

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.

On the third day a visit was made to Lake Pupuke to see the nesting Shags. Very close-up observation was possible of many Pied Shags (*P. varius*) and White-throated Shags (*P. melanoleucos brevirostris*), all nesting with young in various stages, and the colonies contained a few Little Black Shags (*P. sulcirostris*), not nesting. About equal numbers of the two forms of *melanoleucos* were observed, each form nesting separately, except for two mixed pairs seen at the nest, and some intermediate adult forms were also seen. Other parts of the lake produced several juvenal Large Black Shags (*P. carbo novaehollandiae*), many Black Swan, feral Mute Swan and numerous Grey Duck, including two only of a Grey-Mallard cross. Some Eastern Rosellas caused many of the party to interrupt their lunch. In the afternoon the party proceeded to the drainage ponding areas between Puketutu Island and the mainland. Interest was first concentrated on several Shoveler Duck amongst numbers of Mallard and Grey Duck on water which was previously completely depopulated by spraying operations carried out by the drainage authority. As the tide rose later in the afternoon, waders were in evidence in numbers. Bar-tailed Godwit (c. 2500) and South Island Pied Oystercatcher (c. 200) came in from the outer mud-banks, the latter including one Northern Oystercatcher. Also observed were 7 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, including a coloured juvenal, 7 Turnstones, 15 Wrybilled Plover, and a Little Stint. Of very special interest, even to the more hardened observers of the Auckland wading birds, was a Curlew Sandpiper in brilliant colouring.

Auckland has much to offer in migratory waders all round the year, and members attending the field study week-end were satisfied that they had been treated to a fair cross-section of all that the area can produce.

— A.B.



SHORT NOTES

NOTES ON SOME BONES COLLECTED BY DR. WATTERS AND MR. LINDSAY AT CHATHAM ISLANDS

The bones from this deposit were collected from Whenuatara, Pitt Island, on 2/2/57. They are embedded in or caked with a yellowish consolidated sand. The following have been identified:

Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*). The collection consists mainly of wing bones of several individuals, portion of a skull, tibiae, metatarsi, femora, and other bones. One or two of the bones are immature, but most of them are mature and have a size range not far short of the average of specimens available from Campbell Island. The breeding birds of the Sisters and Forty-fours Islets are to-day slightly smaller and darker winged than the breeding birds of Campbell Island, but there are not sufficient bones of the existing Chathams birds available to enable a useful comparison to be made with the sub-fossil bones.

Some of the dimensions of the latter are:

Tarso-metatarsi	123 mm.	124 mm.
Tibia	225	
Femur	97	
Radius	100	
Carpal	135	