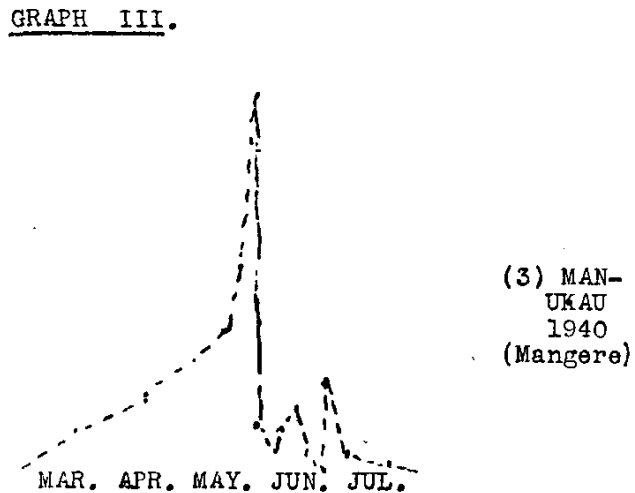
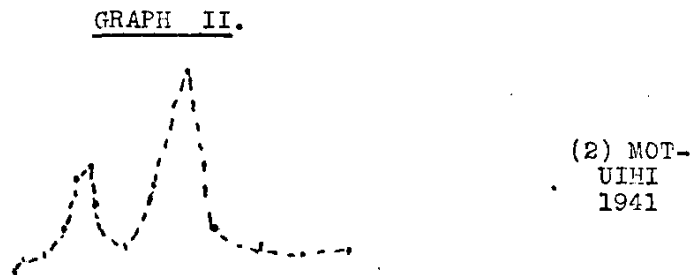
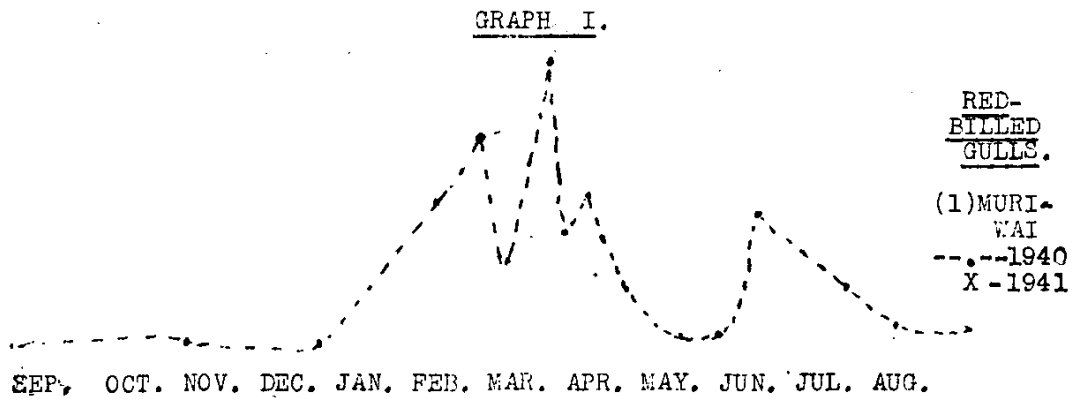


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## SEABIRD CENSUS ALONG THE THAMES COROMANDEL ROAD

by P. C. Bull.

Frequent trips along this road during the last few years have offered opportunity to make the following censuses of seabirds. Successive counts in a short period vary greatly, owing to differences in tide and weather. Migration is, however, revealed by the figures for stilts and gulls. The movements of White-fronted terns are obscure and seem particularly susceptible to weather and tidal conditions. If nearby colonies were known their presence along the coast in the breeding season and well up the river estuary soon after the new year might be explained.

Records of shags apply chiefly to the Thames beacons; of stilts to the mudflats at Thames and Manaia; of gannets to off-shore waters in which they were fishing, their numbers varying with visibility. As the road does not always follow the coast, the stretch is not the best possible for such counts.

Date	W-f. Tern.	Stilt.	Red-b Gull.	Black- back Gull.	Caspian Tern.	Black Shag.	Pied Shag.	White- thr. Shag.	Gan- net.
30/12/38	0	—	70	30	—	2	—	—	—
3/1/39	32	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
26/3/40	—	5	—	—	3	11	—	—	—
27/3/40	—	43	192	147	12	6	—	1	—
11/5/40	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15/5/40	72	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20-30
17/8/40	30	15	—	—	—	15	—	3	few
21/8/40	—	—	—	—	1	12	—	3	many
29/12/40	28	0	8	10	—	10	1	—	—
3/1/41	5	—	25	30	4	4	1	—	7

#### NOTES ON FANTAILS AT NELSON.

Fantails have increased during the last year. The difference in the marking of individual Black Fantails continues to be of interest. Some have regular markings on both sides of the head, others have none at all and are coal black. A leaden-coloured bird is reported from Mapua, 19/7/41 (a freak?). The fantails at Astrolabe were moulting their inner tail feathers 28/1/41. At this stage it is hard to tell a Pied Fantail at a glance as the inner white tail feathers are absent. At The Cliffs in July, 1941, three were seen going to roost together, two pied and one black, but they separated during the day. Of these two pied individuals one has learnt to come into the verandah and ask for flies. The method is as follows: Arrived on an adjacent tree it chirps to catch the writer's attention. The latter then catches a blowfly or other insect and holding it in hand waves it to and fro to show the fantail that it is about to be released. As soon as the fly leaves the hand the fantail swoops down and in most cases secures it. If not very hungry it will allow the fly to es-

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cape. It has also learnt that at the dinner hour blowflies are attracted by the smell of cooking. At 12.30 on most days it will arrive at the back door and sitting on a convenient tree overlooking the position, swoop down on blowflies as they come and go outside the gauze door.

It is noticeable that fantails have difficulty in dealing with blowflies, which are rather too big for them. On first securing them they beat them against a branch with their beaks. They may then hold them in their claws and pick viciously at them. But this is not enough and they will frequently let the fly go, to swoop at it again. After many such batterings and releases to secure in a more favourable position, the fantail eventually reduces the fly to a stage when it can be swallowed.

. MRS. P. MONCRIEFF.

#### NOTES ON THE FIELD CHARACTERS OF THE HUDSONIAN GODWIT.

The Hudsonian Godwit, *Limosa haemastica*, was recorded for the first time in the North Island by N. Ridland and myself near the mouth of the Waikato River, 2/11/40. This record appears on p.13 of the Second Annual Report of the Society. As we were able to watch the bird at a range of 20 yards or less the following notes were made: It is about the size of a male Bar-tailed Godwit, *L. lapponica baueri*, and beside Stilts, as we saw it, looked quite a dumpy short-legged bird. Even when resting its black tail is its most conspicuous feature, and when it flies this shows still more clearly in contrast to the white rump. There is a whitish alar bar moderately conspicuous in flight.

General colouring a brownish grey, with light mottling on the wings and some of the coverts tipped with light gray or white. Neck and throat brownish grey, underparts whitish, with a fairly distinct line of demarcation between the grey and white at the chest. Head: dark line through eye with a pale streak above and below, crown, medium brown. Legs dark;