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FIELD STUDY WEEK-END, BAY OF PLENTY 1960

A pleasant Field Study Week-end began on Friday, October 21, when twenty-six members from Whangarei, Auckland, Clevedon, Cambridge, Gisborne, Minginui, Tauranga, assembled at Whakatane at the Philatelic Hall. Mr. W. T. Parham had arranged a display of photographs, gannet rings, reports of the gannet-ringing scheme, cartoons by R. H. Haeusler, and as a side-line, photographs of bats. Mr. H. R. McKenzie welcomed those present and outlined the excursions planned and the bird-life which could be expected. Mr. and Mrs. Parham had given a great amount of time and thought to planning and arranging excursions and meetings. Interesting local films were shown by Mr. Parham and supper concluded the evening.

Next morning a visit was made to Mr. Farnworth's aviary, where birds admired and photographed included Golden and Lady Amherst pheasants, King Parrots, Rainbow Lorikeets, Indian Ring-necks, and African Crimson Finches. Studies of hybridisation were explained by Mr. Farnworth, e.g. crossing of Greenfinch and Goldfinch with Canary. N.Z. Red-fronted Parakeet were compared with Yellow-crowned Parakeet, a valuable study.

At a small lake at the foot of Mt. Edgecumbe, some new members had their first sight of the Dabchick. Beyond Kawerau, the party climbed a hill to view from above a small lake known to ornithologists as "Prickett Lake," where the highlight was five Bittern in the air together. Also seen were six Dabchick, four Scaup, and inevitably the odd shag.

At the edge of the Rotoma Hill bush the party had lunch with noises off:— the calls of Long-tailed and Shining Cuckoo, Kingfisher, Grey Warbler, Fantail and Pied Tit. Whiteheads were heard but only the McKenzies were privileged to see a party of four. R. St. Paul's party counted forty Bellbirds, twenty Tui, two Pied Tits, and eight Fantails. Dr. Elsie Gibbons saw a native Pigeon, and W. H. Way a Pied Tit feeding its mate. All saw a Long-tailed Cuckoo flying.

The next stop was at the Rangitaiki River mouth for a tantalising view of Whale Island and Rurimu Rocks, which unfortunately could not be visited. W. T. Parham gave some information about them and showed films at one of the evening meetings. Offshore a Giant Petrel was sighted. Along the beach was a pair of Banded Dotterel. On the river were some gulls and two Little Black Shags.

On Saturday evening, members were guests of the Whakatane

Branch of the Forest and Bird Society, being cordially welcomed by Miss V. Rucroft, President. A very fine display of mounted N.Z. birds of forest, swamp and shore had been arranged in a natural setting by Messrs. Grubner, Huygens and others. Colour films of native and Australian birds and of Australian marine life were shown by Mr. J. Prickett. A vote of thanks and supper brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

Next day, the party assembled early at Ohiwa Harbour Wharf and embarked in five dinghies to explore the west end of the harbour. Landings were first made on a shell bank, then on a small island about which five Reef Herons were flying. Two nests of these were inspected, one having an egg. Miss M. McIntyre had judged that a third nest was likely to be under a lip of rock. The boats were all manoeuvred neatly into a tiny cove, and some of the party had a precarious scramble to view with a mirror a nest with three eggs. It was hoped to see a colony of shags, but as a stiff head wind had sprung up, it was thought advisable to return, after some Maori fortifications had been explored. Birds seen or heard had been Gannet, Black-backed gull, Tui, and Shining Cuckoo. The oarsmen on the way back certainly earned their lunch, which was eaten on the lawn of Mrs. Dawson's home at Ohope Beach.

That afternoon, Matata Lagoon was visited. Here the list of birds seen included Black Swan, Mallard, Black Teal, Shoveller, Grey Duck, Little Black and Little Pied Shag, Godwit, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel and Pukeko. It was a pleasant surprise to be invited to a delicious afternoon tea by Mr. and Mrs. F. Burt, who have a duck sanctuary. On the way home a brief visit to Tarawera river-mouth resulted in sightings of four species of shag, and some Black-billed gulls. Red-breasted Dotterel were expected, but not seen; but at least a dozen Banded Dotterel were in occupation.

At the evening meeting, W. T. Parham showed coloured films of White Island and other awe-inspiring scenes of volcanic activity, such as Tarawera, and described the expedition on the naval vessel to White Island. The gannetries were a feature of the showing.

On the final day, another excursion was made to Ohiwa Harbour to explore the east end. The five dinghies were roped together in two groups with an outboard motor for each. A landing was made on a low island where 2000+ Godwits were observed and among them Caspian and White-fronted Terns. As the Godwits were rather jittery, some of the party, in order to get photographs, advanced towards them on their knees. According to H.R. McKenzie, Godwits cannot abide the sight of human legs. A possible sighting of a Tattler among the Godwit was reported by Miss M. McIntyre. At the rear of the party, the chittering of a pair of Black Oyster-catchers being heard, Mr. McKenzie sent D. Bettesworth forward to demonstrate the method of locating the nests of waders. He found a circular scrape in the sand with foot-marks around and a driftwood marker on the rim, but no eggs. In the same locality a pair of Black-backed Gulls had a nest.

Because of the outflowing tide and contrary wind, the convoy was unable to make port, so most of the party hitch-hiked to the wharf, and after some hand-towing, D. Merton got one motor to pull the string of boats home. This delay prevented a trip to the nesting

burrows of the Grey-faced Petrel, the Bay of Plenty muttonbird, at Otarawairere Bay.

After a late lunch at the seaside home of Mr. and Mrs. R. Weston, a suggestion was made to hold the next Field Study Week-end (Labour Day, 1961) at Clevedon. All who attended learned a lot from a delightful week-end. Those who did not bring cars were most grateful for transport provided by those who did. Thanks, too, are due to those who so kindly billeted some of the visitors.

— R.V.McL.



CLASSIFIED SUMMARISED NOTES

I. G. Andrew, Wellington
J. W. Bain, Gisborne
T. R. Beatson, Dunedin
B. D. Bell, Blenheim
A. Blackburn, Gisborne
R. H. Blanshard, Little Barrier
Mrs. M. J. Blundell, Clevedon
K. R. Bond, Kaitaia
Miss O. Cartwright, Dunedin
C. N. Challies, Lower Hutt
P. Child, Geraldine
V. I. Clark, Rotorua
J. E. Coulthard, Manukau Heads
R. A. Cresswell, Gisborne
Mrs. O. Cullen, Whangarei
E. Dear, Kopane
A. T. Edgar, Titirangi
Dunedin Naturalists Field Club
Rev. R. J. Fenton, Northcote
D. G. Fenwick, Auckland
Miss B. L. Goertz, Ardmore
P. Grant, Greymouth
A. R. Harris, Dunedin
B. D. Heather, Winton
M. Hodgkins, Tauranga
M. J. Hogg, Auckland
F. B. Hudson, Kaipara Flats
M. J. Imber, Hawera
King's College Bird Club
N. J. Ledgard, Titirangi

Mrs. E. H. Matwig, Te Kopuru
Mrs. H. M. McKenzie, Clevedon
H. R. McKenzie, Clevedon
Mrs. R. V. McLintock, Tauranga
D. Medway, Wellington
D. Merton, Gisborne
W. L. Moisley, Clevedon
G. J. Moon, Warkworth
A. A. Morgan, Greymouth
Mrs. G. Orum, Clevedon
W. T. Parham, Whakatane
W. T. Poppelwell, Dunedin
Mrs. A. C. Prentice, Dunedin
Mrs. A. Prickett, Birkenhead
J. Prickett, Birkenhead
A. T. Pyrcraft, Auckland
W. W. Renouf, Clevedon
R. A. Ringer, Auckland
J. W. St. Paul, Clevedon
R. St. Paul, Minginui
Mrs. M. A. Scott, Tauranga
A. L. Secker, Upper Hutt
R. B. Sibson, Auckland
P. D. G. Skegg, Auckland
W. S. Sutherland, Kawhia
A. Todd, Miranda
D. A. Urquhart, Karaka
J. G. Walker, Dunedin
Mrs. L. E. Walker, Dunedin
R. R. Wiblin, Pukerua Bay

N.I. KIWI (*Apteryx australis mantelli*) — Kawhia, calls reported from Mahoe stream (W.S.S.). L. Waikaremoana, heard at Te Puna and Hopuruahine, 27/2/ - 6/3/59 (F.P.H.). Gisborne, 12/4/60, 1 killed by dog six miles from city (A.B.). Mahoenui district, May '60, heard calling at Waikawau; 1 killed by dogs near Maungarongo (W.L.M.).