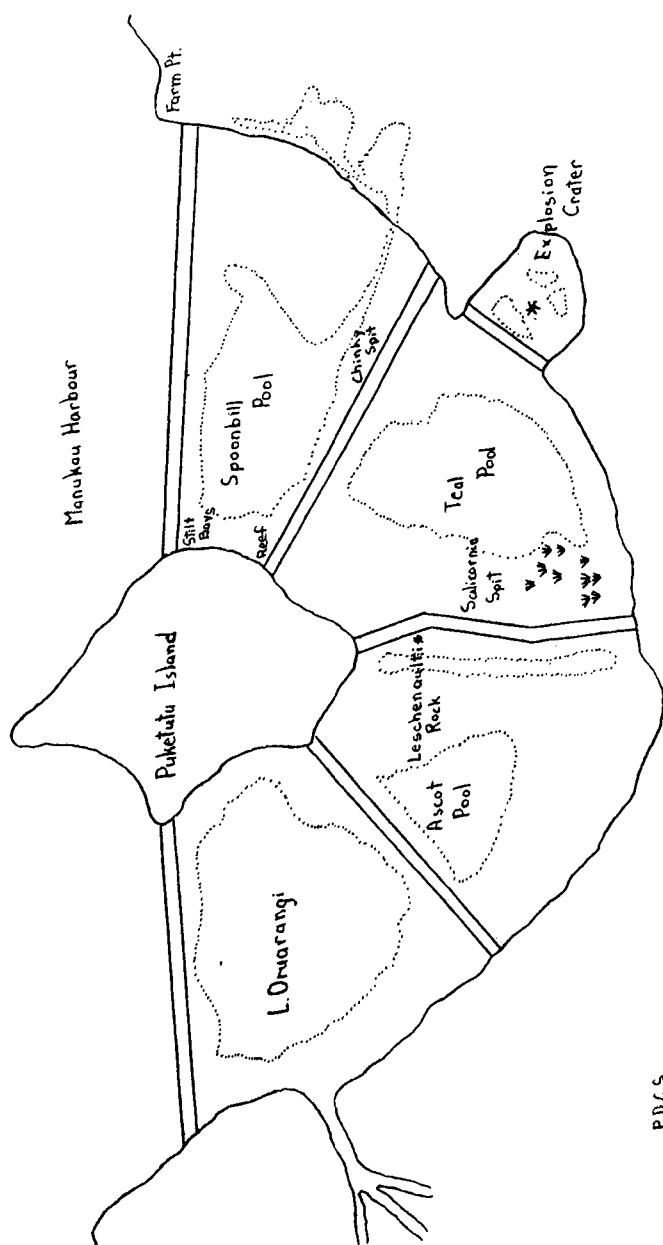
MANUKAU — (b) PUKETUTU - IHUMATAO

Since the last annual report on the birds of this corner of Manukau was made, there have been more changes near Puketutu where the reclamation of tidal flats has continued as Auckland's huge scheme for the disposal of drainage and sewage nears completion. North of the old causeway the big lake which was formed in 1957 by the building of the first new sea-wall, was cut in two when a massive earth-wall was built to block the channel between Puketutu Reef and Chinky Spit — if one may use the names coined by local bird-watchers over the years. Names have now had to be bestowed upon the two attractive sheets of water so formed, and it is proposed to call the inner Teal Pool and the outer Spoonbill Pool. These names commemorate ornithological events of some local significance. On the one pool was found the first spring of Gray Teal (*A. gibberifrons*) to be recorded near Auckland, while the other pool was visited by three Royal Spoonbills (*P. regia*) in November, 1957, and has since become a favoured haunt of Shoveler or Spoonbill Ducks (*A. rhynchotis*).

Puketutu Island is now linked to Ihumatao by a new sea-wall. By mid-November, lorries were able to cross at low tide, and by December a big new lake, fed by the Oruarangi Creek, had been sealed off behind it and tidal water was virtually excluded. During the winter of 1959 an earth causeway was pushed across the middle of this lake from Puketutu towards Ascot. It is proposed to call the two new pools which lie to the south of the old causeway Ascot Pool and Lake Oruarangi.

Heavy rains in the summer and autumn freshened the pools just when the wide expanse of shallows was beginning to shrink; and as most of the area was quiet and sheltered it proved especially attractive to ducks and waders. All the species which have normally flocked into this area in summer and autumn were present in undiminished numbers, some in far greater numbers than usual. The first Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) to be recorded in New Zealand stayed for two months. An unusual visitation of Black-tailed Godwits has been described in *Notornis*. Two species of arctic sandpipers were actually present in small flocks. Ducks were quick to use such an obviously rich feeding ground. The arrival of a Dabchick was a big surprise.

These ideal conditions were abruptly terminated in May by the aerial spraying of insecticide. After a very wet April, which greatly enlarged Teal Pool and inundated the seepage area at its head, there were complaints of a plague of flies and mosquitoes in Mangere and the authorities decided — overhastily in the opinion of some critics — that the edges of the pools were the origin of the infestation. The spraying was carried out by aeroplane, the Explosion Crater and Teal Pool receiving especial attention. Neither of these places has been the same since. The aquatic organisms were killed. Ducks and Stilts were driven away from the sterile, contaminated water and were still shunning it in October.



P.D.G.S.

Auckland ornithologists could count themselves very lucky to have such an exciting artificial lakeland on their door-step. They were only too happy to be able to show some of the rare birds mentioned in these notes to visiting ornithologists, among whom were Mrs. Avis Acres, J. W. Bain, B.D. Bell, F. C. Kinsky, E. G. Turbott. Nor did Spoonbill Pool belie its reputation when a host of ornithologists bore down upon it on 26/10/59 during the Field Study Week-end.

DABCHICK — One was found on Teal Pool on 29/3/59 and was still there on 10/5/59; an interesting example of autumn wandering, as the nearest known waters where Dabchicks breed are thirty miles away — unless the Waitakere reservoirs have been colonised.

SOOTY SHEARWATER — 1 old corpse on 5/7/59.

TASMANIAN MUTTONBIRD — 1 freshly dead on 8/5/59.

BLUE HERON — Single birds appear from time to time.

WHITE-FACED HERON — Now present at all seasons, gathering into flocks in autumn and winter. 8 on 20/5/59. 23+ on 21/6/59 on L. Oruarangi.

BLACK SWAN — Some remained on Teal Pool after other ducks and waders were driven away by the spraying of insecticide. Max. on pools 40 on 18/6/59.

GREY TEAL — Up to 6 (?8) present between 2/2/59 and 25/4/59. This appears to be the first record of this small duck near Auckland.

SHOVELER — 2 pairs on the Explosion Crater on 2/11/58 were the first recorded in this part of Manukau for many years. There was a post-nuptial influx, c. 20 on 2/2/59; c. 60 on 12/2/59. Smaller numbers during the winter. 2 drakes and a duck on 11/10/59 suggest breeding.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — c. 120 on 8/10/58; 500+ on 2/2/59; c. 1,400 on 29/3/59 beside L. Oruarangi. Numbers varied during the winter according to the tides. 100+ still present beside Spoonbill Pool on 30/9/59.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER — A single bird noted on several occasions between 11/4/59 and 30/9/59; 3 on 17/10/59.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER — 42, the biggest flock so far recorded in this area on 5/2/59 and 4/3/59; on 8/2/59 some were showing a few first black streaks of nuptial dress. 13 on 28/3/59. 2 early return-migrants beside Spoonbill Pool on 9/9/59, one still with much black on the underparts.

BANDED DOTTEREL — c. 500 on 5/2/59; winter numbers were rather fewer. On 19/4/59 some were already in almost full breeding dress. The wintering flock, e.g. c. 400 on 21/6/59, especially favoured the vicinity of Chinky Spit, now growing green with a thin cover of vegetation, especially sand-spurrey; c. 200 still present on 8/8/59. A few lingered into September, but presented a plumage problem, e.g. on 16/9/59, of eight birds, two seemed to be a pair in normal breeding dress, but the other six were not paired, none was properly banded and some showed scarcely a trace of a band. They had not the warm golden look of young birds of the current season. Were they therefore late youngsters from last season?

WRYBILL — c. 600 on 8/2/59; 650+ on 29/3/59 and throughout winter; 500+ still present on 16/8/59; c. 100 on 4/9/59; 73 on 15/9/59; 21 on 27/9/59. A few lingered till October.

- ASIATIC WHIMBREL — 4 on 2/11/58; 6 (? 7) on 13/11/58. As seems to be the way with these birds, they moved on and were not reported again.
- BAR-TAILED GODWIT — 5000+ on 2/11/59 and throughout summer coming in to Spoonbill Pool or L. Oruarangi when tides were big. On 5/2/59 one very red male was noted and many were reddening. Unusual numbers, 7000+, wintered in Manukau, of which at least 5000 sometimes roosted beside L. Oruarangi.
- HUDSONIAN GODWIT — As reported in *Notornis VIII*, 161-162, one was present over the summer and two were seen on 13/5/59, evidently wintering. Further records of single birds were made on Spoonbill Pool on 21/6/59 and 9/9/59.
- ASIATIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT — As reported in *Notornis VIII*, 161-162, a single bird frequented Teal Pool in February and March; and three more arrived apparently with the autumn influx of waders from the south; so that on 13/5/59 four were present on Spoonbill Pool and two on 9/9/59. A comparison of dates shows that these four *melanuroides* must be distinct from four which were seen during autumn and winter on the Miranda coast of the Firth of Thames.
- MARSH SANDPIPER — As reported in *Notornis VIII*, 125-126, one frequented Teal and Spoonbill Pools between 24/3/59 and 13/5/59. The contamination of the shallows by spraying seems to be the reason for its disappearance, after it appeared to have settled in for the winter.
- TURNSTONE — 30+ on 5/2/59; c. 50 on 4/3/59; c. 24 on 28/3/59; 9 on 25/4/59; 5 on 10/5/59; 1 on 13/5/59; 1 on 9/9/59.
- KNOT — 1000+ on 2/11/59; plentiful throughout summer; 2000+ on 52/59; 4000+ on 29/3/59; 6 on 25/4/59; c. 50 on 13/5/59; c. 20 on 30/9/59.
- SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER — 2 on 2/11/58; 4 on 13/11/58; 7 on 1, 3 and 4/3/59; 8 on 15 and 29/3/59 and 5/4/59.
- AMERICAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER — 1 from 1/3/59 to 15/3/59, kept near the Sharp-tails, but rather apart by itself and evidently left before them.
- CURLEW SANDPIPER — 9 on 1/3/59, one being well reddened; 5 on 4/3/59; 2 on 28/3/59, just starting to redden on the breast; 1 on 25/4/59, reddening.
- RED-NECKED STINT — 1 seen several times between 1/3/59 and 15/3/59 with Wrybills.
- PIED STILT — Unusual numbers of non-breeders throughout the spring, attracted away perhaps from Harania Creek; c. 500 on 8/10/59; 800+ on 13/11/58; c. 1000 on 27/11/58 and later; 1500+ on 25/4/59; c. 1800 on 21/6/59; Stilts avoided the Explosion Crater and Teal Pool, which had been favourite haunts, for several months after the spraying and had not returned to them at the end of September.
- CASPIAN TERN — Only c. 60 counted on mid-winter census. One ringed as a chick at Palliser Spit on 8/1/59 was reported dead from Mangere on 4/6/59.
- WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN — One was present throughout the summer, preferring Teal Pool, but occasionally feeding elsewhere. By 5/2/59 it was virtually in full breeding dress. Many observers saw it up till 19/4/59, when it was feeding in the evening over the shallows of Spoonbill Pool.

MANUKAU — (c) KARAKA-PUHINUI

GANNET — A few often penetrate Pahurehure Inlet; 1 dark youngster on 15/3/59.

WHITE-FACED HERON — 3 the most seen together.

ROYAL SPOONBILL — Up to 6/10/58, 6 were often seen near Weymouth; then 3 up to December and perhaps till early February; from then on 2 ranging from Kidd's Bay and up the creeks nearly to Papakura and Drury.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — c. 160 on 28/9/58 and 18/10/58, evidently intending to summer; c. 500 on 27/2/59; c. 800 on 27/3/59; c. 700 on 21/6/59.

ASIATIC GOLDEN PLOVER — 11 flying inland on 18/10/58; 66+ on 12/1/59; 105+, a few starting to blacken, on 8/2/59; exact count of 110 on 27/7/59; 60+ on 10/3/58 and 27/3/59.

BANDED DOTTEREL — 3 on 18/10/58; c. 12 on 12/1/59; c. 250 on 8/2/59; numbers counted in autumn fluctuate according to where the birds are feeding; sometimes more being seen; 350+ on 24/4/59; c. 490 on 21/6/59.

RED-BREASTED DOTTEREL — 2 on 10/3/59; 5 on 8/4/59; 7 on 24/4/59; 7 on 21/6/59.

WRYBILL — 23 on 18/10/58; 127+ on 12/1/59; c. 600 on 8/2/59; c. 900 on 27/3/59; c. 700 on 24/4/59; c. 1050 on 21/6/59.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW — 2 on 18/10/58; 5 on 10/3/59.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — c. 5000 on 18/10/58 and probably throughout summer, though counts varied because of poor tides. Only c. 600 on 10/3/59 and c. 200 on 24/4/59; but c. 2200 on 21/6/59, when a mid-winter census of waders in Manukau revealed remarkable numbers present.

GREENSHANK — 1 on Karaka shellbank on 10/3/59, with Pied Stilts, studied at ten yards (H.R.McK.).

GREY-TAILED TATTLER — 1, almost certainly the same bird as recorded previously, was present throughout the summer up to 26/4/59.

TURNSTONE — c. 200 on 18/10/58 and throughout summer; possibly more in late February and March; still 150+ on 8/4/59. One of the characteristic waders of the southern shore of Manukau; but not noted on a mid-winter census on 21/6/59.

KNOT — Again scarce in spring. 5 on 28/9/58 with 2500+ Godwits; 300+ on 12/1/58; 1000+ on 8/2/59 and 10/3/59; 20+ on 24/4/59.

RED-NECKED STINT — 12 on 18/10/58; 14 on 27/2/59, some reddening slightly on the neck; 13+ on 10/3/59; 10 on 8/4/59, 2 having really red necks; 2, pale, on 24/4/59; 1 on 21/6/59, wintering.

PIED STILT — During the summer months few are seen on the open coast, those that remain preferring the muddy creeks. Midwinter census c. 1400 from Weymouth to Clark's Bay.

CASPIAN TERN — There was the usual post-nuptial influx, only c. 15 being present in mid-December. Then 40+ on 10/3/59; c. 60 on 24/4/59. c. 240 in mid-winter between Weymouth and Clark's Bay.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN — c. 30 on 12/1/58; c. 40 on 8/2/59; 120+ on 27/3/59.

TERN (Sp?) — Two small terns (*albifrons/nereis*) were again noted in late summer and may have been present all along as they are easily

overlooked. On 27 and 28/2/59 one, which was slightly larger than the other, was changing colour. On 10/3/59 it was in full breeding plumage typical of *albifrons*, but the smaller bird appeared as before. They were not seen on subsequent visits.

FERNBIRD — 2 or more seen and heard along Kidd's Bay on 21/6/59 and 9/10/59.



FIELD STUDY WEEK-END

The field study week-end held in Auckland on 24th to 26th October last was attended by about 30 members, and was considered by those present to be completely successful. This was the second such week-end held in the month of October, and the value of the field work, and of the closer contacts between members of the Society from all parts of New Zealand should lead to such study periods becoming an established part of the Society's activities. The smooth running of the organisation was due to the efforts, both before and during the week-end, of Mr. A. Ringer, R.O. for Auckland, and of Mrs. Ringer and a band of helpers from amongst Auckland members.

Members gathered on the evening of Friday, 23rd October, to be informed of arrangements, and to view an interesting collection of colour slides shown by Mr. R. B. Sibson. The following morning an early start was made for Miranda on the Firth of Thames, to observe wading birds. In spite of showery weather and a poor high tide, the day produced much of interest. In addition to large numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits, Knots, South Island Pied Oystercatchers and a few Wrybilled Plovers, a flock of 16 Turnstones provided a new bird for some members, and a group of six Asiatic Black-tailed Godwits (*L. limosa melanuroides*) was a thrill for everyone. "The Pools" produced a White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), a resident of many months' standing, but somewhat confusing in its generally white plumage with black margins on the underwing. In this area were also observed 20+ Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, several Banded Dotterels and a male New Zealand Dotterel in its beautiful full breeding plumage. Other birds of interest seen during the day were a Black Oystercatcher amongst the S.I. Pied Oystercatchers, and a further pair of New Zealand Dotterel. Members met again in the evening to hear a talk on the Islands of the Hauraki Gulf by Mr. R. B. Sibson, this being illustrated by an excellent series of colour slides, including many from a recent expedition to the Alderman Islands. This was followed by supper provided by some Auckland lady members.

On Sunday, 25th October, a projected launch trip to see the gannet colony on Horuhoru Island was cancelled on account of the state of the sea. In its place, a trip was made to Bethell's Beach, on the west coast, to observe the Spotted Shags nesting on the Ihumoana cliffs. Most of the adult birds were found to be in post-nuptial plumage, with fully-fledged young; but at least one nest of small young birds was seen, and one or two adults were in nuptial plumage. Glorious weather added greatly to the pleasure of the drive over the Waitakeres and of the day's outing. A pair of New Zealand Dotterel presented themselves for fairly close inspection just before departure, and the return trip was made the more interesting for some by sightings of Eastern Rosellas, Pied Tit and Pigeon.