

RIFLEMEN IN EXOTIC PINE-FORESTS

On 30/6/60, Mr. O. Secombe and I saw a Rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris*) in Matea Forest, east of Kaingaroa Forest. It was in a mature stand of *Pinus radiata* at least half a mile into the pines and one and a half miles from the nearest podocarp forest of the western Ureweras. Riflemen occur to my knowledge in beech, podocarp, scrub-hardwood and hardwood forest from sea level to over 4,000 feet and are reported from patches of scrub (Oliver, "New Zealand Birds," 1955), but as far as I can ascertain they have not been reported previously from pine forest. The species can therefore be tentatively added to the list of endemic birds that can adapt to this new habitat.

For those who are not familiar with the bird-life of the Central North Island pine forests, the native birds in Kaingaroa during the winter together with the approximate number of times an observer can expect to contact the species in a ten-hour day are listed below:

Whitehead (40), Tomtit (25), Grey Warbler (25), White-eye (20), Fantail (18), Robin (15), Bellbird (<1), Morepork (<1). In addition, Fernbirds, Pipits, Kingfishers and Harriers occur within the forest perimeter but not in the pines; and Tuis, Kakas and Yellow-crowned Parakeets can be found up to the forest boundary but have not penetrated inside.

It is significant that most of the successful colonizers of the pine forests are the insect-eaters; and that one of these, the Whitehead, attains a degree of abundance seldom reached in indigenous forest.

GRAEME CAUGHLEY

Riflemen were observed by me, on several occasions, in Karioi State Forest, during November, 1959, but only in stands of unthinned, mature *Pinus radiata* (planted 1927). These stands are confined to the lower block of the forest, adjacent to the Waiouru-Ohakune main highway at c. 2150 feet a.s.l. No more than two Riflemen were seen at any one time; and, more often than not, they occurred singly. This would appear to be an isolated group, as no birds of this species were observed, between August and November, 1959, in other compartments of exotics within this forest.

C. N. CHALLIES

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERNS IN THE AUCKLAND PROVINCE
AUTUMN 1960

During the autumn of 1960 four distinct White-winged Black Terns (*C. leucopterus*) are known to have been present in the Auckland province, viz:— one in the Manukau Harbour, two in the Firth of Thames and one in the Bay of Plenty.

(a) An adult in breeding dress was seen by numerous observers during March and April over one or other of the Puketutu pools. If the same individual has now frequented upper Manukau, especially Harania Creek and the vicinity of the Favona Causeway for some years — and there are good grounds for believing that only one bird is concerned — it has now assumed breeding plumage for six successive years, possibly seven, without migrating (v. *Notornis*, Annual Locality Reports). It is,

of course, possible that two or more of these terns have paused in Manukau on their northward passage; but never have two been seen together. General behaviour and faithfulness to certain feeding grounds at certain seasons suggest that the many sightings in upper Manukau over nearly eight years are of a single individual. It was already in breeding dress at Harania Creek on 22/1/60. Its last reported appearance was at Spoonbill Pool on 27/4/60 when it was hawking flies at dusk over the shallows in which many hundreds of Pied Stilts were standing.

(b) The White-winged Black Tern which was first reported at the Miranda pools in February, 1959, has stayed in the vicinity for more than a year and a half. Its estimated age when first seen was about eight months and it remained a very pale bird throughout 1959. Little change was observable in its plumage till mid-February, 1960, when the upper wing surface was appreciably darker and small patches of black were showing under the wing. By 2/3/60 the characteristic pattern of the wing of an adult in breeding dress was outlined and the sides of the body were blackening, though the black areas on the head were only slightly enlarged. On 16/4/60 it was virtually in full nuptial plumage. However, it may still have been immature, as it did not migrate. For although it was not present over the pools in the morning on 12/6/60, it was seen there in the evening by Mr. W. W. Renouf. There is no shortage of suitable feeding waters among the creeks and marshes of the Firth of Thames. As a general rule, where Stilts can find food, so can a White-winged Black Tern.

This individual was seen on several occasions by many observers during August, 1960, as it flitted among the numerous pairs of Pied Stilts which were nesting around the pools.

(c) On 16/4/60 a second White-winged Black Tern was found at Kaiaua, a few miles north of the Miranda pools. It was resting, a distinctly smaller tern, among White-fronted Terns (*S. striata*) well down on the stony foreshore. It was easily approached; and when disturbed, flew in the manner typical of the species, before resettling. It was in the pale plumage of a juvenile rather less than a year old. Fortunately since 1952 we have had considerable experience of White-winged Black Terns in this state of plumage. Mr. and Mrs. J. Prickett also saw it.

(d) On 8/3/60 at the mouth of the Tarawera River in the Bay of Plenty, a White-winged Black Tern was the 'odd man out' in a mixed flock of c. 100 White-fronted (*S. striata*) and four Black-fronted Terns (*C. albobristatus*) which were grouped on the beach. It was discovered by Mrs. H. M. McKenzie, and closely watched by Miss G. Hatch of Honolulu and H.R.McK. Its plumage was at an interesting stage of transition. The wings were dark above and patchy below; black patches were emerging on the sides of the body, while on the head the black was spreading from the three areas which are permanently dark. As adults generally appear to be in full breeding dress by the end of February in New Zealand, this may have been a second year bird, assuming nuptial plumage for the first time. The adjacent Matata lagoon is just the type of habitat which seems to attract stray White-winged Black Terns in New Zealand. Messrs. M. J. S. Black and W. J. Brown report that they watched this tern at Matata on 12/3/60.

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