

BLUE REEF HERON AT LAKE TAUPO

On 5/7/61, my wife and I stopped on the Taupo town waterfront to examine a party of Little Shags at the outer end of a groyne about forty yards from the lake shore. A Blue Heron (*Egretta sacra*) was seen trotting along the groyne towards the shags, catching a fish, probably a "Cockabully," on the way. From the road above the lake we used binoculars to make sure that it was indeed a Blue Heron. While visiting Major G. F. and Mrs. Yerex we learned that there had been a report of a Blue Heron but Major Yerex had not investigated it because White-faced Herons (*Ardea novaehollandiae*) frequent the lake and are usually reported as "Blue" or "Reef" Herons. He accompanied us to the lake shore where we now found two Blue Herons, apparently quite at home in their new-found "sea." Two were seen again by Mrs. McKenzie on 6th and by Dr. J. S. Armstrong on 12th. A single bird, or the two, were seen several times between these dates. Sometimes they were on the stones of the groynes, sometimes padding along the sandy beach.

— H. R. & H. M. McKENZIE

[There are no recent inland records of the Reef Heron. However, Buller (2nd Edition, p. 131) reports "a pair was seen on the Taupo Lake in October 1875, and I observed one on the wing at Lake Rotoiti in October 1884." — Ed.]



SILVEREYES MOVING AT NIGHT OVER CHRISTCHURCH

On 11/4/61 at 9 p.m., I heard flocks of Silvereyes flying over my home, in Shirley, Christchurch. I did not pay much attention to them, but I did note that they seemed to be travelling roughly from east to west. It was quite dark at the time. The following evening I heard flocks, flying in the same direction, from 9 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., and they may have continued longer. A flock would be heard slowly coming up from the east and then would pass overhead and the flight calls would die away towards the west. Sounds carry well at night and so distances are hard to estimate, but they seemed to be flying fairly high — about the 100 ft. level. Judging from the frequency of calls, there must have been at least twenty birds in each flock, maybe many more, and they came over at a rate of about one flock every five minutes or less. This would mean about 400 birds flew over while I listened on 12/4/61. On both nights there was no wind so, if they were migrating, they were almost certainly not off course.

Stead (*Life Histories of N.Z. Birds*) states that there is a northward migration of Silvereyes in the Christchurch area but, as the Canterbury breeding population is low, there is no return movement in Spring. Oliver (*N.Z. Birds 1955*) accounts for the greater numbers in winter by a movement into settled areas in search of food. Fleming (*Emu*, 42, 209) found no evidence of a migration in Auckland, but suggests aggregation and local wandering. The easterly movement of the birds, over this area, does not agree either with Stead's northerly migration, or a dispersal in search of food, but movement at night does suggest some kind of migration.

— DAVID DAWSON