

4. GREY WARBLER (*Gerygone igata*). Is much less abundant; no more than 6-7 birds observed during the trip mentioned above. Noted a very incomplete melody of song as compared with birds in Wellington district at the same time of year.

5. NORTH ISLAND TIT (*Petroica toi-toi*). Scarce; only two birds seen.

6. PIED FANTAIL (*Rhipidura flabellifera*). This form of the fantail represents one of the most numerous species in the manuka country. Mostly in small flocks of 5-7 birds including several juvenile. More abundant in small gulleys and close to the Waikato,

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but plentiful elsewhere; in one day's tramp about 50 birds were observed.

7. WHITE-EYE (*Zosterops lateralis*). Comes next in numerical order, moving everywhere in small parties.

8. BELLBIRD (*Anthornis melanura*). Saw one adult and one young bird, but about 4-5 birds within a radius of 10 miles still singing, some of them inside the edge of afforested areas.

9. CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla coelebs*). Is scarce in the manuka country but rather plentiful in afforested areas, which forms one of its favourite haunts on the Continent.

B.—WAIKATO RIVER AND ROTOKAUA LAKE.

1. BLACK SHAG (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). Is fairly plentiful; every day 5-6 either roosting or flying along the river to and from Lake Taupo, and also saw several on Lake Rotokaua.

2. WHITE-THROATED SHAG (*Phalacrocorax brevirostris*). One odd bird seen.

3. PARADISE DUCK (*Casarca variegata*). One pair on Puete River estuary but without young.

4. GREY DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*). Several birds flying along the river every day; about one hundred birds, both adults and juvenile on Rotokaua Lake; most of them in moult, but very cautious like the Paradise Duck; probably a lot of shooting is going on.

5. SHOVELLER (*Spatula rhynchotis*). About 100 birds on Lake Rotokaua, though for the great distance this record must be considered as probable only.

6. BLACK SWAN (*Chenopsis atrata*). Rather scarce as only 8 birds observed on Lake Rotokaua.

7. BITTERN (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*). Single bird on Puete River estuary.

In concluding these few field observations, I wish to stress the following points which may be of interest from a more general viewpoint. Of the 17 species of birds observed in this part of the Taupo district six only belong to introduced species and only two of them—the White-eye and the Californian Quail—seem to find suitable conditions in the primitive manuka scrub forest and are represented in respectively larger numbers. And finally, besides the presence of more or less ubiquitous Harrier and some of the water birds, the Fantail and the Pipit are the two species which seem best adapted to these peculiar ecological conditions.

NOTES ON CUCKOOS. By B. J. Marples.

In addition to the two common New Zealand cuckoos, the Shining Cuckoo (*Lamprolaima lucidus*) and the Long-tailed Cuckoo (*Urodynamis lucidus*) Oliver in his "New Zealand Birds" mentions a single occurrence of an Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus optatus*) at Te Anau in 1902. On September 17, 1951, a specimen of the Pallid Cuckoo (*Heteroscenes*

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pallidus was sent in for identification from Craig Flat, on the banks of the Molyneux River some five miles above Beaumont. It was a male weighing

84 grms. The following are its measurements in millimeters: Wing 191, tail 162, tarsus 19.0, toe 24.5, culmen 22.0, testes, right 4.0x3.0, left 5.0x3.5. Scattered contour feathers were in moult. Its stomach contained 28 black hairy caterpillars and 4 others, and a few earthworms chaetae. No internal parasites were found.

This is apparently the first record of a straggler of this species reaching New Zealand, but more interesting is the history of this bird as supplied by Mrs. Adams, the sender. It had been seen about Craig Flat for three years, but seemed to carry out a seasonal migration, as it appeared before May and departed about October, only to return again next autumn. In spring it whistled and would approach quite close if replied to. If it was moving south for the breeding season, as one would expect, it is curious that it should have established its winter quarters towards the south of the South Island. In flight it is described as having a gliding action, scarcely moving its wings, and was not observed on the ground as it habitually perched on the tops of posts. In general appearance it is a grey bird, about 13 inches long, with a long tail.

Another isolated straggler which has apparently not been previously recorded is a specimen of a Channel-billed Cuckoo (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*). This is a large bird, about 2 feet long, with a massive downwardly curving bill. It is grey with a large conspicuously barred tail. The specimen is in the Otago Museum and was presented by Mrs. Thompson, of Invercargill, in December, 1924.

A record of a young cuckoo reared by thrushes was made by Miss Sadler, of Thames, in September or October, 1940. The cuckoo was seen to remove an egg from the thrush's nest, fly off carrying it in its beak and drop it on the ground. It was then seen to carry its own egg from the ground and put it in the nest, the actual laying of the egg not being observed. The egg resembled those of the thrush. The thrushes hatched before the cuckoo. One morning all three thrushes were found out of the nest, one being dead. The two live ones were replaced but next morning they were both out again and were dead. The cuckoo was reared by the foster parents. The observer was uncertain as to the species of the cuckoo but thinks that it was a Long-tailed Cuckoo as it was about as large as a thrush.

A Pallid Cuckoo has also been seen by Dr. Falla at Okarito in December, 1941, and by E. L. Kehoe at Greymouth in March, 1942.