

DUNNOCK — Was seen only a few times on the roadside near the camp.

PIBIT — A flock of eight to ten birds was seen on Gertrude Saddle which is well above the bush line.

BELLBIRD — Found throughout the bush, but judging from the counts they are more numerous on the valley floor. Usually in ones or twos, but two small flocks of seven birds and of about a dozen were reported seen on the flax plants near Key Summit.

TUI — A probable sighting of one flying high over the bush at Gunn's Camp. Two reported at Hidden Falls feeding on Miro berries.

LESSER REDPOLL — One small flock was seen in the bush near Lake Marion.

CHAFFINCH — Widely distributed in the bush but only in small numbers. The most seen together was four, and usually only one or two.

HOUSE SPARROW — A few were constantly seen around the camp, but nowhere else.

BUSH HAWK — A fleeting glimpse caught as one flew low along the road, and struck a branch where a House Sparrow had just landed. There was a distinct clap, and a feather drifted down, but the fate of the sparrow was not ascertained.

WHITE-EYE — This is probably the most abundant bird in the bush occurring in small flocks of between three and a dozen birds. They were more often heard than seen and usually occupied the canopy layer of the bush, though coming down low along its edges. Their distribution appears to be throughout the bush.

No Kiwis or Wekas were seen and, according to Murray Gunn, they were thought to have been wiped out by stoats in the nineteen thirties. One stoat was caught in a live trap in the bush well away from any buildings. Mr. P. K. Dorizac, Chief Ranger Fiordland N.P., tells me that Kiwis are still plentiful in the Cleddau Valley, which is through the Homer Tunnel from the Hollyford.



BIRDS OBSERVED ON THE WAY UP TO, AND AT, BOULDER LAKE, HAUPIRI RANGE, NELSON PROVINCE

By C. McCANN

On 18th March, 1961, a party consisting of Messrs. Frank Soper of Puramahoe, S. Northcote-Bade, A. Sears, B. Durant and the author visited the Boulder Lake area. We returned over the same route on the 20th.

We camped at the site of the newly constructed hut of the Golden Bay Alpine Club. Mr. Soper was largely responsible for the construction of this hut, which is situated beside a small waterfall, on

the southerly shore of Boulder Lake. The lake lies in an amphitheatre of high ridges and peaks rising another thousand or more feet above the lake. The lake itself is 3,224ft. above sea level.

We ascended by way of Bainham, passing through The Castles, and up the Brown Cow Ridge, sidling the peak at about 4000ft., finally dropping down through tussock to the level of the lake. The following birds were noted during the trip:

GREAT SPOTTED KIWI — No birds were seen, but, occasionally, during the night the call was heard in the forests adjacent to the lake, 3,200ft. It is presumed to be this species as it is known to inhabit this area (c.f. *Notornis* VIII, 237).

PARADISE DUCK — A pair was seen on the borders of the lake by Mr. Northcote-Bade. Apparently, the birds were moulting at the time for feathers were seen and one was collected.

SCAUP — A drake and two ducks were seen on the lake in the early morning of the 20th. So long as the observer stood still the birds would approach but any movement sent them away again.

BLACK SHAG — A single bird haunted the lake during the whole period of our stay. It was very shy and would not allow approach.

KAKA — Frequently heard in the beech forests skirting the slopes below 3000ft., occasionally, at higher levels in the vicinity of the lake as they flew over.

KEA — Keas were seen and heard calling as they flew over the lake and along the ridges bordering the lake.

MOREPORK — Several birds were seen in the forests on the way up to the lake. Others were seen and heard frequently after dusk in the patches of forest skirting the lake.

RIFLEMAN — Some birds seen and heard in the beech forest in the vicinity of the camp site.

ROCK WREN — Not seen by any of the party during the trip, but Mr. Keath Marshall of Puramahoe had a coloured slide of one taken in the area.

FANTAIL — Fantails were frequent in the forests on the way up to the lake and at the camp-site. They were often absurdly 'tame,' approaching within a few inches of one's face. No specimens of the melanic form were observed.

YELLOW-BREASTED TIT — Several specimens of this bird were seen between 2-3000ft. in the forests. Some were quite 'tame' and approached to about a yard. The yellow breast was distinctly visible. They appeared to move about in the low shrubs only a few feet from the ground.

Several birds with white breasts were seen within the same range as that of the Yellow-breasted Tit, but appeared to be more frequent where the ground cover was less and 'broad-leaved' trees were more common. The black and white of the breast was sharply demarcated. They had exactly the appearance and manners of the North Island representatives. They appeared to be more 'fluffed up' than the

Yellow-breasted Tit, making them appear very slightly larger than that bird. Incidentally, the Yellow-breasted Tit appeared to hold its feathers more tightly.

FERNBIRD — This bird appeared to be fairly plentiful in an area known as Beetham's Clear — an open grassy area, which in wet weather seems to be marshy, with scattered *manuka* bushes dotted around. The birds haunted the shrubs and tall grass and their clicking notes could be heard all round. If the observer were still the birds would emerge cautiously to the periphery of the bush and approach to within three or four feet to investigate the stranger. Any movement on the part of the observer sent the bird back to cover. The chestnut colouring of the crown was very distinct and the striae of black on the breast were well-defined. No birds were seen outside this circumscribed area.

GREY WARBLER — The Grey Warbler was frequent in the bush almost all the way up. It appeared in the forest around the camp site also.

BELLBIRD — The Bellbirds were plentiful and were, perhaps, the commonest birds in the forests all the way up — they were very vociferous. In the beech forest round the lake they were also numerous, but not so plentiful as in the lower forest between 1,500 and 3000ft. They appeared to be feeding on insects among the branches. (The South Island Rata was in flower at the time.) Some birds were quite 'tame' and would approach within three or four feet of the observer (if still). Others appeared to follow us down the path and come quite low to investigate. They would have a look at us and then burst into song. I have never seen nor heard so many Bellbirds together. Incidentally, no Tuis were seen during the trip.

WHITE-EYE — Small parties of White-eyes were frequently seen, even around the lake — sometimes flying quite high (4000ft.).

PIPIT — The Pipit was very common on the lower grasslands and along the roads, but absent from the bush areas. It reappeared in open grassland higher up. A pair was seen on the shore of Boulder Lake on the morning of the 20th.

WESTERN WEKA — Wekas were seen on the way up moving about in the forest at about 2-2500ft. and again in the forest adjoining the lake. They were heard calling after dark around the camp site.

PUKEKO — Some birds were seen along the streams and in hedgerows on the lower levels.

HARRIER — Several Harriers were seen over the lower hills and on the plains.

BLACKBIRDS — Blackbirds were seen on the plains and on the lower slopes. None were observed at the lake.

SONG THRUSH — Common in the low country, especially around cultivation.

GOLDFINCH — Small parties of Goldfinches were seen on the plains and on the lowest slopes only.