

GREENFINCHES EATING COTONEASTER BERRIES

The Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) is an uncommon visitor to my Titirangi garden, but on 5th-7th April, 1960, three birds, adult male and female, and an immature female, were observed eating cotoneaster berries. They visited the bush each day about 8.30-9 a.m., and stayed on it for up to fifteen minutes. Though the berries were apparently equally attractive for some time before and after the dates mentioned, no other birds were seen to eat them, nor did the Greenfinches return.

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AN EXTINCT SEA EAGLE IN THE CHATHAM ISLANDS

According to records going back as far as 1866, there is good evidence from a number of localities in New Zealand that a species of Sea Eagle has been seen from time to time. From the descriptions given by observers, and from a specimen in the Dominion Museum said to have been taken in New Zealand, Oliver listed the White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) as an occasional straggler to New Zealand (1). Mrs. Perrine Moncrieff has now amassed considerable evidence that eagles of this sort may have occurred from time to time in certain regions of the South Island, and I am indebted to her for the use of her notes (2).

The usual range of *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is "Coasts of India, Ceylon, Burma and the Malay Peninsula and through the entire Malay Archipelago to Australia, Tasmania and western Polynesia." (3).

My work on the subfossil birds of New Zealand and the Chatham Islands at the British Museum (Natural History) has revealed a number of novel features, one of which is the indication of small populations of birds such as falcons, owls, Kaka and Kakapo, not recorded as living birds or preserved in Moriori tradition.

The latest novelty to be found consists of the bones of a large raptorial bird which I have identified as belonging to a robust species of *Haliaeetus*. From Oliver's conclusions on straggling sea-eagles in the New Zealand region, it seemed likely that these bones would belong to *H. leucogaster*, the species occurring closest to the Chatham Islands.

However, following a detailed examination of a large series of *Haliaeetus* skeletons kindly made available to me in the Bird Room of the British Museum (N.H.) by Mr. J. D. Macdonald, and in the University of Cambridge Museum of Zoology by Dr. K. A. Joysey, I find that the Chatham's eagle is quite distinct in features of the tarsometatarsus and pelvis from the White-bellied Sea Eagle, and, indeed, from all the southern forms of this genus excepting *H. vociferoides* of Madagascar and possibly Mauritius — another interesting parallel between the fossil birds of the Malagachian-Mascarene region and the Chatham (4). The species which the Chatham's bird most closely resembles are *H. leucocephalus*, the Bald Eagle of North America, and *H. albicilla*, the White-tailed Sea Eagle of Northern Europe and Asia.

The tarsometatarsus is usually a good criterion for distinguishing osteologically between eagles but the two northern species are not quickly separated in this way. The Chatham Island bones are, in the series I have before me, quite constant in their differences from these two species and they appear to represent a hitherto unknown member of the genus.